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# The daily battles of Antonio de Viti de Marco\*

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses the economist Antonio de Viti de Marco's collaboration with the daily press, in relation to his scientific work and in the context of early twentieth century Italy. It brings out De Viti's proposals for free trade and fiscal policies intended to support the development of the southern regions of Italy, as well as his critical attitude towards the public sector and its decision making processes. It also highlights his political activities and commitment, an important aspect of his achievement, yet all but unknown outside Italy.

**Keywords:** Antonio de Viti de Marco, history of economics, Italian marginalism, daily newspapers, economic policies

**J.E.L. Classification:** B1, B31, D72, F13, H3, R11

## 1. Introduction

De Viti de Marco is too well known in political, historical and economic literature for any biographical background, however brief, to be called for here; we refer the reader to other sources<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical information on De Viti de Marco can be found in L. Einaudi, *Prefazione in Principi di economia finanziaria*, Torino, Einaudi, 1934; E. Rossi, *A. de Viti de Marco uomo civile*, Bari, Laterza, 1948; G. Salvemini, *De Viti de Marco*. Ricordo di Gaetano Salvemini, *La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, 12 September 1948; U. Zanotti-Bianco, Antonio de Viti de Marco, *Nuova Antologia*, March 1962, pp. 337-354 (reprinted in *Meridione e meridionalisti*, Roma, Collezione Meridionale editrice, 1964, pp. 329-335). See also A. Cardini and R. Faucci, *De Viti de Marco, Antonio*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991, vol. 39, pp. 584-588 and M. Mosca, *Antonio de Viti de Marco*, in V. Negri Zamagni and P.L. Porta (eds.), *Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero, Economia*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2012, pp. 574-578. On his childhood and adolescence, see E. Chirilli, *Tuzzo. Preistoria e protostoria di Antonio de Viti de Marco*, edited by M. Mosca, G. Malinconico e G. Malinconico, Bari, Cacucci, 2010. On his economic theory see G. Dehove, *L'oeuvre financière de A. De Viti de Marco*, *Revue d'économie politique*, 1946, n. 4; the essays collected in E. D'Albergo (ed.), *Scritti in memoria di Antonio de Viti de Marco*, Bari, Cacucci, 1972 and in A. Pedone (ed.), *Antonio de Viti de Marco: tra liberismo economico e democrazia liberale*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1995; cf. also among others O. Kayaalp, *Antonio de Viti de Marco*, in F. Meacci (ed.), *Italian Economists of the 20th Century*, Cheltenham-Northampton, Elgar, 1998, pp. 95-113; A. Fossati, Needs, The principle of minimum means, and public goods in De Viti de Marco, *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 28, n. 4, 2006, pp. 427-438; G. Eusepi and R.E. Wagner, Tax Prices in a Democratic Polity: The Continuing Relevance of Antonio De Viti de Marco, *History of Political Economy*, Spring 2013, pp. 99-121, forthcoming. On his political thought see L. Gangemi, *Anteguerra e dopoguerra nel pensiero di Antonio de Viti de Marco*, Napoli, Morano, 1945; A. Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco. La democrazia incompiuta*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1985;

This article will deal with a subject yet to be explored: his collaboration with daily newspapers in relation to his scientific work and political commitment, in the context of early twentieth century Italy, an era which has gone down in history as the golden age of the press<sup>2</sup>.

Much of De Viti de Marco's work was published in reviews he himself founded, directed and financed at various times. For example, it is well known that he played a fundamental role from 1890 to 1912 in the rebirth of the *Giornale degli economisti*, for which he wrote the *Cronache* (*Chronicles*) from 1897 to 1899<sup>3</sup>; from 1911 to 1913 he invariably published articles in *Il Popolo*, a democratic weekly of his electoral constituency of Gallipoli<sup>4</sup>; in 1911 he began his collaboration with G. Salvemini's *L'Unità*, in which he wrote regularly from 1914 to 1920, while from 1916 to 1918 he shared its direction. Maybe it is precisely because these platforms were so easily available to him, and because he felt he had to support them, that not many of his articles were published in the daily papers. This hypothesis finds confirmation if we look at the period of his collaboration with the latter: though it extends through a quite lengthy stretch of time (from 1897 to 1922), it is mainly concentrated in the years 1901-1911, i.e. in the interval between the end of his regular writing of the *Cronache* in the *Giornale degli economisti*, and the beginning of his weekly articles for *Il Popolo* and then to *L'Unità*. He is then a frequent contributor, but not mainly for the daily papers.

The starting point for this study is around a hundred or so pieces published in various daily newspapers. They are articles and letters De Viti sent to the papers, interviews, information (referring to articles of his published elsewhere, to conferences he took part in as a speaker, to speeches he made in his electoral constituency or on other occasions, etc). Then there are the accounts of his work in Parliament, in the commissions and the parliamentary groups in which the economist, as House Member, took part. The articles, the letters and the interviews are primary sources of great importance, and will be analyzed in detail, not merely to enrich our knowledge of his thought, but also to discover how a politically committed scholar like De Viti approached and made use of the daily press. The remaining journalistic pieces, on the other hand, are based on

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A.L. Denitto, *Introduzione* in A. De Viti de Marco, *Mezzogiorno e democrazia liberale*, edited by A.L. Denitto, Bari, Palomar, 2008. On his contribution to the history of economic thought cf. M. Mosca, De Viti de Marco, Historian of Economic Analysis, in *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, XII, 2005, n.2, pp. 241-259. An overall evaluation can be found in M. Mosca (ed.), *Antonio de Viti de Marco: una storia degna di memoria*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> R. Brizzi (*Mass media e politica: dal telegrafo a internet*, in S. Cavazza and P. Pombeni (eds.), *Introduzione alla storia contemporanea*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2006, ed. 2012, pp. 179-183) recalls that between 1850 and 1915 - before the revolution brought about by the radio - the press had an absolute monopoly in the transmission of information, and that during the first world war it remained the main propaganda weapon.

<sup>3</sup> De Viti de Marco acquired and directed the *Giornale degli economisti*, together with Pantaleoni, Mazzola and then Pareto. His involvement was such that the editorial office of the *Giornale* was in his own home, as was *L'Unità's* later (Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco. La democrazia incompiuta*, cit., p. 286). Pantaleoni wrote as follows to Colajanni about the *Giornale degli economisti*: "De Viti set up a kind of cooperative ... Well, I have to admit his system worked a miracle" (letter of 16 April 1897, in S. M. Ganci, *Democrazia e socialismo in Italia: carteggi di Napoleone Colajanni 1878-1898*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1959, p. 329).

<sup>4</sup> Gallipoly is a small town in Apulia. As well as articles on specific subjects, for *Il Popolo* he writes a column called *La settimana politica* (*The political week*).

material already published elsewhere, or comment on interventions not originally intended for the papers; rather than critically examine their content, these materials will be used as sources to interpret, this time, the use the papers themselves made of the figure of De Viti de Marco.

On the economist from Salento<sup>5</sup> there is an excellent bibliography<sup>6</sup>, the fruit of meticulous and impressive work by his principal biographer<sup>7</sup>; it has always been, and continues to be, the only reliable and absolutely indispensable point of reference for his scholars<sup>8</sup>. Inevitably, given the thoroughness of our scrutiny of the newspapers basic to this study, numerous articles have emerged which may now complete that already wide ranging bibliography; it is quite obvious that only a study like this one, aiming precisely at the systematic examination of the daily press, could provide the occasion to dig them out<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. Articles and letters

Since many of the articles and letters of De Viti de Marco published in the newspapers are examined here for the first time, we provide a detailed account, but at the same time we have tried to be as concise as possible.

The first letter is of 1897, to *Avanti!*<sup>10</sup>. By that time the economist, already the author of two important books<sup>11</sup>, had been teaching in Rome for ten years; in addition to the *Giornale degli economisti* (for which he had been writing exclusively<sup>12</sup> since 1890), he was directing the Economic Liberal Association<sup>13</sup> together with Pantaleoni, and was himself aiming to go into politics<sup>14</sup>. This letter is actually in defense of Pantaleoni, who, because the latter had accepted a transfer to Geneva University, had been accused of having abandoned the struggle for free trade. De Viti recalls important episodes in which his “colleague and friend” had distinguished himself for his courageous dedication to improving society<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Salento is a geographical region in the south-eastern extremity of Italy, administratively belonging to Apulia, where De Viti was born.

<sup>6</sup> A. Cardini, Guida bibliografica agli scritti di Antonio de Viti de Marco, in A. Pedone (ed.), *Antonio de Viti de Marco: tra liberismo economico e democrazia liberale*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1995, pp. 237-308.

<sup>7</sup> A. Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta, 1858-1943*, cit.

<sup>8</sup> We have also drawn heavily on this bibliography in these pages.

<sup>9</sup> Those articles in the daily papers contained in Cardini's bibliography will be indicated in our footnotes, including the number he provides for them.

<sup>10</sup> Ancora di Maffeo Pantaleoni. Una lettera del prof. de Viti de Marco, *Avanti!*, 8 November 1897 (Cardini n. 50).

<sup>11</sup> *Moneta e prezzi*, Città di Castello, Lapi, 1885 and *Il carattere teorico dell'economia finanziaria*, Roma, Pasqualucci, 1888; with the latter he founds the pure theory of public finance.

<sup>12</sup> Except, of course, for his books.

<sup>13</sup> See L. Michellini, *Il movimento antiprotezionistico di fine Ottocento: l'Associazione per la libertà economica e l'Associazione economica liberale*, in M.M. Augello and M.E.L. Guidi (eds.) *Associazionismo economico e diffusione dell'economia politica nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, vol. II: *Dalle società economico-agrarie alle associazioni di economisti*, Milano, Angeli, 2000, pp. 405-433.

<sup>14</sup> De Viti tried to get elected in the elections of 1897, but was defeated by Nicola Vischi, a follower of Crispi.

<sup>15</sup> De Viti's letter seemed too weak to Pareto (V. Pareto, *Lettere a Maffeo Pantaleoni*, edited by G. De Rosa, Roma, BNL, 1960, vol. II, p. 118, letter of 11 November 1897). The role of the daily press in this story is reconstructed by I. Magnani,

With as many as five articles in 1901, two in *Corriere di Napoli*<sup>16</sup> and three in *Il Mattino*, De Viti wishes “to call the attention of the southern Italian public” to crucial aspects of trade policy<sup>17</sup>. His anti-protectionist position had been widely known for ten years by this time<sup>18</sup>; in one of these articles<sup>19</sup> he warns the southern population of the blandishments represented by the offer of agricultural credit<sup>20</sup> formulated by Luigi Luzzatti in the course of his trip to Apulia, explaining that an offer of this kind in actual fact concealed his intention not to renew the international trade treaties<sup>21</sup>. De Viti had at various times polemically attacked Luzzatti<sup>22</sup>, the author of the protectionist custom duty of 1887 held responsible for having stifled exporting southern agriculturalists like himself<sup>23</sup>. Criticising the orientation of *La Tribuna*, he explains that an increase in the Italian industrial duty, decided upon as a reprisal for an increase in Germany’s agricultural duty, would be entirely to the advantage of the industrialists, and entirely to the disadvantage of “we agriculturalists”: it would lead in fact to a rise in prices of industrial products and reduce the price of agricultural products<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, on addressing an entrepreneur from his own area, De Viti in a letter to *La Provincia di Lecce* explains that the interests of the South are not to be pursued by protecting agricultural products through customs duties<sup>25</sup>. An article of 1903 in *Il Mattino*<sup>26</sup> reveals his extraordinary technical competence over landed property (land registry, predial, the criteria of calculation of landed income), acquired in the field, thanks to his business activities as a landowner and a producer of wine.

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*Dibattito tra economisti italiani di fine Ottocento*, Milano, Angeli, 2003, pp. 191-192, n. 54. Pantaleoni will do everything possible not to leave, but then remains in Geneva for three years.

<sup>16</sup> Alleanze politiche e trattati di commercio, *Corriere di Napoli*, 24 February 1901 (Cardini n. 88), and Trattati di commercio e interessi agricoli, *Corriere di Napoli*, 5 March 1901 (Cardini n. 89).

<sup>17</sup> La guerra di tariffe e gli interessi agricoli del Mezzogiorno, *Il Mattino*, 27-28 August 1901 (Cardini n. 92).

<sup>18</sup> The reference here is to the first articles appearing in the *Giornale degli economisti* in 1891, of criticism towards Italian customs policy, which had become protectionist.

<sup>19</sup> Storia retrospettiva, *Il Mattino*, 13-14 May 1901 (Cardini n. 91).

<sup>20</sup> To this subject De Viti will often return, see also Le illusioni del credito agricolo, *Il Mattino*, 29-30 October 1902 (Cardini n. 108).

<sup>21</sup> In 1929 he will write of having unmasked in this article “the aims proposed by ... Luzzatti in his *tournee* in Apulia” of 1901 (A. de Viti de Marco, La questione meridionale, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, Roma, Collezione meridionale, 1930, p. 33). The running of agrarian credit in the South of Italy was entrusted from that year on to the Bank of Naples.

<sup>22</sup> Starting from Proroga o corso forzoso?, *Giornale degli economisti*, 1891. In 1902 he expressed the hope that Luzzatti would follow a different policy for future international trade treaties (Sintomi evidenti, *La Provincia di Lecce*, 9 February 1902 - Cardini n.95).

<sup>23</sup> De Viti de Marco produced and exported wine: he had inherited an estate (I Veli) near Brindisi, which he transformed into an avant-garde wine producing company (see Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., pp. 163-164). Images of this, as of other places where he lived, can be seen in the documentary *Antonio de Viti de Marco: A Story Worth Remembering* (web address: <http://www.dsems.unisalento.it/devitidemarco/index-E.html>).

