

**FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE
QUADRUPLE
ALLIANCE; WHY
ITALY WENT TO WAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649190331

From the Triple to the Quadruple Alliance; why Italy went to war by E. J. Dillon

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

E. J. DILLON

**FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE
QUADRUPLE
ALLIANCE; WHY
ITALY WENT TO WAR**



BARON SYDNEY SONNINO.

FROM THE TRIPLE
TO THE QUADRUPLE
ALLIANCE

WHY ITALY WENT TO WAR

By
DR. E. J. DILLON

PUBLISHED FOR
"The Daily Telegraph" BY
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

MCMXV-

II 520
17 115

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, which is very faint and difficult to decipher.

1
2

TO
KATHLEEN M. DILLON
THESE PAGES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

365105

FOREWORD

ITALY'S active participation in the war was the work of the nation, not of the Government. Had the decision been left to the Parliament, to the acknowledged leaders of the people, to the Cabinet or even to all three combined, it must have fallen out differently. Neither Professor Salandra nor Baron Sonnino would have gone back to office after their defeat by Signor Giolitti in May. The Dictator, or else a lieutenant of his choice, would have been entrusted with the reins of power by the King who in this matter had always displayed a meticulous respect for constitutional forms, and Austria's belated offers would have been accepted by the Consulta. But the nation, wroth with the representatives who had misrepresented it, wrested from them for a moment the powers it had bestowed and reversed their decision.

It was the act of a moment. Its effect was to impart direction to policy, not to prescribe ways and means. Wrought to white heat by the strange behaviour of its official spokesmen the Italian people rose up in its millions, disowned them and imposed its own will on the Cabinet.

Previous to this, conversations had been carried on between the Consulta and the Ballplatz on the subject of certain claims to which Italy deemed herself entitled in virtue of the Triple Alliance. Baron Sonnino, therefore, relied upon the Triple Alliance for the success of his plea and the continuity of Italy's policy and was minded, he frankly said, to restore fresh vigour to that compact if Italy received the benefits it conferred upon her. That was the ground taken up by the distinguished Foreign Secretary and his colleagues. His chief, the Premier, approving this view launched the phrase "sacred egotism" which was to have consecrated and popularized it. But it failed to catch on.

The Ministers who looked upon themselves as temporary trustees of the community, liable to be called upon to render an account of their stewardship, held that they were not free to substitute generosity for the furtherance of national interests. But the nation took a different stand. It devised a policy which would mark its kinship with the progressive peoples of the world, its sympathy for the victims of Teuton frightfulness and its resolve to link its own immediate interests with those of the Powers which were fighting against the lust of domination.

Having thus uttered its fiat the nation abandoned to its official representatives the work of translating it into acts of policy and war. And the Cabinet with a painful sense of responsibility, conscious that it is still but a trustee, has since¹ been carrying out the will of the people with the most scrupulous care for national interests. Thus it declared war against Austria-Hungary, whose obstinacy had broken up the Triple Alliance, but not against Germany, who had done her utmost to uphold that alliance. Italy's relations, political and economical, with Germany whom she has for a generation considered and treated as a sort of benevolent guardian, are seemingly only suspended. Money is still freely and openly passing between the two countries via Switzerland. To those Italians who petitioned their Government to forbid the payment of debts to Germans and Austrians during the war, the Premier and the Cabinet turned a deaf ear. The Banca Commerciale has made some changes in its staff but none that connote a change in its policy. And it seems quite possible that whatever developments the war may bring forth Italy's moral support will go with us into Turkey, Asia Minor, and wherever else we are fighting the enemy while her military assistance will probably continue to make itself felt along the Austrian frontier. For the Italian General Staff holds that that is her wisest course.

¹ Written on the 6th September, 1915.