

Travel 36

Este: Polesine, where fascism started.

Polesine is between the River Pó and Adige. A totally flat country, indeed boring, but plenty of history and of reality.

Here in Polesine started the fascism.

Here was and is endless sufferance.

Here is solitude.

Here is the passé, that gives a lot of thoughts.

You will learn a lot visiting this region. It is the region of Italy, that I prefer.

Been tourist is also to search your own view of the history.

This guide will lead you in the towns, where the real first fascism started, 1919-21.

The towns are in Polesine, a region between the rivers Adige and Pó, the cities are Fratta, Villamarzana, Badia, Castelmasa, etc.

This region has an optimal agriculture.

The soil can produce two harvests per year.

During the Austrian domination, 1808-1866, the Polesine was the richest region of the empire.

The richness was the output of agricultural production. It was only for the landlords, who owned the farms.

But for the land workers, life was really miserable.

The situation deteriorated even more, after the Polesine was annexed to Rome in 1866.

The new state, Italy, oriented the agriculture to produce milk and meat in order to satisfy the population in the growing industrial cities as Milan, Rome, Napoli, etc.

Maize became the absolute most demanded agricultural product, that to feed cows, that produce milk and meat.

These fundamental transformations of agriculture changed also the diet of the population in the Polesine. They changed their traditional healthy diet to a diet composed exclusively of maize (unbelievable, but true).

This was catastrophic, because a diet of only maize is unhealthy, and gives disease, like Pellagra, and more.

These was the life of land workers in Polesine.

After the 1. World War, years of 1919-21 land workers organised them self in Unions, for improving their working conditions.

Unions were absolutely not accepted by the local landlords. They then organized them self in anti-Unions groups, that used violence.

Unions and anti-Union groups ended in terrible physical fought, as it was shown in Bernardo Bertolucci's film "1900".

The anti-Union groups were very violent. They dominate any activities that were against the interests of the landlords. They scared the entire population.

The story end with, that the anti-Union groups elected a leader, Mussolini, a pop journalist.

The name fascism come from fascio, (=bundle of sticks), which was the Roman empires personal guards's sticks to beat any aggressor.

The fascist groups used sticks to beat any persons, that opposed them.

Here the explanation of the real first origin of the fascism.

Then the story continuous with political fights:

- The land workers Union had Giacomo Matteotti as their leader.
- He was soon assassinated by Missolini in 1924.
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Matteotti was the only Italian politician that really was against the fascism. All others escaped abroad or didn't do anything.

Matteotti were a son of Polesine, his house in Fratta is now a museum.



Fratta

We start with the visit of Matteottis home in Fratta.



Matteotti house

*Dedicato
a Velia*

Vita a Casa Matteotti



*Mostra di documenti provenienti dal fondo
della Famiglia Steiner*

Casa Museo Giacomo Matteotti
21 ottobre - 27 novembre 2016

*Orari di visita: Sabato 15.00 - 18.30
Domenica 10.00 - 12.30 e 15.00 - 18.30
o su prenotazione al n. 0425.668030 int. 11*

La mostra, curata dalla prof.ssa Lodovica Mutterle, direttrice della Casa-Museo, presenta la figura di Velia Titta (Pisa 12 gennaio 1890 - 5 giugno 1938), moglie di Giacomo Matteotti. Una donna borghese colta, amante della lettura, poetessa e romanziera, che ha avuto un ruolo decisivo nella vita del suo compagno ed ha vissuto in prima persona le conseguenze delle scelte politiche di Giacomo in particolare modo per la sua posizione contro la guerra (discorso del 5 giugno 1916 in Consiglio Provinciale di Rovigo) e per la sua intransigente e decisa opposizione al fascismo. Una storia al femminile da riscoprire, una figura di donna dei primi decenni del Novecento, che colpita da un duro destino, ha saputo reagire con dignità e coraggio.

Città di Prata Poenense

Comune di Prata Poenense

Comune di Prata Poenense

Comune di Prata Poenense

A seldom photo of Matteotti's wife, Velia

Matteotti can therefore be defined as Italy's Lenin.

A bit more on Matteotti.

The family Matteotti came to Fratta from Trento in 1850. The reasons of the move were that the border to the Pope's state was at the river Po. That gave good conditions for business.

The family invested their saving in agricultural land.

Matteotti was the leading figure of the socialist movement in Italy.

He was not only an intellectual, but also a very practical politician. He had great knowledge in state finances, fx.

The house is now a museum. Check for opening time.



The grave of Matteotti, I n the cemetery of Fratta



A road dedicated to Matteotti.

Giacomo Matteotti was very beloved Italians.

He's assassination alienated very soon any many persons sympathy for the fascism.

Just to give an idea of his popularities: now in Italy there are 3.292 streets waring his name.



Fratta was an historically important town.

Fratta is a beautiful and an important town. It testifies many facts of the history:

- The Polesine was a marsh zone until 1500, when Venetian patricians invested their money to redeem the soil from the water.
- They redeemed the soil and build great villas. The region is plenty of fantastic Palladian villas. In Fratta there are several of these magnificent villas.