<sup>24</sup> La guerra di tariffe e gli interessi agricoli del Mezzogiorno, *Il Mattino*, 27-28 August 1901 (Cardini n. 92).

<sup>25</sup> Alcolizzazione dei vini e protezione degli olii. Lettera al Sig. Luigi Capozza, *La Provincia di Lecce*, 8 January 1905 (Cardini, n. 135).

<sup>26</sup> Errori e danni, *Il Mattino*, 20-21 January 1903 (Cardini n. 111), in reply to an article of De Johannis in *La Tribuna* which denied there was a crisis in landed property (A. De Johannis, Vi è una crisi della proprietà fondiaria?, *La Tribuna*, 18 January 1903).

In December 1901 De Viti de Marco was elected House Member for the Gallipoli constituency<sup>27</sup>; he joined the group of radicals for whom he had passionately and publicly hoped for a program “of bold liberal reforms”<sup>28</sup>. A letter to *Avanti!*<sup>29</sup> of 1902 offers him the opportunity to express his liberal position on the subject of strikes and agrarian agitation<sup>30</sup>. It is a most interesting letter, setting out the following hopes: maximum freedom to organise and struggle for the two sides, maximum neutrality of the state in the conflict, minimum intervention of the latter, but tutelage of law and order. His idea that in practice the government tends to be a organ that takes sides emerges clearly here, an idea characteristic of him, as an anticipator of the theory of public choices<sup>31</sup>: a solution of conflicts of an economic nature via politics – he writes – compromises the ideal neutrality of the state, which should remain extraneous.

With the aim that will always be characteristic of him, of not restricting the range of his political battles merely to a regional environment, in a brief letter of 1903 to *Il Secolo* De Viti asks the “democratic press of Milan”<sup>32</sup> to take an analogous position to the appeals of *Il Mattino* of Naples, and declare itself clearly in favor of the international trade treaties, against the policy of tax relief, of agrarian credit and public works, which in his opinion represented a mistaken route towards the development of Italy’s South, and Italy as a whole. This vision leads him to reach an agreement with the socialists<sup>33</sup> in their rejection of customs policies based on the threat of reprisals, and in 1904 he sends a letter to *Avanti!*<sup>34</sup> explaining that beneath these maneuvers were once again concealed the “desire to not make concessions on industrial duties”; he thus invokes “the eagle eye of the press on watching the negotiations” and to “warn the public – this poor *corpus vile* on which new and painful experiments are being prepared by the *positivists of industrial protectionism* – which is attempting today to predispose the South of Italy to favor a policy of reprisals”. This packed quotation allows us to grasp significant aspects of De Viti’s political, economic and cultural orientation<sup>35</sup>. As we shall be seeing, a month later the first anti-protectionist League will be

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<sup>27</sup> The election occurred in the by-election of 22 December 1901, caused by the raising of his predecessor and rival Nicola Vischi to the Senate.

<sup>28</sup> Il neo partito radicale nel paese, *Il Mattino*, 29-30 November 1901 (Cardini n. 93). As is well known, De Viti was the leading spirit of the free trade wing of the radical party, as opposed to the social radicalism tendency. See G. Orsina, *Anticlericalismo e democrazia: storia del Partito radicale in Italia e a Roma, 1901-1914*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Dalle nuvole alla realtà, *Avanti!*, 20 February 1902.

<sup>30</sup> The occasion was the agitation of 1902, the year the Federation of agricultural labourers was born.

<sup>31</sup> This paternity is recognised in the first place by the founder of public choice, J.M. Buchanan. See the interview in *Antonio de Viti de Marco: una storia degna di memoria*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2011, pp. 109-114, as well as in the already mentioned documentary (<http://www.dsems.unisalento.it/devitidemarco/index-E.html>).

<sup>32</sup> Nord e Sud *Il Secolo*, 18 November 1903.

<sup>33</sup> This agreement is stigmatized by its adversaries who associate together “socialisti e deviteschi”, meaning socialists and free traders. In defense of the free trade policies of the socialists see E. L. (Enrico Leone), *Liberismo e socialismo (polemichetta con N. Colajanni)*, *Avanti!*, 2 February 1904.

<sup>34</sup> A proposito di trattati, *Avanti!*, 4 February 1904 (Cardini n. 129).

<sup>35</sup> The characteristic density of De Viti’s prose has often been noticed (see for example R. Faucci, *De Viti de Marco, Antonio*, cit., pp. 584-588).

founded<sup>36</sup>, the fruit of an agreement between socialists and free traders; and at the end of the year De Viti will see his election as House Member reconfirmed.

The economic issue always came first: it always has to clearly prevail over that other basic belief uniting the Italian radicals, i.e. anticlericalism; De Viti asserts this in a letter to *La Provincia di Lecce*, on the eve of the anticlerical demonstration in Rome of February 1907<sup>37</sup>. However, it is not only economics that the newspapers have to deal with, for through them he also wishes to mobilize and educate for active political involvement: in 1910 he uses *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>38</sup> to make public a letter he received in which the Luzzatti government is accused of not having sent any of the promised cisterns by rail to the province of Lecce during the grape harvest. In addition to exposing this fact, the article also serves to explain to the Salento dealers that in general they err in turning *privately* to their House Members, and he encourages them to act *publicly* if they wish to save the wine trade and the Apulia vineyards.

Two articles appearing in *Il Giornale d'Italia* in 1911<sup>39</sup> touch on an inflammable subject of the moment, the state monopoly of insurance<sup>40</sup>: De Viti, after speaking in the House on it in the course of a heated discussion<sup>41</sup>, intervenes at the height of the battle together with other illustrious adversaries of the project<sup>42</sup>, strenuously opposing what in his opinion is none other than a pact between Giolitti<sup>43</sup> and the socialists to extend the role of the state in the economy<sup>44</sup>; he warns his readers about the damage which will be done to the state budget, without moreover resolving the problem of the “great mass of poor workers, who will have to pay for workers’ pensions fatally reduced to the benefit of the lesser number”. In the second article, rather than entering into the merits of the problem, he concentrates on the negative repercussions for the South of Italy: he explains that the prohibition for Italians to insure themselves abroad raises the threat of reprisals

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<sup>36</sup> In section 4 we shall be illustrating the circumstances of the foundation of this League.

<sup>37</sup> La manifestazione anticlericale del 17 febbraio. Una lettera dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *La Provincia di Lecce*, 10 February 1907 (Cardini, n. 149). On the diverse positions within the radical party on the subject of anticlericalism as a political reason for differentiation see Orsina, *Anticlericalismo e democrazia*, cit., ch. iv, and also S.W. Halperin, “Italian Anticlericalism”, *The Journal of Modern History*, 19, n.1, 1947, who refers to De Viti de Marco on p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Le ferrovie e il commercio pugliese, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 3 November 1910.

<sup>39</sup> L'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 2 July 1911; Il Mezzogiorno pagherà le spese di guerra del Monopolio delle assicurazioni-vita, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 8 July 1911. The latter was also published in the form of a letter in *La Stampa* (L'intervento straniero secondo l'on. De Viti de Marco, *La Stampa*, 8 July 1911).

<sup>40</sup> The bill established that the profits of a new state insurance institution (later INA), would serve to finance the *National Insurance Fund* for disability and old age of the workers (law of 4 April 1912). In actual fact it was not forbidden for private companies to practice, even if they were considerably reduced in numbers. See the disappointing results ten years after the law was passed, in L. Livi, *Lo spirito di previdenza e il monopolio delle assicurazioni sulla vita*, Trieste, Libreria editrice C.U. Trani, 1922.

<sup>41</sup> We shall see this in section 5.

<sup>42</sup> In the paper De Viti's brief article is placed below a much longer article of Pareto on the same subject (Pareto spiega alla buona gente chi farà le spese del Monopolio, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 2 July 1911).

<sup>43</sup> Giovanni Giolitti was the Italian Prime Minister five times between 1892 and 1921.

<sup>44</sup> The following note of Cardini's (*Storia del liberismo: Stato e mercato dal liberalismo alla democrazia*, Napoli-Roma, Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2009, p. 105) refers to the 1880s, but is valid also for the period examined here: “Around the issue of accidents and insurance liberal economic culture consolidated, based on the authority of the state rather than individual initiatives, and acted in support of legislation to define state intervention”.

by foreign companies, threats which will translate into custom duties against Italian agrarian exports (mainly from the South), and foresees that the industrialists (from the North) will respond with duties on foreign manufactures. This will lead to the South of Italy suffering from damage twice over, both in exporting agricultural products and in importing machinery and other goods necessary for agricultural production. His target is the House Member Angiolo Cabrini, who he calls “official economist of the socialist confraternity”.

As may be seen, his relationship with the Socialists is always punctuated with subtle distinctions, reservations, and criticisms; it is unsurprising that in the end there is a break with them: *Il Secolo* is the platform De Viti chooses, after an electoral defeat<sup>45</sup>, to send between 1913 and 1914 some indignant letters<sup>46</sup> against the accusation his socialist adversary Stanislao Senape De Pace<sup>47</sup> brings against him, of having made a pact with the clergy; he denies every charge and challenges the Socialist Party leaders to exhibit their evidence. The evidence consists of a letter of a bishop inviting the Catholics to vote for De Viti, a letter which as we shall be seeing *Avanti!* will publish<sup>48</sup>. Obviously, his denial is categorical: with a telegram to the paper he exhibits one piece of evidence after another to prove his innocence<sup>49</sup>; as one may imagine, the mouthpiece of the party which was by now his adversary comments by leaving one suspended in some doubt, and to this we shall be returning<sup>50</sup>. Accusations of another kind will be made again in 1916: De Viti replies to some malevolent questions asked by *Avanti!*<sup>51</sup>, writing in the faithful *Il Secolo*<sup>52</sup>. One contains insinuations on his relationship with Giolitti, but he answers curtly: “I am always independent, to continue the campaign against the Teutonic, sugar, iron and steel, banking and electoral corruption of old and new adepts of Giolittism”. With the other one, he is accused of having defended the interests of the Apulia Aqueduct Company; he replies that he has never defended a private firm, but only the aqueduct itself, and emphasizes: “The Sacchi Law<sup>53</sup>, which was the crowning achievement of my first campaign, *allows us today* to defend the interests of the state and

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<sup>45</sup> De Viti was defeated in the general election of 1913, but as we shall see he was re-elected in the by-election of 1915.

<sup>46</sup> L'on. De Viti de Marco e le accuse dell'on. Senape, *Il Secolo*, 14 December 1913. L'on. De Viti e il caso Senape, *Il Secolo*, 10 January 1914. There follows another brief letter sent on 15 January 1914 both to the director of *Avanti!*, and to the *Il Secolo*, with which he asks his adversary to formulate “accusations in such a way as not to evade libel action and public discussion”.

<sup>47</sup> The socialist Senape De Pace had been defeated by De Viti in the four previous elections, winning in November 1913, but then, dying in March 1915, he had again left the seat to the radical candidate.

<sup>48</sup> The bishop’s letter is published in the article: Un “gentilonizzato” a metà è l’on. De Viti de Marco, *Avanti!*, 7 March 1914; We will return to it in section 4.

<sup>49</sup> De Viti e il vescovo di Nardò, *Avanti!*, 9 March 1914.

<sup>50</sup> De Viti will clear up the whole affair in La mia storia del patto Gentiloni, *L’Unità*, III, n.11, 13 March 1914, p. 477.

<sup>51</sup> We shall be examining these articles in section 4.

<sup>52</sup> L’on. De Viti De Marco a certe insinuazioni, *Il Secolo*, 1 February 1916.

<sup>53</sup> With the Law of 13 April 1911 the deadline for the completion of the Apulia aqueduct by the contracted firm was shortened.



of the people". He returns to this same subject with two letters to *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>54</sup>, and with an article on *La vita italiana all'estero*<sup>55</sup>; we shall be coming back to this, too.

Besides the question of the presumed agreement with the Catholics, 1914 is also the year of the real recovery of free trade<sup>56</sup>: De Viti in *Il Secolo* spurs on the radical party to take a clear anti-protectionist position<sup>57</sup>; in a meticulous analysis he explains why the predominant political issue relates to custom duties: on the one hand the mass of the people have understood that it is a source of privileges, on the other it represents the only question that could create the hoped-for division between the parties in Parliament, necessary to avoid cross-party alliances based on convenience<sup>58</sup>. He criticizes the socialist idea that the interest of the workers coincides with that of the protected industries, and hopes the radicals will as a matter of urgency distance themselves from these erroneous positions. He recalls that the horizons of the radicals are not restricted to the defense of the interests of an individual class; they must work so that through free trade is realized on the one hand the maximum productivity of capital and labor, and on the other the lesser price of products, to the advantage of consumers, in other words every citizen. These are years in which, also thanks to the activities of De Viti, the free trade line is reconfirmed within the radical party<sup>59</sup>.

The penultimate letter, sent to *Corriere della sera*<sup>60</sup> and to *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>61</sup> on 23 April 1921, is a very important one for the reconstruction of his life because it concerns his definitive withdrawal from politics. In 1919, as president of the parliamentary commission for electoral reform, he had presented the bill for a system of proportional representation<sup>62</sup>, and yet so soon afterwards he was declaring he no longer wished to stand for re-election: he explains that Giolitti had vetoed the inclusion in the electoral lists of another democratic candidate of Salento, the republican Antonio Vallone. De Viti decided he didn't want to go it alone: his reason is that the landed bourgeoisie of Lecce wanted from the government a policy against the peasants, and

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<sup>54</sup> L'on. De Viti de Marco risponde all'"Avanti!", *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 31 January 1916, and L'on. De Viti de Marco replica a F. Ciccotti, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 4 February 1916.

