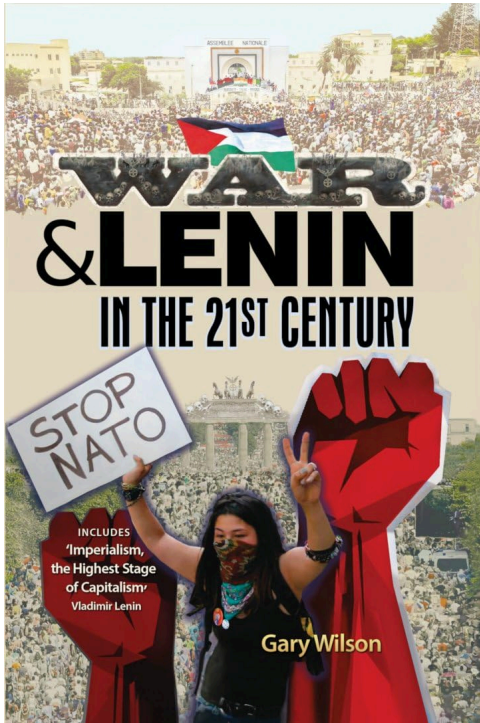


War and Lenin in the 21st Century

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 26, 2025



[5](#)

By Gary Wilson

[BUY NOW](#) | [FREE PDF](#)

Vladimir Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and a key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” in 1916, more than a century ago. It is still one of the most influential critiques of imperialism.

After the first imperialist world war broke out, Lenin’s main interest was promoting a socialist revolution to end the war. To this end, he exposed the war’s economic roots and explained why the popular Social Democratic anti-war movement had

crumbled.

Lenin identified imperialism's key features: monopoly capitalism, finance capital, the export of capital, and colonialism, leading to the competitive division of the world among the imperialist powers.

Does Lenin's analysis of imperialism hold up today?

20th-century imperialism brought about more wars, revolutions, and counterrevolutions than any preceding century in recorded history.

World War II ushered in a shift in imperialist relations. The United States emerged from WWII as the world's most powerful imperialist country, gaining control of European and Japanese empires in Asia and Africa. It established the U.S. dollar as the international currency and engaged in endless wars to maintain what the Cubans call 'The Empire.'

Unlike in 1914, the U.S. military-industrial complex dominates the imperialist world. Today, the Pentagon has more than 750 bases in more than 80 countries. The U.S.-commanded military alliance called NATO is an imperialist war machine dominating Europe and beyond.

Pentagon contracts are gutting the U.S. and NATO allies' economies. The U.S. government's budget is dominated by military spending, now almost a \$1 trillion a year. Military contracts drain the budgets of every NATO member. To pay for this war budget, services are cut, and austerity imposed; the working class is being impoverished.

As in Lenin's time, the conclusion is that socialist revolution will end imperialist war, enabling workers to meet their own needs.