

# Nuova Rivista Storica

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## Abstracts

MARINA CATTARUZZA, *Quel giorno a Ginevra. Le occasioni mancate della monarchia asburgica, 1917-1918*

*Between November 1917 and March 1918, the Central Empires and their allies gained a provisional military superiority over the Entente and the United States of America: Germany and Austria-Hungary took advantage of Bolshevik Russia retreating from the conflict while the Italian army suffered defeat at Caporetto. Moreover, the United States still needed to follow up its declaration of war of April 1917 with facts. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George assessed the military situation in the Entente as very serious and considered a victory for his side highly unlikely. Thus, he promoted negotiations for a separate peace with Austria-Hungary to weaken the enemy front. The United Kingdom attached great importance to such pourparlers; the South African general Jan Smuts, who belonged to the enormously influential and numerically restricted war cabinet, was chosen as British envoy. Two crucial (although scarcely known) editions of sources allow the essay to reconstruct in detail for the first time the consultations that occurred in Geneva in December 1917 between Jan Smuts and the Austro-Hungarian emissary, Count Mensdorff. Although the two negotiators did not reach an agreement, the talks favoured the formulation of peace conditions for Austria-Hungary and the German Reich by Lloyd George and US President Woodrow Wilson. The proposals considered the military strength of the adversaries, so they were adequately moderate. However, in the end, such diplomatic endeavours failed. The fiasco was due primarily to miscalculations by the Central Powers, the deflagration of the «Sixtus scandal», and Italy's turn to support the separatist forces in the Habsburg empire. Therefore, a process was set in motion that finally led to the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy just a few months later.*

Keywords:

*World War I*

*Peace negotiations between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*

*Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*