<sup>55</sup> La nuova convenzione per l'acquedotto pugliese, *La vita italiana all'estero*, IV, vol. VII, n. XLII, June 1916, pp. 497-515.

<sup>56</sup> As will be seen in the next sections, in 1914 the first Congress of the new anti-protectionist League will be held.

<sup>57</sup> La questione "politica" predominante è quella doganale. Il partito radicale dovrebbe far sua la piattaforma antiprotezionista, *Il Secolo*, 31 January 1914.

<sup>58</sup> We should remember that during the radical congress of 1914 the decision was taken, by a majority vote, to leave Giolitti's fourth government.

<sup>59</sup> G. Orsina (*Anticlericalismo e democrazia*, cit., p. 228) recalls that the free trade radical wing re-emerged in the party precisely in 1913, coagulating around the subject of free trade the charge of industrial parasitism and corruption of the Giolitti government.

<sup>60</sup> L'astensione dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Corriere della sera*, 23 April 1921.

<sup>61</sup> Il rifiuto dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 23 April 1921.

<sup>62</sup> His thinking on the proportional voting system, of which he was the promoter, is to be found in A. de Viti de Marco, *La riforma elettorale, Problemi italiani*, 1(1922), vol. 1, n. 19, pp. 341-356.

without Vallone's help he judged it to be impossible to balance the conservative elements with those for democracy. So he withdraws<sup>63</sup>.

His last two contributions are again significant: the first one is a letter of 17 March 1922 to *Il Sole* and signed "A. de Viti de Marco. Wine producer"<sup>64</sup>. It is the passionate outpouring of a man who has decided to withdraw from public life; it deals with cream of tartar, in other words a tartaric acid present in grapes – and obviously is something he produces – which is exported to England. De Viti denounces the fact that there is a plan to place custom duties on the export of raw tartaric material to keep the demand low (and hence the price) in order to protect Italian industry, which uses it. This is the umpteenth time he censures the behavior of Italian industrialists: he criticizes them for being incapable of exploiting a national raw material, pointing out that the English are able to pay higher prices and also have to find the transport costs. In addition, he explains that the Italian firms interested in the cream of tartar represent only a very small fraction in relation to the capital invested in wine production, and that in a regime of competition the English demand and that of the rest of the world would support the price of the cream of tartar. He reminds people once again that the customs duties force southern agriculturists to buy Italian machinery of poor quality at very high prices; finally, he notes bitterly that it is enough that a small Italian company shows an interest in reducing the price of a raw material for its export to be obstructed. The second piece is a long article dealing with the tax on agricultural profits<sup>65</sup>. As always with him, the various dimensions of his existence overlap: this article – like the previous one – of course contains references to his position of landowner and businessman farmer, but at the same time the analytical style of the treatment recalls without a shadow of doubt his treatise on public finance, on which he was then working<sup>66</sup>.

Some years later De Viti will remember the early post-war years as the "frightful period of complete anarchy" the country went through, with the almost complete disappearance of the state and with "phenomena typical of civil war"; Fascism, a regime "anti-liberal and antidemocratic",

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<sup>63</sup> This episode requires some explanation. De Viti in this letter refers to the elections of 1919 (he writes about it in detail in *Discorso dell'on. Antonio de Viti de Marco, 19 aprile 1925. Antonio Vallone*, Galatina, Tip. Marra & Lanzi, 1925, pp. 12-13; partial reprint in A. de Viti de Marco, *Mezzogiorno e democrazia liberale*, edited by A.L. Denitto, Bari, Palomar, 2008). M. Romano (*Storia di una famiglia borghese. I Vallone di Galatina*, Milano, Angeli, 2003, pp. 208-211) explains that, after the veto from Giolitti, Vallone and De Viti were both elected in an alternative list of candidates. So De Viti in this letter announces his decision not to run again for the elections of 1921, citing an episode that occurred before the elections of 1919. Romano also tells of the pressures De Viti brought to bear on Vallone so that, in the elections of May 1921, he would adhere to the national block which went from Giolitti to Mussolini; but Vallone rejected this, winning his seat in a list of independent candidates. The deeper political reasons for De Viti's withdrawal are to be found in a manuscript of his cited in Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco. La democrazia incompiuta*, cit., pp. 345-346: in the violent confrontation between conservatives and socialists, by then becoming a question of law and order, he saw no further room for a third party, liberal and democratic.

<sup>64</sup> La questione del cremore grezzo all'esportazione, *Il Sole*, 17 March 1922.

<sup>65</sup> L'imposta sui profitti agricoli, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 31 December 1922.

<sup>66</sup> De Viti's treatise was for many years circulated in the form of lithographed lecture notes; then in 1923 it was printed in a limited edition, finally being published in 1928, and then later reprinted in various revised editions.

had in the meantime “overwhelmed” his group, which for thirty years had fruitlessly stood for its opposite: “the defense and consolidation of the liberal and democratic state”<sup>67</sup>.

### 3. Interviewing the expert

De Viti’s interviews are also an important source of information on his position in the political panorama of his time, because they indicate what he was held to be expert in; they, too, are studied here mostly for the first time. It will be seen that, despite the recurrence of certain subjects, the interviews reflect a much greater variety than his articles: but although he always answers competently and with precision, on many an occasion he will lead the argument back to his free trade orientation.

With the interviews, for example, the journalists may wish to concentrate on his opinion on Italy’s active involvement in Tripolitania<sup>68</sup>: he states in reply that he is in favor, not of the military intervention, but of an industrial and commercial expansion of Italy there (of capital, labor and products); he thus hopes that international agreements reserve that area to Italian influence. He nevertheless has doubts about the success of the expansion, because of the usual ills afflicting the country: high taxes, unproductive spending and industrial protectionism. He points out, however, that if the intervention succeeds, the Italian colony at Tripoli would be agricultural, and would enter into competition with southern Italian production; in this he finds a further reason to recommend that the government should not put itself forward as a “military entrepreneur”, but ensure new outlets for Italian agricultural products through free trade policies<sup>69</sup>. In 1905 *Avanti!*, in an interview at “the home of an illustrious friend of ours”, asks De Viti to shed light on the planned International Chamber of Agriculturalists, fearing an organization in defense of capitalist interests; he, as a wine producing entrepreneur, denies this, and encourages the socialists to strengthen the peasant leagues and to continue the anti-protectionist battle, also thanks to the help from this new organization<sup>70</sup>.

The variety of subjects dealt with in the interviews is clear from the questions he’s asked; one, for example, concerns a parliamentary bill for which he was the mover more than a year before on the contribution of the Treasury to the Congregation of Charity of Rome<sup>71</sup>. The *Corriere*

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<sup>67</sup> A. de Viti de Marco, *Al lettore*, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. v-ix.

<sup>68</sup> A proposito di Tripoli, Occupazione militare o espansione commerciale, *Il Sole*, 27 April 1902 (Cardini n. 100).

<sup>69</sup> De Viti writes further on the necessity and the dangers of the occupation of Libya in a series of articles for *Il Popolo* in 1911 and 1912.

<sup>70</sup> L’Istituto agricolo internazionale, *Avanti!*, 13 February 1905 (signed Paolo Sgarbi) (Cardini n. 137).

<sup>71</sup> Schiarimenti del deputato radicale on. De Viti de Marco, *Corriere della sera*, 20 January 1908. The law for the payment of a yearly instalment from the state coffers to the Congregation of Charity of Rome had been approved on 22 December 1906 (it then became law on 10 February 1907 n, 25).

*della sera* journalist asks him whether it is true, as some maintain<sup>72</sup>, that with this law the state has gifted millions to the Vatican; De Viti explains that the opposite is true: the state had saved a large amount of money, and at the same time the Vatican had enjoyed a little political success<sup>73</sup>. *La Stampa* will ask him about a scandal involving the Ministry of Education, and he says he is definitely in favor of a parliamentary enquiry<sup>74</sup>. Perhaps in his role of southern economist, after the earthquake in Calabria of 1905, *Avanti!* invites him to explain his thinking on the Italian “southern question” which, in the opinion of the journalist, “for two decades has been debated without resolving anything”<sup>75</sup>: it is an opportunity for De Viti to express the hope in vigorous terms that there will be a reduction in tax revenues and in public spending, though he is aware of the political resistance reform of this kind would meet. Again because of an earthquake, the one of December 1908, *Il Giornale d'Italia* asks De Viti for an exact estimate of the economic damage of the disaster<sup>76</sup>; this is a long and interesting interview, in which he gives his reaction to the losses suffered and on the absolute need to rebuild the two damaged cities<sup>77</sup>, even having recourse to public expenditure. The interview offers him a further opportunity to denounce the dead weight of the bureaucratic apparatus<sup>78</sup>, and to attribute responsibility to the Socialist Party. In another interview<sup>79</sup>, this time perhaps requested because he was a radical (and hence presumably a freemason<sup>80</sup>), De Viti repeats his belief to *La Stampa* that all occult powers (whether secular or ecclesiastical) which pursue their own specific interests are to be condemned; in addition, he states that it is possible to be patriotic even if one is a convinced internationalist, as are the freemasons, the Church, the socialists, and also liberal economists.

The up and down relationship with the socialists that we have met with already emerges from many of his interviews as well. For example, the questions of *Avanti!* of 1902 on the issue of

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<sup>72</sup> The question had been raised by the republican Eugenio Chiesa in the review *La Ragione*, organ of the National Association of Free Thinking “Giordano Bruno”.

<sup>73</sup> De Viti argued that the economic success of the state consisted in having paid the Vatican a sum, once and for all, less than was owed, whereas the political success of the Vatican consisted in not having to collect a payment from the state every year, thus avoiding “implicitly carrying out an act of recognition of the state itself”.

<sup>74</sup> L’inchiesta sulla Minerva deve essere parlamentare?, *La Stampa*, 15 March 1908. The Minerva Square was the headquarters of the Ministry of Education: the minister Nunzio Nasi was charged with embezzlement, and found guilty. See also Il caso Nasi, *Il Popolo*, III, n. 50, 9 March 1913, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> La questione meridionale e la riforma tributaria, *Avanti!*, 16 October 1905 (Cardini n. 140). The author of the article, Paolo Sgarbi, again declares he is a “personal friend” of De Viti.

<sup>76</sup> Interessante dibattito sui danni economici del terremoto. Intervista con l’on. De Viti de Marco (signed Vico Pellizzari), *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 30 January 1909 (Cardini n. 158).

<sup>77</sup> The two cities are Messina and Reggio Calabria.

<sup>78</sup> In 1925 he will say of himself: “I consider every nationalization as bureaucratization, and I abhor it, preferring private enterprise” (*Discorso dell’on. Antonio de Viti de Marco, 19 aprile 1925. Antonio Vallone, cit., p. 19*).

<sup>79</sup> L’inchiesta sulla massoneria, *La Stampa*, 1 August 1913. The occasion was the enquiry launched by the then weekly *L’idea nazionale* (II, n. 31, 31 July 1913).

<sup>80</sup> According to the list of Orsina (*Anticlericalismo e democrazia, cit., pp. 267-272*) most of the Roman radicals belonged to the freemasons. But about De Viti, the author can find nothing to confirm his membership.

the conversion of rent<sup>81</sup> provide him with the chance to reaffirm his opposition to public works financed by the debt and taxes: in his opinion works like these achieve a redistributive policy which allows the state to keep a part of the resources for itself, and to follow political criteria for the sharing of those left. He explains that the policy of public works is in point of fact harmful to the working classes, and points out that the socialists, too, have often given their support to this argument. The journalist, however, who presents the interview, dissociates himself from De Viti's opinions on public works, although sharing his criticism of unproductive public expenditure. The subject comes up again in a debate in *Il Secolo*<sup>82</sup>, as also in another long interview in *Avanti!*<sup>83</sup>, which this time agrees with De Viti on the "need not to separate the tax reform from the reduction of unproductive expenditure". The economist bases this opinion more on political and legislative evaluations than economic ones: he asserts in fact that the ruling class would never accept a tax reform with the same tax burden, and that therefore to carry it out there would have to be budget surpluses. To create these surpluses he suggests reducing the unproductive expenditure, and to carry out tax relief for the lower classes. The interview also provides him with an opportunity to examine the economic program of the Radical Party, whose congress had been held shortly before<sup>84</sup>; he hopes the radicals will commit themselves to "combating every form of class legislation" and to defending not labor, capital or the land, but all the citizens, in that they are all taxpayers and consumers. On the issue of the railways, and in general on municipalizations, De Viti took a technical stance, desirous of evaluating its suitability case by case<sup>85</sup>, whereas in the custom duties policy he finds "the real bone of contention between North and South" of Italy, saying he is sure the Radical Party will take an anti-protectionist position<sup>86</sup>. In March 1906, after the serious disorders in Apulia<sup>87</sup>, *La Stampa*<sup>88</sup> and *La Tribuna*<sup>89</sup> ask De Viti, as House Member for those areas, to express his opinion both on their origins, and on the reaction of the forces of law and order. Even if it is unsurprising to find a free-trader invoke the neutrality of the government,

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<sup>81</sup> Le spese improduttive. Opinioni dei deputati meridionali (signed Vito Lefemine), *Avanti!*, 4 October 1902. De Viti declared himself in favor, if the conversion was freely made and not compulsory or forced.

