

Adriano Olivetti



Adriano Olivetti in front of the Ivrea factories in a photo of 1959 c.

Adriano Olivetti (1901-1960) was born in Ivrea, the second child of Camillo and Luisa Revel. Initially, his education is imbued with the game, freedom of thought and he is interested in the socio-political debate. Spirituality, loyalty to work, profound respect for the worker, entrepreneurial courage in starting and consistency in finishing, the high selectivity of targets: Adriano and his father, although differently, share these traits. After graduating in chemical engineering, he is a workman in the family plant of typewriters. Like Camillo in the late 19th century, Adriano travels to the USA (1925-26) visiting a hundred factories to observe the modern methods of production and work organization. Back in Italy, he recommends his father a program to modernize the company in the name of what has been named "industrial humanism": a plan aimed at decentralization, at the management according to functions, at the development of the commercial network. In those years, Adriano has also his first great idea of a product: in 1932, MP1 is presented, the first portable typewriter.



Did you know...?

*Adriano's legacy is that of an extraordinary industrialist, capable to invent a new work culture to give value to collaborators and assistants, engineers and technicians who work for him. He is the general manager of the company since 1932 and progressively takes its control after his father's death (1944). He applies the **principle of the triplets** at the higher levels of the company: for each new engineer, also a humanistic-educated person is hired. For Adriano Olivetti, culture is the essential pillar of life and of his firm.*



Detail of the entrance with the Olivetti pictogram



La Martella neighborhood, Matera

In 1945 Adriano Olivetti publishes *L'ordine politico delle Comunità* (The Political Order of Communities), a book including observations on statal organization: for Olivetti, a Community should be at the center of the statal organization, a people-oriented society, a culturally homogeneous and economically self-sufficient territorial unity. After the publication of the book, the Movimento Comunità is founded in 1948 in Turin. One of the most vivid actions of the movement is the achievement of the La Martella settlement in Matera, directed at the development of the local community.

Olivetti's industrial strategy is founded on the productive models observed in the USA and takes into consideration the work conditions, the relation with the local territory, innovation, the employees' training, the aesthetical quality of the spaces and the objects. In the same years in which the *Negozio* is built, the company is considerably growing and has plants in 17 countries. Between 1930 and 1940 it produces 5 new models of typewriters and between 1945 and 1959, 21 more. To mention a few: the first personal typewriter (**M40**, 1933), the first business calculator (*Divisumma*, 1940), the renowned **Lettera 22** (1950).



The Olivetti logotype in Istrian stone in the Sotoportego del Cavalletto



Lettera 22 typewriter, from 1950



Negozio Olivetti in 1978, exhibition of Dino Buzzati



The shopwindow of the Negozio

In 1997 the Ivrea-based company, experiencing a shakeout, shuts the prestigious *Negozio* in San Marco. In the site, a completely inadequate touristy shop takes over until Assicurazioni Generali, the owner, launch a thorough conservative restoration. In 2011 the management is **entrusted to FAI** which gives it back to the community and reinstates the original exhibition while keeping it open to the public. Olivetti donates the machines on display to evoke the original Olivetti design.