

Italian Socialists in a Parliament of War: the Crisis of the Party during the 24 Legislature (27 November 1913 – 29 September 1919)

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Abstract: *The Socialist Group in the Italian Chamber of Deputies during the First World War, held firmly in the hands of the reformist minority (Filippo Turati, Claudio Treves and the review “Critica sociale”), was soon to address the diversity of views on neutralism that emerged inside the Party since the summer of 1914. The compromise formula, “Neither support nor sabotage”, created by the Socialist Direction aftermath of Italian involvement in the conflict (May 1915) did not allow to recover the ideological unity within the Party but exposed the parliamentary group to the attacks of the political forces that were supporting for the decision to go to war. To follow the path of Italian socialism in Parliament during the war must be scanned two other steps that marked it deeply: the debate following the defeat of Caporetto (October 1917), in which the Socialist Party became the object of profound attacks on the defeatism that would have sown among the troops; the debate during the season of deep crisis and prerevolutionary period that the conflict had opened in Italy (after November 1918). These three events were crucial for a party riven by deep internal divisions and lack of a clear political ideology, weakened by heavy external aggressions; nonetheless it remained, even in a Parliament increasingly limited in its powers by the war policies of the Government, the bulwark of the prerogatives of representative institutions.*

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