<sup>82</sup> A. Loria, A. De Viti de Marco, Come impiegare gli utili della conversione, *Il Secolo*, 23 August 1906 (Cardini n. 147).

<sup>83</sup> Un programma radicale-liberista. Le spese improduttive e la riforma tributaria. Intervista coll'on. De Viti de Marco, *Avanti!*, 10 June 1904 (Cardini n. 130).

<sup>84</sup> The founding congress of the Radical Party was held in Rome from 27 to 30 May 1904.

<sup>85</sup> It should be remembered that in 1890 De Viti, with a scientific article, had intervened on the similar question of the state running of the telephone industry (A. de Viti de Marco, L'industria dei telefoni e l'esercizio di Stato, *Giornale degli economisti*, September 1890, pp. 279-306).

<sup>86</sup> He also deals briefly with the question of political freedoms, and declares himself in favor of the maximum extension of the right to vote, including the illiterate and women. It should be recalled that De Viti's wife (Harriet Lathrop Dunham, of New York) in March 1906 was among those who signed the petition presented to Parliament by the women's national committee for universal suffrage (see Camera dei Deputati, *Il voto alle donne. Le donne dall'elettorato alla partecipazione politica*, Roma, Camera dei deputati, [1965], p. 113).

<sup>87</sup> The agitations of the workers and peasants had involved many towns of Apulia. See D. D'Alterio, *La capitale dell'azione diretta*, Trento, Tangram, 2011, pp. 485 ff. and M. R. Pascali, *Il vento del Sud* (3), *Mezzogiorno e movimento contadino*, in *Sudpuglia*, 1988, n. 1, pp. 73-80.

<sup>88</sup> I giudizi di un deputato dei luoghi, *La Stampa*, 26 March 1906.

<sup>89</sup> I conflitti di lavoro nel leccese, *La Tribuna*, 26 March 1906.

and request the latter to take “truly conciliatory action to reconcile the opposing sides”, his answer is pretty cool: the caution he shows probably reflects his position as landowner and agricultural entrepreneur. In 1910 he says to *La Tribuna* that he will not support the government<sup>90</sup>; then, concerning the northern Italian agitation over threshing machines, *Il Giornale d'Italia* publishes a statement of his<sup>91</sup> that the supply of machinery should occur according to the rules of competition, and that the state must not guarantee their exclusive use to the cooperatives of agricultural laborers. Again, concerning the well known burning topic of the state monopoly of insurance, interviewed by *Corriere della sera* in 1911 he showed strong disagreement with Nitti's project<sup>92</sup>, calling it “an act of violent expropriation without compensation ... an act of absolutism, of socialist tyranny”<sup>93</sup>. He uses a similar tone in the interview he gives on the same subject to the Rome Catholic daily *Corriere d'Italia*<sup>94</sup>.

In 1914, not many months after the elections which had left him temporarily outside Parliament, De Viti in a long interview for *Il Giornale d'Italia* firmly denied inferences about his electoral agreement with the clergy<sup>95</sup>: one proof of this, among others, is his vote against the teaching of religion in state schools. 1914 is also the year of the local elections with the success in Naples of the popular bloc; *La Stampa* asks him for a comment on these electoral results<sup>96</sup>, and in his reply we get an excellent insight into his democratic beliefs, and his expectations regarding a turnover in the political classes thanks to the recent introduction of male universal suffrage<sup>97</sup>; he released similar comments to *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>98</sup>. Another interview with the re-elected House Member was published both in *Il Secolo* and in *La Stampa* in 1915<sup>99</sup>. It starts from an inquiry by *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>100</sup> and concerns the provisions of the Italian government which, at the end of January 1915, faced with the grain crisis, finally abolishes the customs duties of 1887. The situation of serious shortages induces a free-trader like De Viti to recommend the prohibition of grain

<sup>90</sup> L'on. De Viti de Marco. Un radicale contrario al ministero, *La Tribuna*, 25 November 1910 (Cardini n. 164). It should be remembered that certain radicals did in fact enter the Luzzatti government.

<sup>91</sup> Il giudizio dell'on. De Viti de Marco sulle cose di Romagna *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 27 December 1910. The interview is in actual fact taken from the review *La libertà economica*.

<sup>92</sup> Francesco Saverio Nitti was an Italian economist and a statesman. Unlike De Viti de Marco, Nitti took an interventionist view for the development of the southern regions of Italy.

<sup>93</sup> Dicerie di crisi pel monopolio delle assicurazioni, *Corriere della sera*, 8 June 1911. The subject is taken up again in a brief interview in *Il Giornale d'Italia* of 5 July 1911.

<sup>94</sup> Le enormità del progetto Nitti, *Corriere d'Italia*, 8 June 1911 (Cardini n. 174).

<sup>95</sup> I sillogismi socialisti-cattolici nell'elezione di Gallipoli, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 23 January 1914 (Cardini n. 262).

<sup>96</sup> Cause ed effetti delle vittorie bloccarde, *La Stampa*, 16 July 1914.

<sup>97</sup> The law was approved on 30 June 1912 (nn. 665-666). It was one of the battles the radicals could not fail to try to deliver on; see the evidence of De Viti de Marco himself in a speech to the electors in 1919, when he states he voted for Giolitti in a vote of confidence only because he had promised universal suffrage (De Viti de Marco, *Discorso agli elettori*, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., p. 381).

<sup>98</sup> Gli on. De Cesare, Garofalo, Carafa d'Andria, d'Andrea, Gualtieri e De Viti de Marco discutono sulla sconfitta liberale di Napoli, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 16 July 1914.

<sup>99</sup> La crisi granaria. Il parere dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Secolo*, 3 febbraio 1915; L'opinione dell'on. De Viti de Marco sulla questione granaria. “Lo Stato sovvenna i compratori poveri”, *La Stampa*, 3 February 1915.

<sup>100</sup> The title of the enquiry was “67 milioni di quintali di grano in meno nel mondo. I giudizi di Pantaleoni e di De Viti de Marco sulla crisi”. The article is headlined: Quel che dice l'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia* 3 February 1915.

exports and their derivatives; he breaks away from his principles, recommending a state subsidy to the poorest for the purchase of grain<sup>101</sup>. The last interview is about the length of the war<sup>102</sup>; his opinion is that the war will last a long time, because this will be necessary to beat a strong enemy like Austria; but he is convinced that the “free nations of Europe” are stronger than the Central Empires, and will thwart the “dream of hegemony” of the latter<sup>103</sup>.

#### 4. When De Viti is news

This part offers a different perspective from the two previous ones: here the articles appearing in the daily press are examined to highlight the times De Viti de Marco makes news, and to study the newspapers’ attitude towards him.

One first group of articles refers to something he wrote which was much appreciated by the press, and published in the *Giornale degli economisti*<sup>104</sup>, where De Viti provides an acute and well argued explanation of the disorders in Milan of May 1898, and of the previous peasant agitations in the South of Italy. Briefly De Viti attributes the economic unrest to the unproductive investments made by the state, and the insurrections to the demand for further public works: if for their economic demands the organized workers do not turn to the capitalists, but to the state, this is because the latter has massively intervened in the place of the private sector. Anti-militarists (both republicans and clerics), separatists, and southerners impoverished by industrial protectionism, are all exasperated by the very serious tax burden and by waste in the public sector; the political struggle is taking place in the countryside and in the cities because Parliament in actual fact does not represent the interests of the taxpayer. To remedy these disorders it is a mistake to place limitations on political freedoms; the answer is the battle against protectionism and political wheeling and dealing, which reduces wealth: less state, more decentralization, less taxes, less customs duties and a tax sharing that at long last no longer damages the poorer classes<sup>105</sup>. *La Tribuna*<sup>106</sup> praises the diagnosis of the “Manchesterian” De Viti, but criticizes the remedies: political freedom will not be obtained by decentralization, free trade does not have

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<sup>101</sup> His recommendation that there should be a “absolute prohibition by law and in fact of grain exports, of pasta, and every other surrogate of the people’s diet” has quite an effect on reading it now, as do questions like: “the state, is it ready to pay a part of the price to poor purchasers?” (Quel che dice l’on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d’Italia* 3 February 1915).

<sup>102</sup> Quando finirà la guerra? *Il Secolo*, 7 August 1915. The article reports an inquiry of the newspaper *New York American*.

<sup>103</sup> On these subjects see De Viti de Marco, *La guerra europea: scritti e discorsi*, Roma, Edizioni dell’Unità, 1918. In this book De Viti interprets the Italian intervention in the war as an affirmation of the values of democracy.

<sup>104</sup> Le recenti sommosse in Italia. Cause e riforme, *Giornale degli economisti*, s. II, vol. XVI, June 1898, pp. 517-546, reprinted as *Dopo i tumulti di Milano*, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 239-268.

<sup>105</sup> The thesis of Cardini (*Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., p. 93), who considers this article a manifesto of a new liberal program, has been criticized by P. Favilli (*Riformismo alla prova ieri e oggi*, Milano, Angeli, 2009, p. 81), who finds nothing new in De Viti’s tax proposals. But the great impression this article made, which we can see from the examination of the daily press, would seem to give substance to Cardini’s suggestion.

<sup>106</sup> La parola agli economisti, *La Tribuna*, 9 June 1898.

justice at heart; the newspaper agrees on reducing public expenditure and taxes, but estimates that the economic and institutional reform put forward by the *Giornale degli economisti* is too extreme and may cause worse revolts, whereas it hopes for a central state power strong and authoritative. *Avanti!* recalls this piece of his on three occasions, no less<sup>107</sup>: the socialist daily shares the assertion of the “conservative” De Viti that the subversive parties had no responsibility for the disorders, and that “the masses ... in tumult ... demand as individuals not to be stripped of everything either by the state, or the municipality, or by protectionism, or by the speculators, or by politicians, or by parasites; and they don’t want to be further bothered by the *political* persecution of the police, or to witness the magistrates’ *political* tolerance towards private sector thieves and public sector big thieves, who run around the country unpunished”<sup>108</sup>. *Avanti!* returns to the text concerning its defense of the interests of the consumers and taxpayers, and again reiterates the paper’s perfect agreement with the economist’s analysis. In 1899, it is again *Avanti!* that publishes “the relevant excerpts of an article which the courageous economist prof. De Viti de Marco will publish in the next number of the *Giornale degli economisti*”<sup>109</sup> against the limitation of the freedom of the press; the journalist traces a link between the bourgeoisie “modern in spirit and truly liberal” and the socialists, both of them insulted by the corruption and political bullying<sup>110</sup>.

Two years after the publication of a rather perplexed piece on his first candidature<sup>111</sup>, when De Viti had already attained some renown with the article just cited, and with the appearance of two new books<sup>112</sup>, the radical daily *Il Secolo* devotes a good deal of space to the 1901 by-election, which he won<sup>113</sup>. The democratic historian Guglielmo Ferrero, the author of the article, supports him with conviction, recalling the decade-long struggle of De Viti against corruption<sup>114</sup>, and against reactionary politics in general; he explains the importance of the role played by the *Giornale degli economisti* in urging on public opinion, and in its vigilant watch over Italian politics; finally, he hopes that De Viti, together with Pantaleoni, will succeed in forming an authoritative and combative group in Parliament<sup>115</sup>. Then a speech in Lecce in January 1903<sup>116</sup> provoked considerable

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<sup>107</sup> Alcuni conservatori presbiteri, *Avanti!*, 14 June 1898; Le parole e le opere, *Avanti!*, 9 July 1898; L’impotenza delle nostre classi dirigenti, *Avanti!*, 10 March 1899 (Cardini n. 78).

<sup>108</sup> Dopo i tumulti di Milano, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 257-258.

<sup>109</sup> Il Parlamento contro la libertà di stampa, *Giornale degli economisti*, s. II, vol. XVIII, March 1899, pp. 260-278, reprinted in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 299-316.

<sup>110</sup> La voce della borghesia, *Avanti!*, 1 March 1899 (Cardini, n. 77).

<sup>111</sup> *La Tribuna* of 5 March 1897 asks itself who this professor is, who is setting out on a an electoral fiasco, as in effect we have seen will happen.

<sup>112</sup> *Saggi di economia e finanza*, Roma, *Giornale degli economisti*, 1898 and *La funzione della banca*, Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei, s. V, vol. VIII, n. I, 1898, pp. 7-38 (revised version Torino, Einaudi, 1934).

<sup>113</sup> Per una candidatura, *Il Secolo*, 16 December 1901 (signed Guglielmo Ferrero). We recall that the constituency had remained vacant on 21 November 1901 for the appointment to the Senate of the previous Member Nicola Vischi.

<sup>114</sup> In particular he refers to the role he played in the scandal of the Banca Romana and in the bank turnaround, on which see Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., pp. 52-53.

