

VareseNews

Urban metamorphosis: Via Manzoni gutted by Democratic pickaxe

Pubblicato: Sabato 24 Aprile 2021



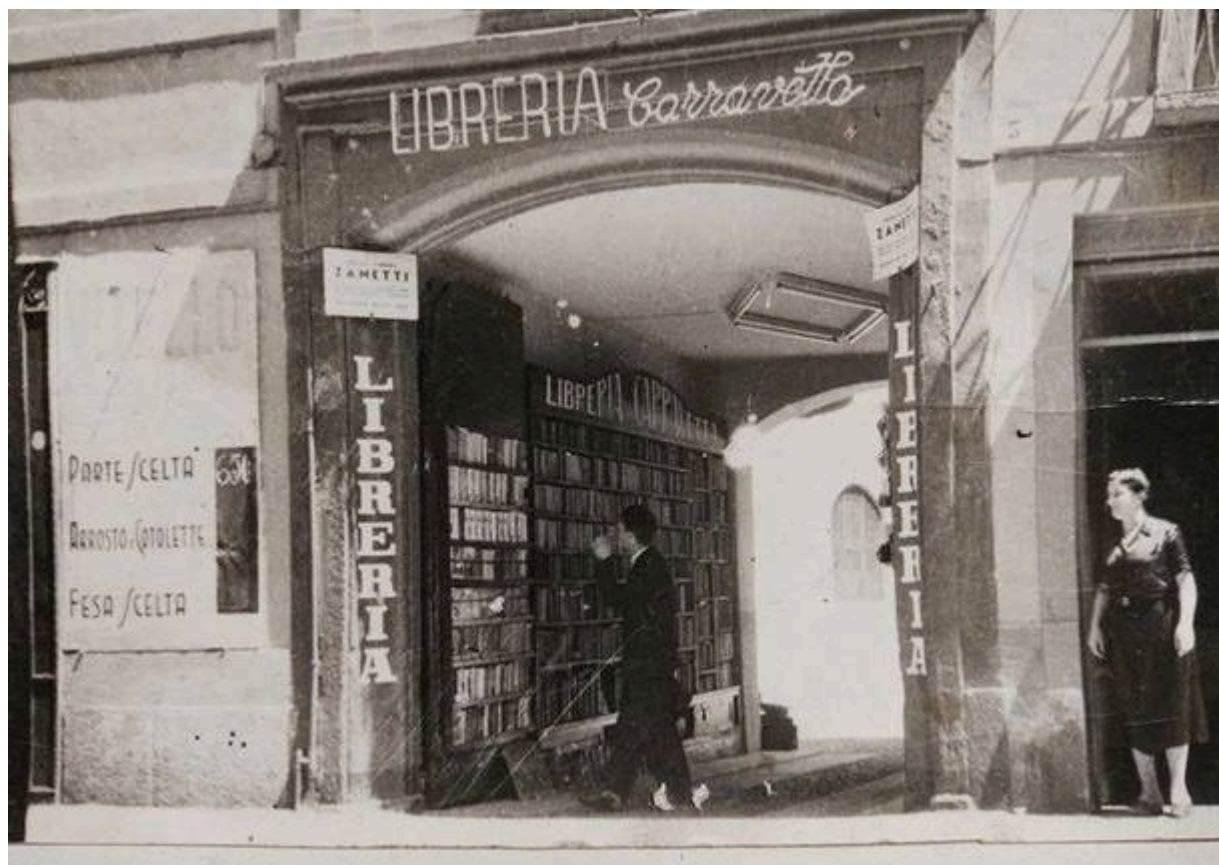
*Every Monday, on a virtual walk, the column “Urban metamorphosis” talks about the transformations that the town of **Varese** has undergone in the last one hundred years, that is, since it became the Capital of the Province. The column is written by **Fausto Bonoldi**, a historic figure in Varese journalism who has covered this topic for years in the Facebook group [La Varese Nascosta](#) (“The Hidden Varese”) and who has also written a book, published by Macchione, entitled “[Cara Varese come sei cambiata](#)” (“Dear Varese, how you’ve changed”).*

