

Compulsory-purchase orders, a story behind every registered letter

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Progress of the Pedemontana clashes with the **stories of the people whose properties have been compulsorily purchased**. And there are thousands who will receive registered letters in the next few days, just as there are thousands of stories to tell. Of these, some, more than others, have stood out as symbolic of a territory that is beginning, after so many years of tacit approval of the use of the environment, to feel the land is coming to an end.

Among these, there is the story of **Elisabetta Alippio**, from Fagnano Olona, whose mother gave her a piece of land, on which she has successfully created an **organic walnut grove**, the only one in Varese Province. For Elisabetta, growing walnut trees was a wager she had made against everyone, but she succeeded; the walnuts grow so well that she uses them to make a wonderful walnut liqueur. Now, Pedemontana has compulsorily purchased a part of the 3000 m² of land, and as there is the buffer zone, in which there can be no forest trees, other trees must be cut down; what remains is only a portion of wood that is too close to the motorway, where, as a result, the walnuts grown will be poor quality.

On the topic of trees, the story of the **Grandfather Oak**, the age-old tree on the large farmlands of Gorla Minore, was at the centre of discussion throughout the summer of 2010. **Carla Castellanza**, of the environmental association CIPTA, made the oak the symbol of her battle against the Pedemontana. The great fervour aroused by her protest also infected other inhabitants of Gorla Minore, who, together with Carla and children from the elementary schools, founded a committee to defend the age-old tree. The regional councillor for infrastructure, Raffaele Cattaneo, also intervened to defend the oak, and the managing director, Salvatore Lombardo, had the plans changed to that it would be saved.

However, in the village of Lozza, one restaurateur is not giving up, even though his restaurant is already surrounded by roads. He is the owner of the "Ristorante al Ponte", a historic restaurant which will see part of its car park and its open-air dance hall disappear, to make room for a viaduct. Here too, the managing director of Pedemontana, and Councillor Cattaneo (photo, left) personally intervened last July, to find a solution to the demands of the restaurateur.

And between Lozza and Castiglione Olona, there is also the story of **Francesco Brumana**, a farmer, a third of whose land has been taken over by Pedemontana for one of the two base camps for the workers. For five years, Brumana will not be able to farm that land, and, according to one agronomist, it will take several more years for the stripped land to be cultivable again. The danger is that the company will not survive these years without being able to farm this land.

Pedemontana is responding to many of these problems by sending out these registered letters, while the large building site is quickly advancing, to complete everything for the Expo in 2015.

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