<sup>115</sup> Pantaleoni had entered Parliament in the elections of 1901. See P. Bini, *Maffeo Pantaleoni*, in V. Negri Zamagni and P.L. Porta (eds.) *Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero, Economia*, cit., pp. 680-686. On the radical liberalism of Pantaleoni



comment; it was an occasion for De Viti to place his ideas in a southern perspective, to help shape a current of opinion and a centre of political action for the defense of southern interests<sup>117</sup>. He repeats that he is against the policy of public works, and hopes for decentralization and tax relief, denouncing the inequality of taxation that damages the South of Italy. He explains that the only way to get capital to flow into southern agricultural production would be an increase in the land's productivity, and for this he believed it to be important to let open markets freely set prices, both of agricultural products for export, and manufactures to be imported. He denounces the mistaken policies of the Italian government, recommending on the contrary making concessions on custom duties to other countries to obtain analogous reductions from them. Finally, he insists on the colonial condition the northern industrialists kept the South in, so that southern agricultural products could be purchased cheaply, and their own industrial products sold to the South protected from foreign competition<sup>118</sup>. *La Tribuna* compared these concepts to the opposite ones of the senator Pasquale Villari, and declared itself to be in agreement with the former<sup>119</sup>. *Corriere della sera* reported the comparison made by *La Tribuna* without further comment<sup>120</sup>, whereas the conservative Milan daily *La Perseveranza*, accurately summing up De Viti's speech, observed the "crudeness of the form and tendency to be regionalistic" in addition to having "prejudices against the North"<sup>121</sup>. A similar stir was caused by a lecture given in Naples in April of the same year<sup>122</sup> on the invitation of the Association of the Landowners and Farmers and Democratic League for the Recovery of the South. On the eve of the negotiations for the renewal of the international trade treaties<sup>123</sup>, De Viti set out in greater detail than in the previous speech the history, the theory and the data regarding international exchanges. Referring explicitly to the existence of an Italian "southern question"<sup>124</sup> he recommended an autonomous reduction of customs duties by Italy; he concluded by showing to the exporting agriculturalists that their interests coincided with those of the consumers, and encouraged them to set up a free trade movement<sup>125</sup>. *Il Mattino*<sup>126</sup> gave an

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and De Viti see F. Felice, *Le libéralisme radical des premières années du Xxe siècle en Italie. Maffeo Pantaleoni – Antonio de Viti de Marco*, in Ph. Nemo and J. Petitot, *Histoire du libéralisme en Europe*, Paris, PUF, 2006, pp.619-650.

<sup>116</sup> Published in *La Provincia di Lecce*, VIII, 1903, n. 3; reprinted with the title *La questione meridionale* in *Per il Mezzogiorno e per la libertà commerciale*, cit., pp. 1-29 and then in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 7-38.

<sup>117</sup> The Lecce speech will be developed in the article *Trattati di commercio e interessi meridionali*, *Giornale degli economisti*, s. II, vol. 27, July 1903, pp. 15-43.

<sup>118</sup> This was the speech which gave rise to the polemic with Colajanni on policy for the South of Italy (see Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit. pp. 135 e 142).

<sup>119</sup> *La questione meridionale*, *La Tribuna*, 12 January 1903.

<sup>120</sup> *La questione meridionale. L'articolo di Villari e il discorso di un deputato*, *Corriere della sera*, 12 January 1903.

<sup>121</sup> *Un discorso dell'on. De Viti*, *La Perseveranza*, 14 January 1903.

<sup>122</sup> *Trattati di commercio e interessi meridionali*, published in *Giornale degli Economisti*, s.II, vol. XXVII, July 1903, pp. 15-43; reprinted as *La politica commerciale e gli interessi del Mezzogiorno*, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 39-78.

<sup>123</sup> The international trade treaties expired on 31 December 1903.

<sup>124</sup> For a recent analysis of the history of the debate on the Italian "southern question" see C. Perrotta and C. Sunna (eds.), *L'arretratezza del Mezzogiorno: le idee, l'economia, la storia*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2012.

<sup>125</sup> For the purpose of this study it is interesting to note that in the article appearing in the *Giornale degli economisti* De Viti is referring precisely to the debate with De Johannis published in *La Tribuna* and in *Il Mattino* in the previous January.

extensive, approving summary of this lecture: it praised the originality of De Viti's diagnosis, and the liberal changes he had recommended for Italy's trade policy.

On 27 March 1904, for the election campaign, De Viti held an inaugural public meeting in the hall of the Milan railwaymen<sup>127</sup>, the first of a series of initiatives arranged with *Avanti!*<sup>128</sup> in various cities to mobilize the workers against protectionism. Chaired by the Marginalist economist and socialist Giovanni Montemartini, the meeting announced the setting up of the Italian Anti-protectionist League<sup>129</sup>. *Il Secolo*<sup>130</sup> stressed the convergence of the struggle of individualist free traders and liberal socialists, based on the common interests of employees and consumers, against the protectionism that kept wages low and raised the price of goods. The account of the same discourse by the socialist paper<sup>131</sup>, on the other hand, emphasized the battle against parasitic protectionism, against industrialists' trusts and big landowners. A second political meeting held by De Viti in Turin on 15 May of the same year<sup>132</sup> was reported by *La Stampa* together with words of very great praise<sup>133</sup>; it highlighted the news of the entry of the proletariat into the battle against protectionism, which altered its former time-honored sectional character, transforming it into a movement of the defense of all employees and all consumers. Of this second meeting *Avanti!*<sup>134</sup> highlighted the danger that government concessions agreed with specific groups might paralyze the struggle for the general interest.

After these episodes of radicals and socialists in alliance, there is the progressive estrangement between the two parties which we have already noted: indeed, in the account of an electoral speech by De Viti in *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>135</sup> there is evidence of his criticisms of socialists and republicans after the revolts in Milan of September 1904<sup>136</sup>. This doesn't stop *Avanti!* in 1908 once more using an empirical study by De Viti of the damage caused by protectionism to the standard of living of the working class and the peasants, in two articles<sup>137</sup>. In fact, alarmed by the rising price of grain, the Socialist Party took up the battle against protection again with the argument that wages are to be defended also by safeguarding purchasing power: the policy of strikes therefore

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<sup>126</sup> Trattati di commercio e interessi meridionali, *Il Mattino*, 20-21 April 1903.

<sup>127</sup> *Il protezionismo e le classi lavoratrici*; the report on this political meeting appeared as 'La politica commerciale e gli interessi dei lavoratori', in *Giornale degli economisti*, s. II, vol. XXIX, luglio 1904, pp. 30-80, and then, together with two other lectures, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 79-131. See *infra* fn. 132.

<sup>128</sup> See the first note of the essay *La politica commerciale e l'interesse dei lavoratori*, cit., pp. 79-80.

<sup>129</sup> On the founding of this League see L. Tedesco, *L'alternativa liberista in Italia: crisi di fine secolo, antiprotezionismo e finanza democratica nei liberisti radicali (1898-1904)*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2002.

<sup>130</sup> Contro il protezionismo doganale, *Il Secolo*, 28 March 1904.

<sup>131</sup> L'inaugurazione della "Lega antiprotezionista" a Milano, *Avanti!*, 28 March 1904.

<sup>132</sup> *Gli interessi operai e l'agitazione antiprotezionista*, published together with the text indicated *supra*, fn. 127.

<sup>133</sup> La conferenza dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *La Stampa*, 16 May 1904.

<sup>134</sup> La lega antiprotezionista all'opera, *Avanti!*, 16 May 1904.

<sup>135</sup> L'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 6 November 1904.

<sup>136</sup> These are the revolts that followed the proclamation of the first national general strike by the left wing union of Milan.

<sup>137</sup> Contro il dazio sul grano, *Avanti!* 18 April 1908; Per la libertà del pane, *Avanti!* 28 October 1908.

had to be integrated with the struggle against the customs duties on grain<sup>138</sup>. And again, in 1912, still within the anti-protectionist struggle, *Avanti!* took up<sup>139</sup> an article by De Viti which had appeared in *Il Popolo*<sup>140</sup> where he attacked Giolitti's policy of massive support for industry and exploitation of southern agriculture, with special reference, this time, to the production of silk<sup>141</sup>.

Four articles in *Il Giornale d'Italia* report speeches of De Viti in his constituency of Gallipoli in the years 1909-10<sup>142</sup>. The first contains his program for foreign policy and public services; for the latter, he exposes the prevalence of specific interests, in the first place of the local and central state bureaucracy. The other three articles are on speeches to the Democratic Association of Gallipoli, where he criticizes the maritime agreements (considered "industrial parasitism" paid for by the taxpayer) and the proposals for tax reform, on which he reiterates his well known belief in favour of tax relief<sup>143</sup>. He asserts, moreover, that if the radicals (who had entered the Luzzatti government) voted the grants to the shipping firms, he would dissociate himself. There is also an interesting passage where he hopes the government will take upon itself the provision of some of the local authorities' expenditure for elementary education. A succinct news item in *La Stampa* in 1913 announces his defeat in the election in his Gallipoli constituency, beaten as we have seen earlier by his socialist adversary, Senape De Pace<sup>144</sup>.

1914 is the year he gets himself spoken about the most in the daily press. The first occasion is the radical congress. *Avanti!*, in its account of the work of the party that was preparing to vote against the fourth Giolitti government, tells of an item on the agenda proposed by De Viti, and then approved, asking that collaboration with other democratic parties be subordinate to the sharing of certain principles, among which anti-protectionism, the containment of military

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<sup>138</sup> Tedesco (*Il canto del cigno del liberoscambismo: la lega antiprotezionista e il suo primo convegno nazionale*, Manduria-Bari-Roma, Piero Lacaita Editore, pp. 11-12) recalls that it was precisely the increase in prices "the element that brought back the subject of customs duties back to the centre of the Italian political debate".

<sup>139</sup> All'ombra del protezionismo. Dagli zuccherieri ai setaioli, *Avanti!*, 4 July 1912. The article contains some criticisms of De Viti, to which we shall return.

<sup>140</sup> I provvedimenti per l'industria serica e per la gelsicoltura. Arrembaggio bancario a Nord; accattonaggio agricolo a Sud, *Il Popolo*, II, n.39, 30 June 1912, p.1.

<sup>141</sup> The silk industry was also the subject of other articles he had published in 1912 in *Il Popolo* and *L'Unità*.

<sup>142</sup> Il discorso dell'on. De Viti de Marco a Gallipoli, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 1 March 1909; Un fiero discorso dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 22 November 1909; Vivace attacco dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 24 November 1909; Il pensiero dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 4 April 1910. De Viti was re-elected in the elections of March 1909.

<sup>143</sup> As we have already had occasion to point out, De Viti's thinking is always very closely packed, and we reproduce it here to show that even in his interventions in the daily press he did not neglect to have recourse to theory: "The reform which is about to be spoken of in Italy can only consist of a more just sharing out of the tax burden, made up of tax relief rather than increase, given the enormous weight of the rates of direct taxation, and the high rates of indirect taxation, dedicating the budget surpluses to make up for the losses of the reductions in the indirect taxation of consumption, and making use of a completely general tax on income to compensate for the losses of the reduction of the present day rates of direct taxation" (Vivace attacco dell'on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 24 November 1909).

<sup>144</sup> De Viti de Marco sconfitto da un socialista nel collegio di Gallipoli, *La Stampa*, 11 November 1913.

spending and taxation, and the end of the “bureaucratic ministerial system”<sup>145</sup>. That same year, at the time of the above mentioned breach between radicals and socialists, *Avanti!* accuses him of being “the solitary radical in Rome and the conservative pro-Catholic in his constituency”, and congratulates itself on having liquidated him politically<sup>146</sup>. The proof of the paradoxical charge which we have already spoken of, that the ex-House Member, “atheist, protestant, and free thinker”, had the support of the Diocese in the 1913 elections, was published in the socialist paper<sup>147</sup>, but *Il Secolo* at once rejected every accusation, producing the content of the article De Viti wrote in *L’Unità*<sup>148</sup>, where he “provides the documentation on the entire history of this poisonous libel”<sup>149</sup>.

But the reason why 1914 saw such a great intensification of the news about De Viti de Marco in the daily press was the resurgence of the struggle against protectionism. In April there was a banquet in honor of Giretti<sup>150</sup>, a radical Parliamentarian and silk industrialist who *Il Secolo* will call “the apostle of the anti-protectionist movement”<sup>151</sup>; De Viti de Marco intervened to assert the principle of economic freedom and express the wish that the democratic parties would be united against neo-conservative coalitions<sup>152</sup>; in his turn, Giretti recalls he had taken up the anti-protectionist struggle 25 years before, precisely together with De Viti<sup>153</sup>. Then, on 21 May in Milan, took place with “the maximum possible clamor in every social class and every town”<sup>154</sup> the first National Conference of a rejuvenated Anti-protectionist League<sup>155</sup>, founded in Turin in 1913<sup>156</sup>. Its aim was to coordinate the efforts, also via the press, to involve all the democratic parties in a cross-party campaign<sup>157</sup>. De Viti de Marco, president of the Conference and of the League<sup>158</sup>, opened the

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<sup>145</sup> La tesi antiministeriale votata dal Congresso radicale, *Avanti!*, 3 February 1914. Orsina (*Anticlericalismo e democrazia*, cit., p. 252) argues that De Viti’s item on the agenda aimed to bind the Giolittian radicals to a precise program. See also A. de Viti de Marco, Congresso e programma radicale, *Nuova Antologia*, January-February 1914, pp. 697-700.

<sup>146</sup> Il caso De Viti, *Avanti!*, 13 January 1914.

<sup>147</sup> As we have seen, this is the letter of the bishop of Nardò, contained in the article: Un “gentilonizzato” a metà è l’on. De Viti de Marco, *Avanti!*, 7 March 1914.

<sup>148</sup> La mia storia del patto Gentiloni!, *L’Unità*, cit.

<sup>149</sup> L’on. De Viti dimostra l’insussistenza d’una calunnia elettorale, *Il Secolo*, 13 March 1914.

<sup>150</sup> In onore dell’on. Giretti per la lotta antiprotezionista, *Il Secolo*, 4 April 1914. Edoardo Giretti, from Piedmont, together with De Viti de Marco, was the leader of Italian anti-protectionism.

<sup>151</sup> La campagna antiprotezionista. Un Convegno Nazionale, *Il Secolo*, 14 May 1914.

