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«TECNICA» O «POLITICA»? UFFICI E COMMISSIONI NEL PARLAMENTO DELL'ITALIA LIBERALE

«Expertise» or «Politics»? The Offices and Committees in the Italian Liberal Parliament

The essay discusses the role of the Parliament in liberal Italy by focusing on the internal struggle between offices and committees, which reflects the conflict between the «atomistic» liberal conception of representation and the new one embodied by the parties. The Senate considered offices ill-suited to recognize the value of «skills» and competence. On the contrary, the Chamber found them incapable of expressing the «political distinction» between majority and minority. Yet, the attempts of the Senate to work through committees and the ones of the Chamber to establish the so-called «Comitato privato» did not succeed. Only in 1920 (and only in the lower Chamber), Committees will replace Chambers, carrying however with them not just the technocratic principle of competence but also the political one that derived from being appointed by the parliamentary groups. Yet, the clear rupture between the mass party and the old liberal world will render their existence precarious and short-lived.

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