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In this book the editor intended to document all of Lenin's texts that he wrote from 21 December 1922 to 6 March 1923. These are the writings that the mortally ill leader of the revolution and the state wrote while he had already been placed under political quarantine by his Politburo comrades. Lenin hoped to be able to intervene, through his articles, memoranda, and letters, in the issues of culture, agriculture, and nationalities policy as well as into the political development of the regime of the party dictatorship and the party leadership. Many documents that have come to public light since Perestroika--which are not at all taken into consideration in this volume--prove that the tragedy of a fanatical revolutionary was played out during this time. Banned into a "politically airless space," he sought to continue playing his accustomed role. Marked for death, he occasionally shook off the thought constraints of Bolshevik "realpolitik" and, with the resentment of the impotent, commented clearly on the ambitions of his comrades in struggle. Meanwhile, the Politburo--Trotsky working closely with Stalin--had seen to it that he was no longer considered to be of sound mind in the party. It was under this sign that "Lenin's final fight" took place.

In the 1960s Moshe Lewin, with the help of documents that became known after the beginning of destalinization, showed the dramatic break between the founder of Bolshevism and the General Secretary in "Le dernier combat de Lénine." The question arises for the current volume of what use is the publication of writings that, with a single exception, are all known and available to all interested in the literature on the subject. The editor flogs the well-known Trotskyist pathos of world revolution. In addition, the attempt is made, as did Trotsky and other "epigones" in the 1920s, to define the "real Lenin" and his legacy with the help of these later writings. Using a series of contemporary documents and articles by Lenin and Trotsky, the impression is to be left among the followers of a great strategic anti-Stalin bloc between the two archrivals. The intent is obvious....

Lenin's Final Fight has nothing new to offer. Previously unknown was the content of a single document, the response of a "commission" of Lenin's secretaries set up on his instructions on the disputed Georgia policy. Here one finds at best references for the search for more revealing material. But this is hindered by the fact that this file is offered from the former party archive without any signature. Overall, in light of newer sources on the early Soviet Union, this is a superfluous, highly anachronistic book.

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