<sup>152</sup> De Viti’s speech is entitled *Un’eco del banchetto di E. Giretti*, in *L’Unità*, III, n. 16, 17 April 1914, p. 498.

<sup>153</sup> In onore dell’on. Giretti per la lotta antiprotezionista, *Il Secolo*, 4 April 1914.

<sup>154</sup> Il Convegno antiprotezionista che si inaugurerà domani a Milano, *Il Secolo*, 20 May 1914.

<sup>155</sup> See Tedesco, *Il canto del cigno del liberoscambismo*, cit.

<sup>156</sup> La campagna antiprotezionista. Un Convegno Nazionale, *Il Secolo*, 14 May 1914.

<sup>157</sup> It should be noted that the conference sees “reunited for an ideal men of all parties ... conservatives like Luigi Einaudi beside republicans like Eugenio Chiesa, radicals like Edoardo Giretti and Antonio De Viti de Marco, and revolutionary socialists like Benito Mussolini ... independents like Gaetano Salvemini, Members of Parliament, university professors, industrialists, journalists”. Il Convegno antiprotezionista che si inaugurerà domani a Milano, *Il Secolo*, 20 May 1914.

<sup>158</sup> The board consisted of Luigi Einaudi, Edoardo Giretti and Eugenio Chiesa, the secretary Nicolò Fancello (see Tedesco, *Il canto del cigno del liberoscambismo*, cit., p. 11).

proceedings with a speech immediately reported by *Il Secolo*<sup>159</sup>. He is very pleased that such a broad democratic political movement of struggle against protectionism has been set up, supported by the lower classes; he denounces the perverse link between groups of industrial entrepreneurs and politics; reiterates that after thirty years of protectionism Italian industries should be able to go it alone without further assistance, but recommends just the same the setting up of insurance for workers' against the risk of resulting unemployment due to the reduction of customs duties. The speech is reported entire or in part by *Il Sole*<sup>160</sup>, *La Stampa*<sup>161</sup>, *Corriere della sera*<sup>162</sup>, *Avanti!*<sup>163</sup> and *Il Giornale d'Italia*<sup>164</sup>, all without comment. *Il Secolo*, like other dailies, also reports the concluding motion approved at the end of the Conference, clearly retracing De Viti de Marco's introductory remarks: a quotation from Cavour<sup>165</sup>, special attention to be paid to the interests of the lower classes, suppression of protectionism for the iron and steel, sugar and grain industries, and resistance to duty increases, assistance to resulting unemployed workers<sup>166</sup>.

In 1915, far from being liquidated, the economist makes news with his return to Parliament, having been re-elected after the death of his historical socialist adversary Senape De Pace<sup>167</sup>. Unsurprisingly, the tone of *Avanti!* is heavy-handed: there are allusions to his presumed local clientele and to the by now ancient polemic on the agreement with the Church, calling him "the radical who is enemy of divorce and friend to the sacristies"<sup>168</sup>. But while the socialist daily digs up old charges once again, *Il Giornale d'Italia* reports the unconditional support of the Radical Party<sup>169</sup>. *Il Secolo*, in its turn, celebrated the return of the House Member by reporting an electoral speech he had made on the difficult subject of the war<sup>170</sup>, where he had listed the material and ideal reasons which made the Italian intervention necessary, and explained the demands to be included in the

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<sup>159</sup> Il Primo Convegno Nazionale antiprotezionista, *Il Secolo*, 21 May 1914. The complete speech appeared with the title *Il problema doganale e l'attuale momento politico* su *L'Unità*, III, n. 26, 26 June 1914, pp. 536-540; and reprinted in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., pp. 165-198.

<sup>160</sup> Il Convegno antiprotezionista a Milano, *Il Sole*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>161</sup> Il convegno nazionale antiprotezionista, *La Stampa*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>162</sup> Scenziati, industriali e operai alla manifestazione antiprotezionista di Milano. La costituzione della Lega, *Corriere della sera*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>163</sup> Il Convegno antiprotezionista a Milano, *Avanti!*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>164</sup> Il Convegno antiprotezionista a Milano, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>165</sup> Cavour, one of the central figures for the unification of Italy, was the founder of the Italian Liberal Party. Cardini notes that the "citing of Cavour as the authentic but neglected source of Italian liberalism had been ... one of the fundamental inspirations behind the thinking of De Viti de Marco" (A. Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., p. 7). In the words of De Viti himself, Cavour was "the man ... who had the precise and integral vision of a liberal orientation in all its concrete expressions" (*Al lettore*, in *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., p. v).

<sup>166</sup> Il Primo Convegno Nazionale antiprotezionista. Il programma minimo per la propaganda immediata. *Il Secolo*, 22 May 1914.

<sup>167</sup> A short paragraph (entitled De Viti de Marco eletto a Gallipoli) gave the news in *Il Giornale d'Italia* of 23 March 1915.

<sup>168</sup> Nel collegio di Gallipoli ricompare De Viti de Marco, *Avanti!*, 14 March 1915. In actual fact De Viti was not against divorce, as he himself explains in *La mia storia del patto Gentiloni*, *L'Unità* III, n.11, 13 March 1914, p. 477. He had already dealt with the subject in 1902 in *La crisi del ministero e i liberali*, *Giornale degli economisti*, s. II, vol. 24, March 1902, pp. 185-197 (signed La Direzione).

<sup>169</sup> Il partito radicale e la situazione politica a Gallipoli, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 23 March 1915.

<sup>170</sup> Il ritorno di De Viti de Marco, *Il Secolo*, 23 March 1915. The electoral speech was published in *L'Unità*, IV, n. 12, 19 March 1915, pp. 645-646; and reprinted in *La guerra europea: scritti e discorsi*, cit., 1918, pp. 20-31.

future peace treaty. The speech was considered to be really courageous, provoking words of admiration from the newspaper. In addition, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, in its account of the great interventionist demonstration at Rome's university, tells of a De Viti "welcomed by frenetic applause and *evvivas*" in his denunciation of the conduct of Giolitti<sup>171</sup>.

But the polemic with *Avanti!* did not stop; in 1916 the Socialist Party paper launched the already mentioned further accusations<sup>172</sup>, and reiterated that the facts of their case were abundantly borne out by documentation<sup>173</sup>. In the meantime we are told that that same year De Viti is among the delegates in Paris, at the International Parliamentary Conference for Trade<sup>174</sup>, and later that he had taken part in a new anti-protectionist conference in Milan in October 1916, criticized by the socialists<sup>175</sup>, who in those months of war accused the bourgeois free traders of not battling with sufficient vigor against protectionism<sup>176</sup>. In 1917 De Viti appeared in the columns of *Corriere della sera* as speaker at the Congress of the Radical Party<sup>177</sup> on the subject "the party and the action of Italy in the war and in international politics"<sup>178</sup>: the subject of interventionism will mark the even deeper division between the socialist and radical positions<sup>179</sup>. The penultimate article, of 1920, explains that De Viti had detached himself from the parliamentary group called Rinnovamento (Renewal), to which he had adhered after the elections of 1919, because of internal divisions about foreign policy<sup>180</sup>. The last article, on the other hand, asks itself about the solidity of De Viti's electorate in the imminent elections, recognizing "a broad suffrage of respectful consideration, which cannot be disputed", but at the same time acutely noting "a complete exhaustion of his patience with the official pressures" of being in Parliament<sup>181</sup>; as we have seen, he will not run in the elections of 1921.

## 5. On the debates in the Lower House

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<sup>171</sup> Il messaggio di D'Annunzio agli studenti radunati all'Università, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 16 May 1915. As Giolitti supported neutrality, that same day the interventionist Antonio Salandra obtained his mandate from the King to govern.

<sup>172</sup> We note that one charge concerned his relationship with Giolitti, the other with the Apulia Aqueduct Company.

<sup>173</sup> Un probo impostore, *Avanti!*, 28 January 1916 and L'on. De Viti de Marco in fuga, *Avanti!*, 6 February 1916. *Il Giornale d'Italia* also took part in the *querelle* on 1 February 1916, publishing a letter entitled: Francesco Ciccotti risponde all'on. De Viti de Marco.

<sup>174</sup> La conferenza internazionale del commercio inaugura a Parigi i suoi lavori, *Il Secolo*, 28 April 1916.

<sup>175</sup> Contro la guerra economica, *Avanti!*, 17 October 1916. To judge from the articles about it, this conference of 8 October 1916 certainly did not make big news in times of military war.

<sup>176</sup> Contro il protezionismo, Il riassetto economico, *Avanti!*, 2 February 1917.

<sup>177</sup> Il Congresso radicale a Roma, *Corriere della sera*, 12 March 1917.

<sup>178</sup> La politica estera del partito radicale, published in *La guerra europea: scritti e discorsi*, cit. See also Il partito radicale e la guerra, *L'Unità*, IV, n.2, 8 January 1915, p. 608.

<sup>179</sup> On the various aspects of the split in Italy between interventionist and neutralist camps see S. Robson, *The First World War*, London-New York, 1998.

<sup>180</sup> Vivace discussione sulla politica estera al Congresso del Rinnovamento, *Corriere della sera*, 20 August 1920. See also his letter published in *L'Unità*, IX, n. 34, 19 August 1920, p. 139. The Rinnovamento parliamentary group had been set up in December 1919 to represent ex-combatants; in 1921 it fused with the radical group.

<sup>181</sup> La laboriosa formazione delle liste elettorali. Provincia - collegio di Lecce, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 14 April 1921.

In the accounts of the House reported in the press, the emphasis and the comment of the newspaper give us a clear understanding of the significance, the caliber and the widespread effect in the country of the speeches De Viti made in Parliament<sup>182</sup>. In 1901 we find his association with Pantaleoni<sup>183</sup>: the two economists are held up by *Avanti!*<sup>184</sup> as examples of “defenders of private property” who nevertheless, in the House, oppose the customs duties on grain together with the socialists. From 1902, the daily press frequently report his interventions in Parliament; his first speech was about the wine producing crisis<sup>185</sup>, and enables the paper to list the well known remedies he puts forward: no to public works, no to the intervention of the state in the form of land and agricultural credit, no to customs duty protection, yes to free trade for the export of agricultural products, yes to the revision of rail transport prices for the transport of goods from the South, yes to tax relief. A speech in the House in 1903 on railway agreements<sup>186</sup> was the occasion to make public the other basic side to his theory, which, as we have already noticed, inspired public choice: the state is the government, which in a parliamentary society is the expression and the outcome of specific groups, so that for this reason it is not necessarily the best defender of the public interest; private individuals may therefore serve the interest of consumers and taxpayers<sup>187</sup>. We notice in passing that if, on the one hand, he asserts that custom duties cannot be lowered without increasing taxes, on the other he demands the reduction of the former for cheap southern goods as compensation for the harmful policies that had gone before. *Corriere* comments: well thought out, substantial, and serious, De Viti de Marco’s speech. Likewise for the statements reported by *Il Mattino*<sup>188</sup> on the legislative, administrative and political errors made in forty years regarding the South of Italy: on the whole, in the conflict between agricultural exports and industrial protection the former is always sacrificed. Unsurprising the congratulations from the Naples daily, adding theirs to others received by the speech maker in the House.

The South of Italy is the subject of many other speeches of his, reported in the press between 1905 and the Great War. Some are political, like the firm attribution of responsibility to the Giolitti government of the tragic epilogue to the disturbances of Taurisano (a little town near

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<sup>182</sup> De Viti’s speeches in the House analyzed by Cardini (*De Viti de Marco in Parlamento*, in M.M. Augello and M.E.L. Guidi (eds.), *Gli economisti in Parlamento (1861-1922): una storia dell’economia politica dell’Italia liberale*, Milano, Angeli, vol. II, 2003, pp. 573-591) overlap only in part with those discussed in the press examined here.

<sup>183</sup> As is well known, the positions of the two economists will gradually move apart, although their deep friendship remained very much alive; see A. de Viti de Marco, Maffeo Pantaleoni, *Giornale degli economisti*, vol. LXVI, April 1925, pp. 165-177.

<sup>184</sup> Difensori dei proprietari non della proprietà, *Avanti!* 19 March 1901.

<sup>185</sup> La crisi vinicola, *Il Sole*, 7 May 1902; two days later there is news of a criticism by De Viti of the international trade treaties with the USA, and a reply by Luzzatti (Sulla crisi vinicola, *La Stampa*, 9 May 1902). And again in L’accordo commerciale provvisorio con l’Austria-Ungheria, *Il Sole*, 20 December 1903, he returns briefly to the subject of the trade treaties which sees De Viti against the demand for full customs duty powers by the second Giolitti government.

<sup>186</sup> Questione ferroviaria, *Corriere della sera*, 24 May 1903.

<sup>187</sup> As De Viti himself notes, he was almost alone in the House “to combat the state management of the railways, which was the cause of infinite problems” (*Discorso dell’on. Antonio de Viti de Marco, 19 aprile 1925. Antonio Vallone, cit., p. 19*).

<sup>188</sup> La discussione sulle dichiarazioni del Governo, *Il Mattino*, 2-3 December 1903.