READ ALL OF THE INSTALMENTS

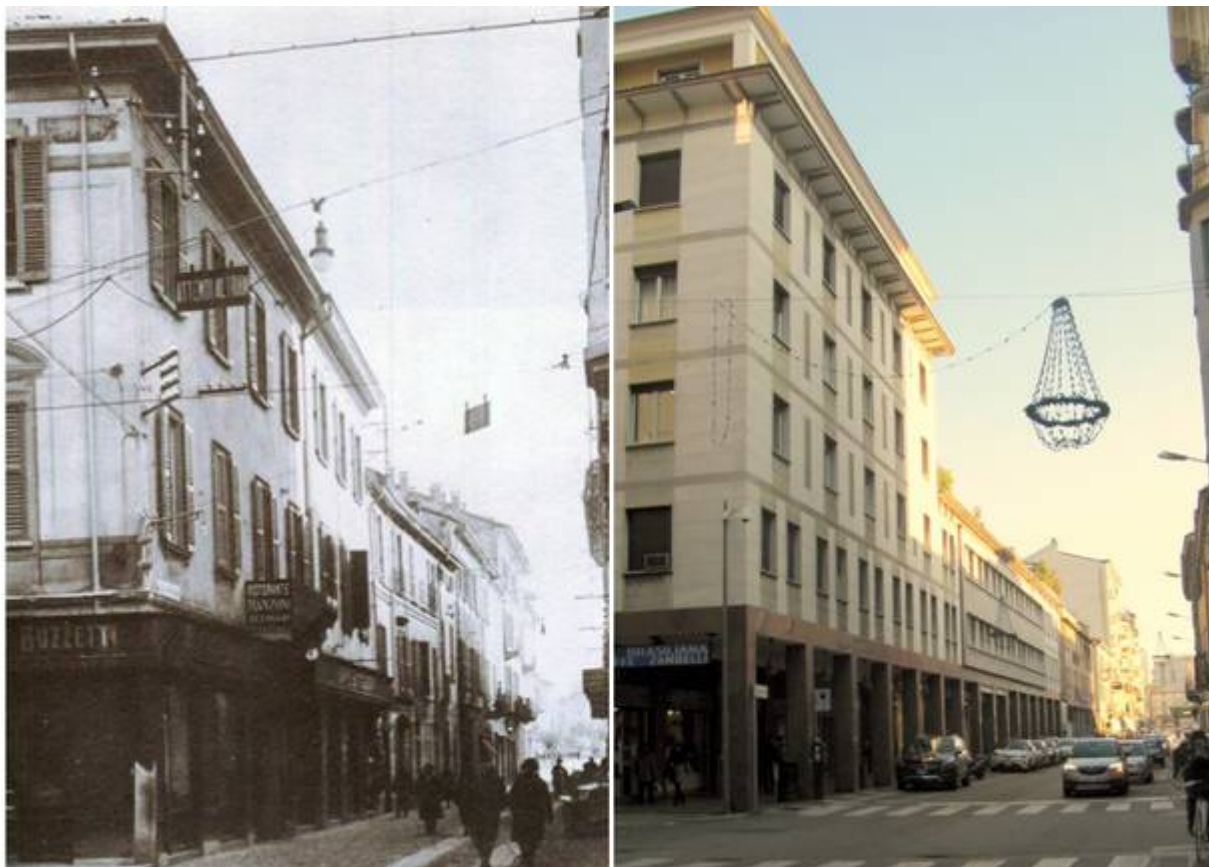
Urban metamorphosis, seventh instalment: Via Manzoni gutted by Democratic pickaxes

Via Volta, which we wrote about last Monday, was and still is a continuation of Via Manzoni which, unlike the street named after the great scientist from Como, did not fall foul of the “restoring pickaxe” of Italy’s fascist period, but was almost completely rebuilt in the second half of the twentieth century. The buildings on the right-hand side, looking from Piazza Repubblica, were demolished in the 1960s and 1970s. Those who, like the writer, are of a certain age, will remember the many businesses whose windows looked onto the street, such as the restaurant on the corner of Via Mazzini and the first

pizzeria opened in Varese by Quinto Zei, and many will recall the lobby, where used books and magazines were displayed by the Libreria Carravetta, a pioneer of reusing.



In the period photo that shows the same side of the street, but from the Via Volta end, we can see the shop windows of the Buzzetti delicatessen and the sign of the Manzoni Hotel and Restaurant, on the corner with Via Magatti. On the same side, the “modernist pickaxe” sacrificed one of the town’s historic buildings, that of the noble Alemagna family, from whose walls valuable frescoes were fortunately removed and now decorate the old headquarters of the “Motta” Music School.



On the opposite side of Via Manzoni, between the Mera-Gorini building, on the corner with Via Bernascone, there is perhaps the last art nouveau building in Varese, which was built in 1926, on the plans of the architect Federico Talamona, and the complex of courtyards, which were built in the early 1990s, a few old houses have survived, one of which housed to the “Albergo dell’Angelo” hotel, whose façade was redesigned in 1843 by the engineer Carlo Ponti.



As the historian Fernando Cova recalls, the hotel was first mentioned in 1599, as the “Locanda dell’Angiolo” inn. Also on this side, which partially escaped rebuilding, there were some well-known establishments, such as the “Firenze Café” (on the corner of the square), a meeting place for sportsmen and women, which replaced the historic “Verbania Café”, and the “Ristorante del Ghiaccio”. Beyond an arch, in a courtyard that leads to the Morfeo Hotel, the cyclist Cervini carried out his activities.

Translated by Graziani Edoardo, Mura Denise, Perinelli Giorgia and Rota Andrea

Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook