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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

- Military Operations in the Information Age - *General John G Lorber*  
USAF
- The New Stealth Weapon - *B Raman*
- Integration of Ministry of Defence with Service Headquarters - *Colonel Ivan David*
- Key to Confidence Building in South Asia : Fostering Military-to-Military Links - *Bharat Karnad*
- Sino Indian Relations : Impressions on a Visit to China - *Maj Gen SC Sinha, PVSM*  
(Retd)
- China in the 21st Century - Implications for India - *K K Mitra*

APRIL-JUNE 1996

*Lenin's Final Fight : Speeches and Writings, 1922-23.* By V I Lenin, New York, Pathfinder, 1995, p. 320, \$ 19.95, ISBN 0-87348-807-5.

The book covers in detail the last 400 days of Lenin's fight in establishing the 'new order' of Russian Union & Peasants power since the advent of October 1917 revolution. The contents revive the memories of 1950 when the publicity material of Russian origin started flooding the Indian book stalls. However, this 'condensed' version of tumultuous occurrences is very well chronicled and authenticated; the cross references provide the desired background for important events leading upto this last year of Lenin's activism in post Czarist period and emergence of the erstwhile U.S.S.R.

The events described generate greater interest for the Indian reader as the events in India also followed more or less the same pattern barely 25 years later e.g. the voluntary merger of princely states into the Indian Republic and the subsequent economic developmental models/socialistic pattern of society, role of national leaders, the struggle and hardships of the masses, the rural and urban divide, disparities between the elite and the poor, the hunger (near famine) conditions to food surplus, etc.

The harsh realities of leadership struggle among the hierarchy and self proclaimed rival successors have been brought out in sharp focus and without any bias or concealment. The interpretations of various statements have been logically deduced and the English translation is free from any ambiguities; infact where-ever there is a possibility of such an ambiguity either due to Lenin's physical disability or the quirks of English grammar, explanatory notes provide the required classifications. The appendices and the introductory notes act as the gap fillers to complete the history of 1917 revolution, internal conflicts and their resolution. Some of the facts which were clandestinely concealed for a long time, more so pertaining to the 'murderous regime' of Stalin and the clever bureaucracy, have been brought out for the first time in any language.

— Air Vice Marshal S.S. Malhotra AVSM, VM (Retd)