

1919-1920. I TRATTATI DI PACE E L'EUROPA

15 - 16 novembre 2018

Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti

William MULLIGAN, University College Dublin

Lloyd George and the Peace

Abstract

Welsh wizard or principled radical? Lloyd George remains one of the most controversial figures in 20th century British and international politics. Loathed by some contemporaries as a cynical, power hungry character, others idolised him and praised his achievements in implementing radical Liberal reforms and leading Britain to victory in 1918. His role in negotiating the peace settlements continues to divide historians today. This paper will examine Lloyd George's efforts to establish a new international order in the wake of the First World War. It will examine his war aims, particularly his speech at Caxton Hall on 5 January 1918, his negotiating strategy at Paris in the first half of 1919, and finally his subsequent attempts to stabilise European politics until his fall from power in 1922. The paper locates Lloyd George's thinking within the context of British liberal internationalism and asks not whether his ideals were fully realised, but whether his policies fatally undermined the post-war possibilities for peace or whether he put in place practices and institutions, which enabled European politics to achieve some degree of stability by the mid-1920s.