

## VareseNews

### Why is Varese a province? “Malicious ideas in Switzerland.”

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✘ Today, we need to understand why Varese became a province, or at least we should remember the historical reasons. Not everybody knows that **Varese’s elevation to a province in 1927**, was prepared by a **lobby** of the local ruling class, particularly by a group of pro-government lawyers (including the leader of the town and a fascist MP) who brought **Mussolini**, who was apparently visiting Milan, a memo on the need to create a strong border province that was separate from Como, that acknowledged the economic and social strength of Varese.

**The document was examined until 1926 (the first signatory was the local division of the National Fascist Party)**, when Varese was one of the 19 new provinces created by Il Duce, at the expense of Busto Arsizio (which was bigger, and which had an anti-Fascist tradition, because of the presence of textile and engineering workers).

The complete text of the **memo** can also be found on the Internet.

Nowadays, it is good practice to read it. Some reasons seem **a bit outdated** and questionable. For example, it is thought that, since the time of the Romans, legions had been posted in Varese to withstand the Rhaetian invasions (these days, instead, we go to the Foxtown Shopping Centre, armed with our credit cards).

**Then, there was a certain anti-German sentiment** (“We must not forget that, in Canton Ticino, a dominating foreign people is insidiously and relentlessly at work against the indestructible voice of breeding in the Italian people”). Or the danger of exiles spreading anti-Fascist ideas. “There is an evil minority of exiles and renegades in Canton Ticino...” **Thus, the dangers of emigration**, that is, the 20,000 Varese inhabitants who went to work abroad temporarily, and on coming back home, could spread **pernicious ideas**. “Hard-working people ... but easy victims of propaganda,” or, “people who are easily discouraged and prone to sudden anger”. Hence, the need for political and military control in order to prevent “painful surprises”. (in the photo, Piazza Monte Grappa; built in the 1930s to give the main town the appearance of a monument).

Among the promoters was the former director of “La Cronaca Prealpina”, **Giovanni Bagaini**. Lobbyists demanded that Varese become a main town, **or that it become a subprefecture attached to Milan, but in any case, far from Como**.

**Other reasons are more modern** and there are some similar to those that Dario Galli, the current President of the Province, listed in his memo to the Council for Local

## Autonomies in Lombardy.

In particular, **the “provincialist” middle class of 1923 Varese** (as Maniglio Botti and Max Lodi dubbed them in one of their books) mentioned not only strategic and geographical reasons, but also **the economic strength of the area**, the motorway, the factories, and even the presence of a local newspaper that “is 35 years old, and that produces 10,000 copies.” Today, we have many more dailies, online newspapers and TV channels. But the lack of the enemy at the door, and the end of lobbying the government (once Fascist, today it is “pro-Bossi”) give Varese less “weight”.

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