

## Historical Museum of Mutual Aid

Along the Road of Solidarity

Pinerolo

The Historical Museum of Mutual Aid was inaugurated for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the General Association of Workers of Pinerolo in October 1998. This association was born in the city of Pinerolo on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1848 as the first Worker Society of Mutual Aid in Italy, with the purpose of union and brotherhood, mutual aid and mutual education, to help each other and give a hand to others through an individual contribution.

On the cultural and social aspect, the mutualism is undoubtedly the most important mass movement raised in Italy between the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Emerged in the middle of the century, thanks to the freedom of association granted by the Albertino Statute, the associations of mutual aid spread, firstly in Piedmont and then in the rest of the peninsula, involving a multitude of workers, artisans and professionals.

A museum that intends to explain the mutual movement must find the way, through documents, items and symbols, to communicate concepts like the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood, and the way to live these values every day.

What we are proposing to set up is a structure which gives back, at least in part, the emotions, the system of values and of interpersonal relationships of mutual associations.

Not just a didactic structure but also a path that makes the visitor relive the "climate" of historical museums of mutual aid as it was at the time of their birth.

For this reason an evocative settlement has been recreated. Without giving up offering essential information, the visitor is introduced and accompanied through the museum path in a "real" mutual aid Society, reconstructed in a historical moment between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when the Italian Mutualism reached the highest point of development.

The idea to simulate a real mutual place was inspired by the very place where the museum is set up: the historical headquarters of the General Association of Workers of Pinerolo.

