

## VareseNews

### Tour of Padania. In Lonate, banners and chanting against the Northern League

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On the one side, there were trade unions asking the Northern League not to employ the forces of law and order for propaganda events, on the other, the Anti-League Movement and the sport-for-all association, UISP, calling for sport not to be exploited, and repeating that there is no such place as Padania. The speaker on the stage had to raise the volume, to be heard above the whistling, chanting, trumpets and pans. The start of the third **Tour of Padania** saw no peace, even in **Lonate Pozzolo**, the town chosen for the start of the third stage of the race organised by the Northern League. **About fifteen protestors, with the flags of the trade unions COBAS and CUB, staged their protest**; in front of them, they held a banner which said "The League doesn't practice what it preaches".

At the same time, protestors from the Anti-League Movement (those who organised the Festival in Brenta) and from UISP also turned up, about thirty people armed with banners and chanting against League supporters. They were observed by a line of policemen, who watched the area **between Via Manzoni and Via Matteotti**, where the stage would begin. In the area, other small groups tried to organise, to block, or at least delay the start of the stage, as they had done on previous days, in Mondovì and Savona (where there had been clashes, policemen had been knocked down, and riders slapped). **The invitation to take part in the protest was made with a series of leaflets produced by the "Varese Anti-League supporters"**, who used the allusive slogan "Northern League, on your bike!". After the official beginning in Lonate Pozzolo, the group of cyclists went to Busto Arsizio, where the day's "real" race began. **The race set off on time at 11.20 a.m.**, and the protestors remained at the start, with their chanting and banners, watched over by the police and carabinieri, in anti-riot gear.

**The starting flag was lowered by Renzo Bossi**, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of this cycle race. He repeated to journalists that this competition cannot be stopped, "because it's what the riders want; they were the first to say let's go ahead with it," said Bossi. "They do the work, and it's only right that they should be able to go on. Politics has got nothing to do with it, this is sport, and the race helps many great professionals to prepare for the world championships. Cycling is an important sport in Varese Province, and I'm a great fan."

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