

Pordenone, Torre Cotton Mill

The Belaz Fratelli & Blanc company from Trieste, made up of entrepreneurs from Geneva, started a cotton spinning factory in Torre between 1839 and 1842. Initially the factory was laid out on six floors and surmounted by a turret, where a bell marked the work shifts, leaning against a second, larger, four-storey one, according to a vertically developed structure, like the contemporary English and German factories and the ancient Italian silk spinning machines. In 1895, after various changes of ownership in 1887 and 1889, it became Società Anonima Cotonificio Veneziano, which belonged to the cotton-maker Emilio Cantoni of Milan. Around 1900 the spinning complex was enlarged and restructured by demolishing the too high vertical structures, replaced by a three- and four-level building with a flat roof and a clock tower that supported the water tank and the stairs. In 1910 the complex expanded again but in 1916, despite the modern fire precautions, the spinning was seriously damaged by a fire.

The activity resumed for a short time in 1917, after restoration works on the structure, but in November of the same year, during the retreat of Caporetto, the establishment was set on fire by the Italian military, so that it would not fall into the hands of the Austrians. The complex was again rebuilt between 1919 and 1920, taking up the formal-aesthetic models of the old building.

In the middle of 1930, the factory was enlarged with the addition of a parallel body, arranged on two levels and joined to the main body thanks to two shelters, placed at the ends. During the Second World War the factory was requisitioned by German troops and suffered heavy devastation. In the 1950s the last expansion. The Torre plant ceased its activity in 1984 and is now in a state of neglect and degradation awaiting restoration.

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