

countries' bad war-aims, and proceeds to draw the following lesson from the misfortunes of the Allies during the three years of the world-war:

"Surely the moral of these repeated defeats, all associated with the pursuit by members of the Allied coalition of special political objects, speaks for itself. Centralization of military control must be born of unity of political purpose. The Allies have not been able to concentrate their armed forces on the all-important object of annihilating German military power, because they cherished different and in some respects *divergent opinions as to the political objects for which a general victory should be used*. . . . Not until these special political objects have been subordinated to the attainment of political objects which all the Allies share in common, will a political condition be brought into existence favorable to the effective and triumphant co-operation of the Allied armies."

All of which is undoubtedly well said. But, we are afraid, to no purpose whatsoever so long as people remain steeped in nationalism—and therefore consider it the highest virtue to work for "national interests," "national objects," and "national ideals."

It is utterly absurd to tell the Italians that they ought to subordinate their *national* objects in this war to some common Allied object, be it that of "defeating German military aggression" or anything else. The Italians have nothing against "German military aggression," and cannot therefore have any such "common" object with the other Allied nations. The Italian Government has for a generation past been closely associated with what we have since the war been wont to call "German militarism." It may or may not have approved of all of its ambitions and contemplated aggressions. But it certainly saw nothing morally wrong in them, until they crossed the path of its own "national objects," which, according to all accepted canons of national morality, are the highest good. In this connection it is well to remember that Italy remained quite unmoved by Germany's "aggressions" in Belgium, Northern France and elsewhere. She remained a calm, cool and calculating

observer for nearly a year after Belgium was invaded. And when she decided to enter the conflict, *it was not against Germany, but against Austria, her "national" foe*. If Italy could help it she would today be at war with Austria only, maintaining friendly relations with Germany, all of the latter's "aggressions" notwithstanding.

And what is true of Italy is true of all other countries. Italy simply being in the unfortunate situation of furnishing an object-lesson of "the true inwardness" of all "national objects." The form which these *objects* take may be different in the case of different nations—due to the different conditions under which they are placed—but their *real* character remains the same so long as they remain *national*. Should we, of this country, therefore, be inclined to assume superior airs toward Italy and attempt to lecture her for not subordinating her "national objects" to the so-called "common object" of the Allies—that of "defeating German military aggression"—she might turn the tables on us and retort *tu quoque*.

"Since when—Italy could say to us—had the defeat of 'German military aggression' become a 'common object' of yourself and the Allies? When the most striking—and *now* to you the most shocking—manifestation of German military aggression, the invasion of Belgium, took place, *you* remained calm and unaffected, even as I. Nay, more so: *You remained neutral in thought*, while I only remained neutral in deed. And it took you much longer than it took me to make up your mind that 'Germany's military aggressions' ought to be resisted. Now, I am not holding it up against you, I am only reminding you of it. We both looked with more or less equanimity—you with more than I—when Belgium was invaded, because that particular act of 'German military aggression' did not affect *our national interests*. Both of us stayed out of the war as long as *those* sacred interests dictated that policy. You stayed out longer, because your *national interests* remained longer unaffected by 'German military aggression.' That accursed thing has finally hit us both, and we are now fighting in common. But remember: For both of us 'the defeat of German military aggression'