

The perception of the Balkan wars and of the general threat of war among Trieste socialists

Sabine Rutar

For many Trieste socialists, the outbreak of World War I and the course it took precipitated an existential crisis. The lives of several leaders of the socialist movement in the city changed dramatically as a result of the collapse of Austria-Hungary – they left the city, lost their identity and/or political convictions, became radicalised or responded to the outbreak of war with illness or even suicide. The Trieste shipyards built warships, so the (shipyard and dock) workers experienced the preparations for war at first hand. The paper aims to reflect the atmosphere of foreboding which dominated discourses in the socialist milieu before and during the Balkan wars. It discusses the Trieste socialists' visions for peace and the future, which were directed above all against the effects of nationalism that were omnipresent in the multi-ethnic city.