Lecce, in Apulia)<sup>189</sup>, which De Viti traces to the economic reason of the enormous burden of taxation weighing down the southern provinces. Others are more technical, like that on the new public works for Italian ports, an argument discussed by De Viti both in a meeting of the House Members representing the constituencies excluded from the project<sup>190</sup>, and in Parliament<sup>191</sup>, where he fulminates against the Minister for public works of the third Giolitti government<sup>192</sup>. His interventions on the Apulia aqueduct are similarly technical: from 1903 a consortium had been set up between the state and the provinces of Apulia for its construction and its running; the competitive tender had been won by the Ercole Antico Company, which proceeded with difficulty among a great many delays, with the daily press closely following the progress of the work<sup>193</sup>. *Il Giornale d'Italia* and *La Stampa* reported De Viti's demand that in judging the work of the company only a criterion of efficiency should be followed<sup>194</sup>: what he absolutely wanted to avoid was that the state take over the work<sup>195</sup>. The press also reported news of meetings of Apulia's House Members, and it was not only a southern paper that did this<sup>196</sup>, but Milan's financial daily too<sup>197</sup>; public works already decided upon and not brought to completion were spoken of (e.g. irrigation, railways and ports), as well as the usual chimeras proposed by the government (agrarian credit, exemption from the land tax); a commission De Viti is part of is appointed to find remedies for the very serious problem of phylloxera<sup>198</sup>.

1911 is a year the daily press most often reports De Viti's speeches in the House. The question of the "dear foodstuffs", presented within his usual theoretical framework, offered *Il*

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<sup>189</sup> I clamorosi incidenti di ieri alla Camera. Nuovi attacchi dei socialisti al Governo. A proposito dei fatti di Grammichele. Un'eco drammatica dei torbidi in Puglia, *La Stampa*, 13 December 1905. On 8 December at Taurisano a demonstration had been held against an agreement about to be reached with Spain (*modus vivendi*) to reduce the customs duties on Spanish wines. The violent reaction of the police provoked four casualties, a death and three injured; the *modus vivendi* was then thrown out by the House. See D. D'Alterio, *La capitale dell'azione diretta*, cit., pp. 485 ff. and M. R. Pascali, *Il vento del Sud* (3), *Mezzogiorno e movimento contadino*, cit.

<sup>190</sup> Per le nuove opere marittime. Contro il progetto governativo, *Il Sole*, 12 December 1906.

<sup>191</sup> Le nuove opere marittime, *La Stampa*, 1 July 1907.

<sup>192</sup> Zanotti-Bianco (*Antonio de Viti de Marco*, cit., ed. 1964, pp. 343-344) recalls the episode and the success of De Viti's defense of the small ports.

<sup>193</sup> Interesting for this study is the following remark in a pamphlet published in those years: "the press began to want to see more clearly into the affair of the Aqueduct on its own account, and concealment or pretence were no longer possible" (P. Delfino Pesce, *L'acquedotto pugliese*, Bari, Humanitas, 1912, p. 63).

<sup>194</sup> Vivaci incidenti alla Camera sui progetti per le Puglie, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 17 March 1911; Vivaci incidenti alla Camera nella discussione della legge per le Puglie, *La Stampa*, 17 March 1911. *Il Sole* also provided the news, very briefly (17 March 1911).

<sup>195</sup> He will recall in 1925: "In the question of the aqueduct ... I tended to the opinion that the Company, weak and defaulting, should be replaced by another, strong in capital, which through the earnings from its activities would have found the incentive for a rapid completion of the work" (*Discorso dell'on. Antonio de Viti de Marco*, 19 aprile 1925. *Antonio Vallone*, cit., p. 19). In 1919 the management passed to an independent corporation, entirely from Apulia. De Viti wrote about it also in *La vita italiana* (La nuova convenzione per l'Acquedotto pugliese. Osservazioni critiche, June 1916, pp. 497 ff.).

<sup>196</sup> I deputati pugliesi riuniti a Roma discutono sugli interessi della loro regione, *Il Mattino*, 19-20 October 1910.

<sup>197</sup> Adunanza di deputati pugliesi per la fillossera e il sequestro dell'Adriatico, *Il Sole*, 12 December 1912.

<sup>198</sup> De Viti was an expert in vineyards afflicted with phylloxera. There is a letter of 7 October 1927 to Einaudi with detailed advice on ways to remedy the very serious problem (Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Fondo Varia, De Viti de Marco Antonio (1858-1943) Folder 2, File c).



*Giornale d'Italia* the occasion to comment as follows: “De Viti, as everyone knows, favors the theory of free trade, a theory he illustrates and defends, asserting that only through free trade can come the financial improvement of the proletarian classes”<sup>199</sup>. In April *La Stampa* reported his positive attitude towards the new program of Giolitti<sup>200</sup>, although everything will be compromised within a few months<sup>201</sup>. After having announced it<sup>202</sup>, *Corriere della sera* refers to De Viti’s tough “economic confutation” of state insurance<sup>203</sup>: as we have learnt, he opposes the plan to finance workers’ pensions with the profits of a new state monopoly agency. He doubts that these profits will be sufficient, and suggests allowing private insurance to survive, to preserve competition<sup>204</sup>; he fears the industrialists who support the project will demand in compensation a tightening up of protectionism, and finally, he asserts that the ultimate aim of the Treasury is to place bonds not absorbed by the market; he then concludes with the drastic judgment: “This trend towards nationalization extinguishes the very sources of income”.

Even in times of war he missed no opportunity to recommend greater freedom for trade, this time among the states of the Entente<sup>205</sup>; then, in the midst of heckling from a hostile House, he declares he will vote against the new ministry<sup>206</sup>. Finally, the nineteen-twenties<sup>207</sup>, as we have said, will see De Viti resign from everything: the news of his withdrawal from the parliamentary group called Rinnovamento which we have already mentioned will be given in *Il Secolo*<sup>208</sup>.

## 6. The economist and the daily press

We now examine the circumstances of De Viti de Marco’s relationship with the daily press and his reflection on this, specifically on the orientation and characteristics of the newspapers. We first notice that despite the variety in the paper’s orientations and the profound differences in the public they address, they very often reciprocally cite and quote published articles: in effect, it

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<sup>199</sup> Sul caro-viveri l’on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 2 February 1911.

<sup>200</sup> This was the fourth Giolitti government, towards which the radicals had actually softened their opposition, thanks to the promise of electoral reform; but as mentioned, they then left it.

<sup>201</sup> A Montecitorio, *La Stampa*, 4 April 1911.

<sup>202</sup> La relazione di minoranza dell’on. Ferraris contro il progettato monopolio delle assicurazioni, *Corriere della sera*, 22 June 1911.

<sup>203</sup> Il monopolio delle assicurazioni alla Camera. La difesa giuridica degli on. Calisse e Tommaso Mosca e la confutazione economica degli on. De Viti e Ancona, *Corriere della sera*, 26 June 1911.

<sup>204</sup> This passage is worth noticing: “The orator then observes that if the state truly finds itself in such a favorable situation as those proposing the bill claim, instead of the legal monopoly it would be better to accept the idea of the state industry in free competition with the private sector which would convert itself then into a natural monopoly, and would at any rate function as a ceiling price”. As mentioned, this is then what actually happened (see L. Livi, *Lo spirito di previdenza*, cit.).

<sup>205</sup> L’Italia nel conflitto europeo, *La Stampa*, 16 April 1916. See also Guerra e libero scambio, *L’Unità*, III, n. 36, 4 settembre 1914, p. 580 (signed Observer).

<sup>206</sup> La Camera a grandissima maggioranza vota la fiducia nel Ministero, *La Stampa*, 1 July 1917.

<sup>207</sup> A little brush with House Member Meda is reported in *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 25 July 1920.

<sup>208</sup> L’on. De Viti de Marco si dimette dal gruppo di rinnovamento, *Il Secolo*, 7 August 1920.

appears that in this era the news, echoing from one end of Italy to the other, manages to take on national significance only by adding together the local readerships.

De Viti's presence in the columns of *La Tribuna* is very brief: the paper restricts itself to reporting his article in the *Giornale degli economisti* of 1898 (judging it "the most remarkable" among those published in the dossier), and his Lecce speech of 1903<sup>209</sup>. But in the interval between the two pieces the paper altered its orientation<sup>210</sup>; in 1901 De Viti writes in *Il Mattino*: "*La Tribuna* – which up until now showed itself to be concerned about agricultural interests, arguing that they should be defended by means of the reduction of industrial protective duties", has changed its opinion and now wants more custom duties; in brief, it had become protectionist<sup>211</sup>. For this reason he launches a demand for media mobilization: "We need the southern press to help create a stable current of public opinion, which everywhere combats any attempt at alteration of Italian custom duties"<sup>212</sup>. So he then chose to send his articles to *Il Mattino* of Napoli, a conservative paper in support of the needs, aspirations and requirements of the South of Italy. To pursue these aims, the pages of the paper seem to be open to every proposal; and despite finding statements sometimes partly in disagreement with De Viti's ideas<sup>213</sup>, there are many instances of praise for the liberal economist, in opposition to that of its leader writer, F.S. Nitti<sup>214</sup>. However, De Viti's collaboration with *Il Mattino* also ends very quickly<sup>215</sup>.

The paper chosen for his articles just before and after 1910 was the Rome *Il Giornale d'Italia*, "the great organ of information of the Centre-South" of Italy<sup>216</sup>, which reciprocated with interviews and news. The name of De Viti appears beside those of other great personalities of the South of Italy, like Giustino Fortunato and Gaetano Mosca. The line of the Rome paper, liberal and against Giolitti, made it above all the preferred place for the appearance of criticisms of the government. Directed by Alberto Bergamini<sup>217</sup>, the paper is always very flattering towards the "eminent", or "acute" economist: it praises his "lucidity of thought and the incisive precision of his

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<sup>209</sup> This speech is reported also by the conservative Milan daily, *La Perseveranza*, 14 January 1903.

<sup>210</sup> On the history of *La Tribuna* see O. Majolo Molinari, *La stampa periodica romana dell'Ottocento*, Roma, Istituto di studi romani, 1977, vol. II, pp. 942-946.

<sup>211</sup> The orientation of *La Tribuna*, however, was not in just one direction, indeed in the article quoted of January 1903 the paper shares the positions of De Viti, and not those of Pasquale Villari.

<sup>212</sup> La guerra di tariffe e gli interessi agricoli del Mezzogiorno, *Il Mattino*, 27-28 August 1901 (Cardini n. 92).

<sup>213</sup> Errori e danni, *Il Mattino*, 20-21 January 1903 (Cardini n. 111).

<sup>214</sup> F. Barbagallo (*Il Mattino degli Scarfoglio (1892-1928)*, Milano, Guanda, 1979) explains that Scarfoglio nourished doubts about Nitti's ideas on the development of big industry, and supported instead an agriculture of avant-garde (p. 94). On the reasons for the paper's opening out to De Viti de Marco's battle for free trade, see also *ivi* p. 82.

<sup>215</sup> Barbagallo (*Il Mattino degli Scarfoglio*, cit., p. 100) points out that in 1903 the daily had shifted towards the defense of Naples' financial groups, rather than the free trader southern landowners.

<sup>216</sup> P. Ottone, *Giornalismo*, in C. Stajano (ed.), *La cultura italiana del Novecento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, p. 356.

<sup>217</sup> The letters of De Viti to *Il Giornale d'Italia* begin with the words "Dear Bergamini"; the director took part in the foundation of the *Rassegna mensile della Lega italo-britannica*, promoted by De Viti (see Cardini, *La democrazia incompiuta*, cit., p. 277). On sending his last letter to the paper, De Viti writes in a friendly way to Bergamini: "we militate on opposing sides" (*Il rifiuto dell'on. De Viti de Marco, Il Giornale d'Italia*, 23 April 1921). On the history of the paper see Alberto Bergamini racconta, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 16 November 1951.

vocabulary”, appreciates his authority and culture, insists on the applause received for his speeches in public. For example it writes of him: “He continues, with his well known competence and profound erudition, to set out the advantages which the Italian budget would derive from the abolition or at least the reduction of customs barriers”<sup>218</sup>. We notice that De Viti’s thinking is reported by *Il Giornale d’Italia* (a paper in sympathy with Sonnino<sup>219</sup>) even when, in April 1910, he is explaining the reasons for his voting against Sonnino, and against various bills proposed by his ministers<sup>220</sup>. But the most important daily paper in his political life is the radical organ *Il Secolo*, to which already in 1904 he is appealing, “to align the masses against protectionism through intense propaganda”<sup>221</sup>. Even before that date the paper is the central reference point for Italian free traders: it reminds readers that De Viti de Marco, together with Pareto, Pantaleoni and Giretti, contributed “to instill new vigor and authority into the campaigns of ‘Il Secolo’”<sup>222</sup>; it is precisely there that a very irritated Pareto threatens to send “a letter, but of those *tremendous*”<sup>223</sup> against the running of the *Giornale degli economisti* by De Viti. The latter’s relationship with *Il Secolo* intensifies from 1913 to 1916; one of the reasons is the mobilization against protectionism at that time: the newspaper publicized every radical initiative in favor of free trade. Beside this, we should not forget that *Il Secolo* supported De Viti enormously, offering him opportunities to defend himself when attacked by *Avanti!* with its various accusations, engaging in a blow for blow battle with the socialist paper. We thus get to the latter, beginning by pointing out that *Avanti!* contains the greatest number of articles concerning him. In a first phase there is considerable harmony between them<sup>224</sup>: in 1898 the paper writes: “it is good to see that, next to a ruling class appearing increasingly like an inward-looking closed caste, there are conservatives who like De Viti ... have a clear idea ... of conditions now, and of the needs of the future”; and in 1899 it calls him “one of the most distinguished economists of the liberal school ... a serene scholar and non-socialist”. We have highlighted some distance in their positions on the role of public expenditure in policies for the South of Italy, but a substantial agreement of opinion remains, thanks to the political alliance in the anti-protectionist battles which are a characteristic of the first decade of the new century. Inevitably, the break occurs: already in 1912 the socialist paper, despite considering De Viti one of

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<sup>218</sup> Sul caro-viveri. L’on. De Viti de Marco, *Il Giornale d’Italia*, 2 February 1911.