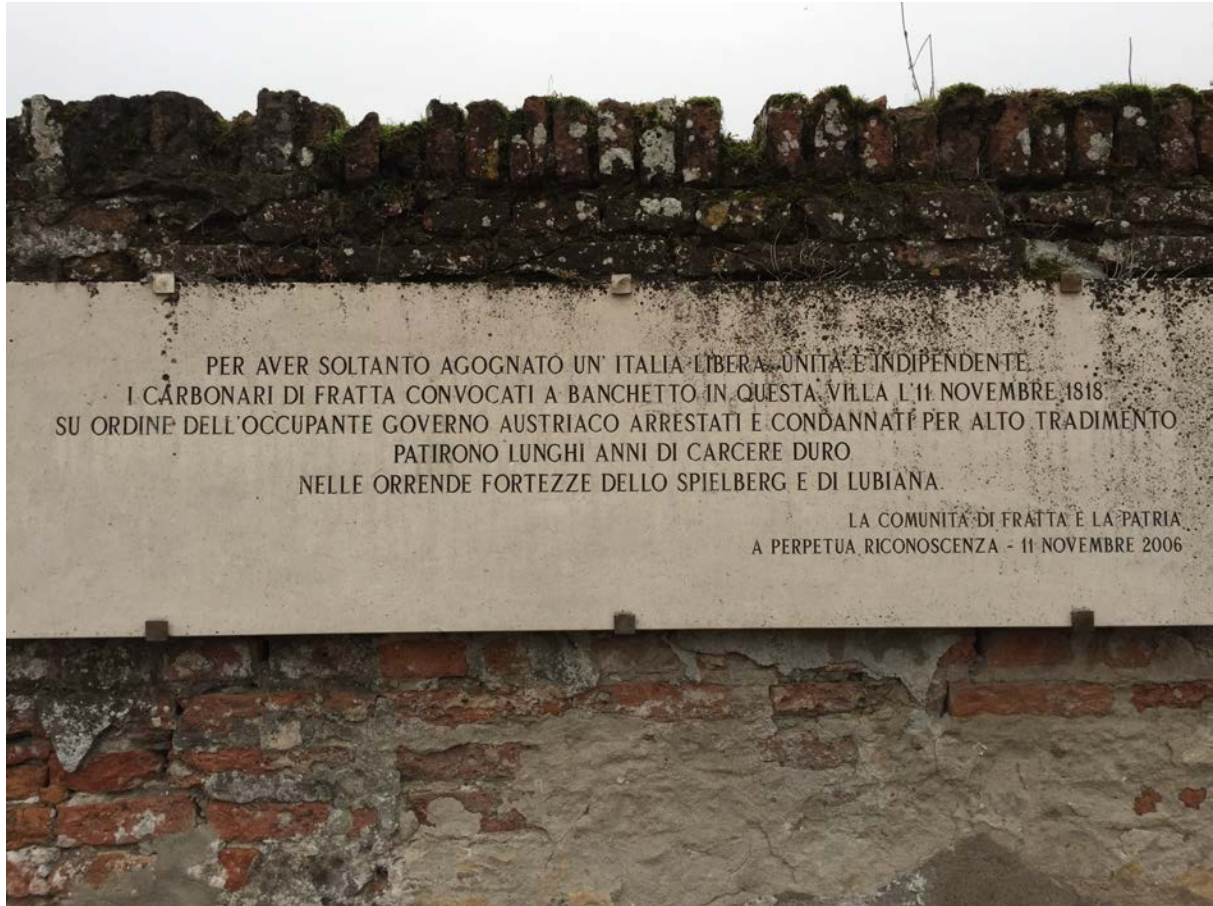
Villa Badoer

Fratta is known also for other important historical events, fx concerning the Italian political unity.

A group of Carbonari, i.e. citizens that in 1818 wished to unite Italy, were arrested and often killed in Austrian prisons.



Villa dei Carbonari



" For having only dreamed of a free, united and independent Italy, the Carbonari (aspirants to the unity of Italy) invited to banquet in this villa the 11 the Nov. 1818, on the orders of the occupying Austrian government, were arrested and sentenced for high treason. They suffered long years of hard prison in the horrific fortresses of Spielberg and Ljubljana"
 The community of Fratta and the Homeland to perpetuate gratitude.
 11.Nov.2006



Piazza dei Martiri of 1821 or the Square of the victims of the Austrian imperators persecutions against anybody wishing freedom



"The days of the Carboneria"



Monument dedicated to the prisoners of the Spielberg in 1821



In Villamarzana

The zone of Polesine had suffered also during the retreat of the Germans in 1943-45.

In Villamarzana there is an impressive place, where dozens and dozens of local citizens were executed.

Un unforgettable view.

Still well conserved!



Germans executed Italians in this place in 1943, at the city centre of Villamarzana.



Germans used this place to executed Italians in 1943. Villamarzana, where Matteotti earlier was mayor.



Place of execution

Sufferance is endless in Polesine.

Fx. in Villamarzana:

- it suffered from Austrian persecutions in 1800,
- it suffered during the fights at the early day of fascism 1919-21,
- the suffered the atrocities of the Germans in 1943,
- during the 1. World War, very many soldiers lost their lives, because military recruited mostly from this zone. See how many names of dead soldiers are written in the war monument.



War monument, remark how many names.

Not finished.

After the 2. World War, inhabitants of Polesine emigrated all over the world. The government in Rome, has organized free transport for persons that wanted to emigrant from the region of Polesine to Brasil. This practice lasted for decades.

Ships were anchored in Genova where emigrants were offered free transport to the "new world".

Villamarzana made a monument for this phenomenon of emigration:



in Villamarzana



Monument to remember the many emigrants from the Polesine. Villamarzana.



Monument to the emigrant. Villamarzana.

You should visit all the towns of Polesine.

Starts in the west: Villa Bartolomea, Badia, Lendinara, and then Rovigo, Crespino (where Napoleon in 1808 executed many citizens), Adria, etc.

When you visit these places, do not forget to give a watch to the beautiful water of the river Pó.

The Polesine, abandoned towns, deep solitude, but they will impress and mark you for ever.

The end of travel 36