

“Vae victis,”¹ Germany!

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It will soon be half a century since the woes that befell humanity were spilt upon the Germans, the woes of this terrible period during which “bourgeois civilization” has begun to recoil from what was quite possibly its highest pitch of greatness.

At the outbreak of the imperialist war of 1914, the gigantic deception to present the conflict as an *ideological war* was founded on the denigration of Germany and the German people. It was not capitalism that slid down the inescapable slope of disgrace and ignominy and naked barbarism, denounced by the Marxists. No, civilization, one in time and in space, was a [universal] human attribute that had only one enemy: the German, while all others rushed to defend it in a holy crusade! Herein lies the entire secular blasphemy; it was the same in 1939 and it is the same today.

The great Marxist movement of the world seemed to tear itself apart. The ortho-Marxists saw in the war the inevitable consequence of the capitalist social system and the reaction of German capital, determined by its exclusion from the colonial feast upon the skins of the wretched peoples of color. On the opposite side, the renegades contended that the proletariat should rent itself out for the defense of the local homeland or of human civilization, for which it had to swap its own cause: the coming of the socialist revolution.

The renegades took roots also and especially in Germany, and pointed to the threat to civilization and culture posed by feudal Russia that was about to destroy a century of democracy – the same thing of which the Ententists accused the Central Powers.

The falsifiers of socialism resorted to all means. But the anti-Germans, laying the groundwork for the infamy of racism and of the predestination of peoples to save or ruin the whole human species, fanned the flames of vile hatred using the text of Tacitus’ Germania – in which the *civilized* Roman described said people, rebelling against imperial oppression, as a bunch of brutes and wild beasts – passed along as it was over the millennia.

In World War I, Germany was defeated, but not thanks to those socialists who became crusaders for the bourgeois liberal idea. It was precisely those socialists who belonged to the healthy wing of the movement and who had supported internal defeatism and civil war rather than foreign crusades that dug the grave for the Kaiser’s state. The October Revolution in Russia rid the German

¹ “Woe to the vanquished”; in Latin in the original text.

armies of a powerful enemy, even more so when it signed the peace of Brest-Litovsk in 1918.

But defeatism, that lively and generous school of socialism, crossed the border bristling with iron, and the great German proletariat grasped the Russian lesson. The Western front collapsed, and thus came about the peace of Versailles and the Weimar Republic.

The German proletariat had two choices. One was the revolutionary dictatorship and the foundation of a second and larger Republic of Soviets. The other was a revanchist national movement against the infamous pact of Versailles, which – without, however, dismantling the almost intact productive apparatus – disarmed the defeated and made of the country that had capitulated a single State, but one that comprised two pieces of territory divided by the insane “Polish corridor.”

The history of the crisis of the German proletariat stuck between these two tendencies is full of immense lessons. It was the treasonous socialists who paved the way for the logical Hitlerian solution, against which the same mountains of exercises in atrocity-mongering were heaped once again.

We communists of the Moscow International rejected every idea of responding with an anti-Versailles national war. However, even this formula had been put forward.

In the second war of German revanchism, Russia – now deviated from revolutionary Marxism – at first made a pact with Hitler for a moment, using as a pretense the Leninist thesis that France and England (later America) were fighting for exquisite imperialist motives: those of 1914.

That was the first disgrace, but the second stage was even worse. Reaching out to the French, the English, and the Americans, the Russians threw themselves once again into the most criminal democratic crusadism. The vital force of class defeatism was everywhere extinguished by two waves of betrayal. Defeated for a second time, Germany has not undergone a second Versailles yet, but it is even worse off for it. The winners divided it into two occupation zones that form two separate States, albeit without a corridor between the two parts of the territory. These are two parts that touch each other, and even Berlin is in two pieces.

The problem of peace. Who can the winners of 1945 conclude it with? Can they make a single state out of the two pieces, clear out, and later sign a treaty with its government? That will never come to pass, because it is impossible. It could only be otherwise if the monstrous *impasse* of freedom, democracy, and parliamentarism were not, as Marxism has known for a hundred years, the foulest of lies.

A thinkable solution, but one whose time has certainly not yet come, is for each of the two winning groups to annex its part of Germany, and for an armed world conflict to follow. This would have one advantage, namely that the "accursed" German people, fighting in part on one side and in part on the other, could not be accused for a third time of being the Cain of modern civilization. There may be another solution, in which the whole German people rises up in a national war against its oppressors East and West. Such might be a patriotic slogan once it becomes clear that neither America nor Russia wants reunification, and therefore peace with a single Germany, while having no interest in two separate peace treaties.

We do have some facts. Russia has not concluded a treaty with East Germany. America has not concluded it with the Germany of Bonn in isolation, either (these would be useless acts). The American president told the Russian leader at Camp David that he feared German reunification. The former then denied it. But the truth is that they told each other, in a conciliatory tone, that neither of them wanted a united Germany, and that they feared it. The true agreement of the summit. Another fact: the quarrel is not over Berlin; instead, there is play-acting about quarreling over the U-2, the spy flights, and the bases.

There is yet another arduous [but] splendid prospect. Not a national war of the Germans, once again patriotic and racist, against all. Rather, a civil war in the two Germanies against the [mutually] complicit governments of America and Russia, that is, a class rebirth of the German proletariat, a return of the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" and of the magnificent tradition of Marx.

This is not an absurd prospect – on the condition that the internal class struggle flares up again in the centers of the West and the East.

Almost half a century has been enough to show that the Russian leadership of the struggle for communism has ended in failure. [Our] hopes can only be placed in a mission of the great Germanic² proletariat, which will fill up the history of the rest of the century. It is not just about Europe anymore. All continents are in turmoil. Although the national ballast weighs heavily, even with revolutionary effects, on peoples of color, their direction would lie in full internationalism following the German unitary formula; the great new State of the German proletariat confronting the forces of the East and the West, all of them socially capitalist.

² This is the only place in the text where Bordiga uses the adjective *germanico* (lit. "Germanic") rather than *tedesco* (German). While this may be merely a stylistic variation to avoid repetition, the distinction is preserved in the translation, since there are indications that Bordiga was referring to a broader category than just the working classes of East and West Germany. In his Dialogue with Bordiga, Jacques Camatte interprets Bordiga's analysis as also applying to Austria and unnamed countries "under German influence."

The peoples of color could move forward rapidly and leap over centuries' worth of history. Today's situation is bleak, but it already seems that China is less inclined than Russia toward peaceful coexistence.

Perhaps it was when Beijing learned of the subjugation of the white German people decreed at Camp David that a yellow cry of protest, naïve but powerful, blew the whole disgusting compromise up.

Only the line of Marx, of Lenin, and of class dictatorship can channel into a single stream the forces that tremble in the bedrock of history across the entire planet.