

An Anglo-Sicilian Gentleman Interventionist Pamphlet at the Outbreak of the Great War*

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Abstract: *Joseph Isaac Spadafora Whitaker (Palermo 1850) was the heir of the wealthy merchant Whitaker-Ingham family, with British origin but established in Sicily. He was a renowned ornithologist, botanist, philanthropist and archaeologist. His wife, Tina Scalia, was the daughter of General Alfonso (who should have to land in Sicily with Garibaldi) exiled in England, whose house, Whyndam Place, was the refuge of the Italian patriots, as well as the meeting place of many protagonists of the Risorgimento.*

This cultural affiliation influenced Joseph Whitaker in order to write a short work, published in Palermo in 1914, focused on Great Britain, Germany and Italy role at the outbreak of the First World War.

Italy formally announced a policy of neutrality on 2 August, 1914. According with the guidance of what he still felt as his mother-country, he opposed with all his strength pacifist propaganda. He stated that to remain neutralists would be betray the spirit that had animated the men of the Risorgimento. He thought that pacifists were doing any effort in order to hinder the work of the Government and to spread discord and distrust in the country. He also urged not to be afraid of the war because Italy was founded on solid parliamentary basis, with a Sovereign faithful to its commitments and obligations provided for in the Constitution.

In his opinion, Italy was favorable to the cause of freedom and could have an opportunity to claim its territories (Italy Trieste, Istria, Zara and Dalmatia), all Austrian possessions. He was confident that the Italian Government would have soon taken the right decision. In effect, Prime Minister Antonio Salandra together with his Foreign Minister, Baron Sonnino, would play a leading part in Italy's decision for war.

Keywords: *First World War, Joseph Whitaker, Italian Neutrality, Triple Alliance, Italian Parliament Positions in 1914*

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