<sup>219</sup> Sidney Sonnino served twice as Prime Minister, in 1906 and again from 1909 to 1910.

<sup>220</sup> We note that only a few days before (31 March 1910) Luzzatti had succeeded to Sonnino.

<sup>221</sup> Contro il protezionismo doganale, *Il Secolo*, 28 March 1904.

<sup>222</sup> V. Castronovo, L. Giacheri Fossari, N. Tranfaglia (eds.), *La stampa italiana nell’età liberale*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1979, p. 111.

<sup>223</sup> V. Pareto, *Lettere a Maffeo Pantaleoni*, cit., vol. II, p. 92 (lettera del 25 July 1897).

<sup>224</sup> Regarding the alliance between free traders and the Socialist Party, Zanotti-Bianco (*Antonio de Viti de Marco*, cit., ed. 1964, p. 352) points out the role played by the daily press: “*Avanti!* – under the direction first of Bissolati and then of E. Ferri – willingly printed, especially during the scandals of the Terni (1902-03) the correspondence of the very active free trader Edoardo Giretti, and the House Member Turati in his *Critica* published a series of articles of the two free trader professors Attilio Cabiati and Luigi Einaudi who then for many a long year spread their ideas in the two most important papers in the country, *La Stampa* of Turin and *Corriere della sera* of Milan”.

the most meritorious in the struggle against protectionism, criticizes him for the contradiction in his faith in free trade and his demand for government intervention in favor of the wine producers<sup>225</sup>, as well as for his regionalism. But the relationship deteriorates finally with the accusations of 1914-1916 traced above, immediately refuted by *Il Secolo*.

In the daily newspaper *La Stampa* interviews and news from the House predominate, where De Viti is always considered an authoritative politician and a competent economist. In the columns of *La Stampa* we find admiring comments on his speeches<sup>226</sup>, his criticisms of Luzzatti and then Boselli<sup>227</sup>, his opinions on technical and parliamentary affairs, in addition to his customary ideas on economic policy. *Corriere della sera* also follows De Viti's career; in spite of his calling it in 1901 "the major organ of the protectionist industrialists of Milan"<sup>228</sup>, the paper likes his speeches, provides space for his opposition to the insurance monopolies, and in general reports radical and anti-protectionist news<sup>229</sup>. Finally, his collaboration with *Il Sole*: even though this is not especially intense, the paper does not neglect the more important events, and in particular it is chosen by De Viti in 1922 to send his letter of the solitary wine producer, having already withdrawn into private life, but still indignant at Italy's iniquitous trade policy.

The 1920s mark the end of the period chosen for this study, but it is worth remembering that in 1922 De Viti stops writing on politics completely, and not just for the daily press<sup>230</sup>. Whereas the more important newspapers commit themselves "to the hilt against the customs duty of 1921 for the conclusion of more liberal trade treaties"<sup>231</sup>, De Viti ends his militancy to devote himself to the writing of his treatise<sup>232</sup>, as well as to the cultivation of his land<sup>233</sup>. The possible reasons for this withdrawal are many and complex, and deserve a separate study.

## 7. Conclusions

This analysis of De Viti de Marco's "daily" battles reveals some new episodes in his political and academic career, but it allows us above all to bring out more clearly unusual features

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<sup>225</sup> In truth De Viti wishes to be able to exploit the comparative advantages of the South of Italy in international trade: wine production was considered one of the "natural" industries, as was said during the anti-protectionist battles (see Tedesco, *Il canto del cigno del liberoscambismo*, cit.); nonetheless, some contradictory features are there, as we shall see in our final section.

<sup>226</sup> His address of 1904 is called a "powerful speech", and the "ovations" it provoked are insisted upon.

<sup>227</sup> It will be recalled that the radicals had entered the government presided over by Luzzatti and in that of Boselli.

<sup>228</sup> Storia retrospettiva, *Il Mattino*, 13-14 May 1901 (Cardini n. 91).

<sup>229</sup> U. Zanotti-Bianco (*Nota storica sul movimento antiprotezionista in Italia*, in A. de Viti de Marco, *Un trentennio di lotte politiche*, cit., p. xvii) notes that *Corriere della sera* and *La Stampa* "took a clearly anti-protectionist line".

<sup>230</sup> The article of 31 December 1922 (*L'imposta sui profitti agricoli*, *Il Giornale d'Italia*) shifts the date of De Viti's last political writing (in the broadest sense) forward to a time previously unknown.

<sup>231</sup> Zanotti-Bianco, *Nota storica sul movimento antiprotezionista in Italia*, cit., p. xxii.

<sup>232</sup> The publication in 1923 of *Scienza delle finanze. Lezioni raccolte dal Sig. Leonelli e riassunte sotto la direzione del professore*, then the publication of *I primi principi dell'economia finanziaria*, Roma, Sampaolesi, 1928, and its later revised editions.

<sup>233</sup> Regarding his attachment in the last phase of his life to his wine producing estate "I Veli", see again the correspondence with Einaudi, in Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Fondo Varia, De Viti de Marco Antonio (1858-1943).

of his thinking and his commitment. This is because the daily papers, by their very nature, neglect aspects of the thought of the person under consideration that they judge to be more complex; they give an outline that is certainly one sided, and yet it is precisely this one-sidedness that helps us realize what usually remains obscured by the predominance of his abstract thought. What emerges is a De Viti less well known, but none the less authentic for that.

Let us begin with two details which appear clearly from these pages. One is that it is the article in the *Giornale degli economisti* of 1898 which brings the already forty-something economist to the attention of the public: it is indeed after the great impression that article created that he acquired celebrity status, and manages to win in the elections of 1901. The other is that when, in mid-1914, the break between radicals and socialists occurs across the nation, also because of the diverse significance they attribute to the anti-protectionist struggle<sup>234</sup>, it has repercussions at the level of individual House Members in individual constituencies, as has been shown, via serious personal accusations.

Another feature emerging more clearly than elsewhere through De Viti's interventions in the daily press is that he speaks exclusively on his own subjects, and leads all other subjects back to them: the agrarian problems of the South of Italy, free trade, transport networks, tax reform, the struggle against monopolies, bureaucracy and privilege, the intrusiveness of the government as dispenser of favors. These subjects on the one hand find their place in the theoretical system he has constructed, and on the other converge in practice with his perspective of southern wine producing entrepreneur. The message that appears is always that if thoughtless trade and economic policy hadn't stopped it<sup>235</sup>, the agricultural producers could have provided the South and the rest of Italy with a stronger drive towards development, following an alternative route, natural and not artificial. In this, the newspapers faithfully and exhaustively represent his ideas: they are recurring ideas, no doubts ever crossing his mind<sup>236</sup>, but for someone who is involved in politics to repeat the same ideas throughout his career it is a mark of tenacity, the solidity of his convictions and strength in action.

What is also striking in these articles is the decisive and insistent way he rejects the charge of the regional character of his commitment; for example, on commemorating Antonio Vallone he goes out of his way to insist that "the love for his own region was not regionalism"<sup>237</sup>. This attitude of his induced scholars to interpret his work in favor of the southern Italian regions as simply a

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<sup>234</sup> Tedesco (*Il canto del cigno del liberoscambismo*, cit., p. 47) rightly points out that for the "revolutionary socialists ... adherence to free trade was only instrumental to the overcoming of the capitalist economy itself".

<sup>235</sup> The evaluation of economic policies in the era of Giolitti recently provided by Ciocca (*Ricchi per sempre?*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2007, ch. 6) diverges markedly from that expressed by the free trade economists of the age.

<sup>236</sup> It is not by chance that G. Fortunato called De Viti the "possessor of 'absolute truth'" (Fortunato, *Carteggio: 1865-1911*, edited by E. Gentile, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1978, p. 371).

<sup>237</sup> *Discorso dell'on. Antonio de Viti de Marco, 19 aprile 1925. Antonio Vallone*, cit., p. 14.

field where he applied his broader liberal program, the true aim of every battle he undertook<sup>238</sup>. In the light of a reading of these pages we may assert that this interpretation should be restricted to the area of his theory, whereas in his political practice the order of priorities should be reversed: here, in fact, his main aim always seems to be, precisely and directly, the South of Italy. On the contrary, the extension of his discourse to the national and general dimension seems to be only a function of broadening alliances and strengthening his position, with the ultimate purpose of finding an answer to the thorny Italian “southern question”, as he himself was already calling it<sup>239</sup>.

Another surprising feature, actually modifying his usual image of someone so intransigent, concerns the exceptions he allows to his free trade program in the everyday realities of his political battles: from the request for state help for the reconstruction of Messina and Reggio Calabria after the 1908 earthquake, to the recommendation not to export grain and derivatives during the crisis, to the request for the carrying out of public works already decided upon by the government in the southern regions, to his solidarity with the protest against the *modus vivendi* with Spain<sup>240</sup>. In fact, for this too he refers to the person who was always the guide behind his actions: “Cavour ... thought it was necessary to stretch a point sometimes in applying the rigid principles of economic freedom, to get the state to intervene to help the southern regions”<sup>241</sup>.

De Viti was, of course, a great theoretician: for the scholar who had founded the pure theory of public finance, theory was an absolute requirement, the foundation of every other dimension, whether applied, historical or political<sup>242</sup>. And because the theoretical structure was solid, and proof against doubt and criticism, he built it up and perfected it throughout his life, preserving the basic framework intact<sup>243</sup>. And yet as we have seen, the image emerging from the daily press is almost exclusively of a man of action; his theoretical competence is there, of course, but from the background to the figure of an expert who is passionately and very publicly involved

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<sup>238</sup> This is Cardini's interpretation, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., ch. III, taken up also in M. Mosca, *Antonio de Viti de Marco*, in *Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero, Economia*, cit.

<sup>239</sup> An interpretation different from Cardini's, and nearer to what has emerged in this study, of the relationship between De Viti de Marco's pro-South commitment and his overall vision, is in A. L. Denitto, *Introduzione* in A. De Viti de Marco, *Mezzogiorno e democrazia liberale*, cit.

<sup>240</sup> The incongruity of De Viti's position on this particular subject was noticed and criticized also by Colajanni and Einaudi (Cardini, *Antonio de Viti de Marco: la democrazia incompiuta*, cit., p. 159).

<sup>241</sup> This quotation continues: “i.e. to get the richer regions to contribute to help the poorer ones. From Cavour to the present day the problem has been turned upside down. Then, it was a case of calling upon the strong to assist the weak; it now happens that the strong devours the weak” (*Discorso dell'on. Antonio de Viti de Marco, 19 aprile 1925. Antonio Vallone*, cit. pp. 15-16). Despite this, we may undoubtedly assert that Pareto was making a big mistake when, before De Viti's election, he forecast seeing him: “approve as the lesser evil the duties on cereal and other similar measures” (V. Pareto, *Lettere a Maffeo Pantaleoni*, cit., vol. II, p. 50, letter of 10 March 1897).

<sup>242</sup> On the priority of the theoretical dimension in the overall production of De Viti de Marco see M. Mosca, *De Viti de Marco, Historian of Economic Analysis*, cit.

<sup>243</sup> One thinks of the slow construction of his *Principi di economia finanziaria*, which lasted decades (from the lecture notes of the course at Pavia of 1886-87, to the first publication of 1928, to the reissues revised and corrected up until 1939).

in his political commitment<sup>244</sup>. So if he is usually thought of as a man embodying abstract thinking, this study modifies not a little our image of his characteristic features.

In conclusion, it would seem that Pareto hits the spot when he writes of De Viti: “he is an *optimist*, i.e. one who believes that with fine words one may change a country’s system for the better”<sup>245</sup>. His aim therefore was not the dissemination of his ideas as an end in itself, nor the simple passing on of information, but policy; he wished his ideas would spread beyond “the field of scientific propaganda ... into that of political action and parliamentary struggles”<sup>246</sup>. De Viti disseminates theory to the extent that it is needed to convince and mobilize, to transform opinions, provide orientation for the choices to be made, to guide the public, persuade it, win consensus, and also votes. Zanotti-Bianco mentions the fundamental role then played by the press to “transfer the anti-protectionist struggle to the field of electoral politics”<sup>247</sup>, and at the same time recalls that the principal newspapers of southern Italy often included De Viti de Marco’s articles and interviews<sup>248</sup>. There are no explicit reflections of our economist on his experiences involving the press, except for just this very general one: “Throughout my life I have been condemned to be a propagandist, although I wasn’t born to do this”<sup>249</sup>. For his propaganda, the daily press certainly played an important role.

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<sup>244</sup> Salvemini (*De Viti de Marco. Ricordo di Gaetano Salvemini*, cit.) had grasped this side of him, calling his spirit “a volcano under the ice”.

<sup>245</sup> Pareto, *Lettere a Maffeo Pantaleoni*, cit., vol. II, p. 102 (letter of 19 August 1897).

<sup>246</sup> *La politica del tozzo di pane*, in *Per il Mezzogiorno e per la libertà commerciale*, Milano-Palermo-Napoli, Sandron, 1905, p. vii.

<sup>247</sup> Zanotti-Bianco, *Nota storica sul movimento antiprotezionista in Italia*, cit., p. xv.

<sup>248</sup> Zanotti-Bianco, *Nota storica sul movimento antiprotezionista in Italia*, cit., p. xvii.

<sup>249</sup> Quoted in Zanotti-Bianco, *Antonio de Viti de Marco*, cit., p. 350.