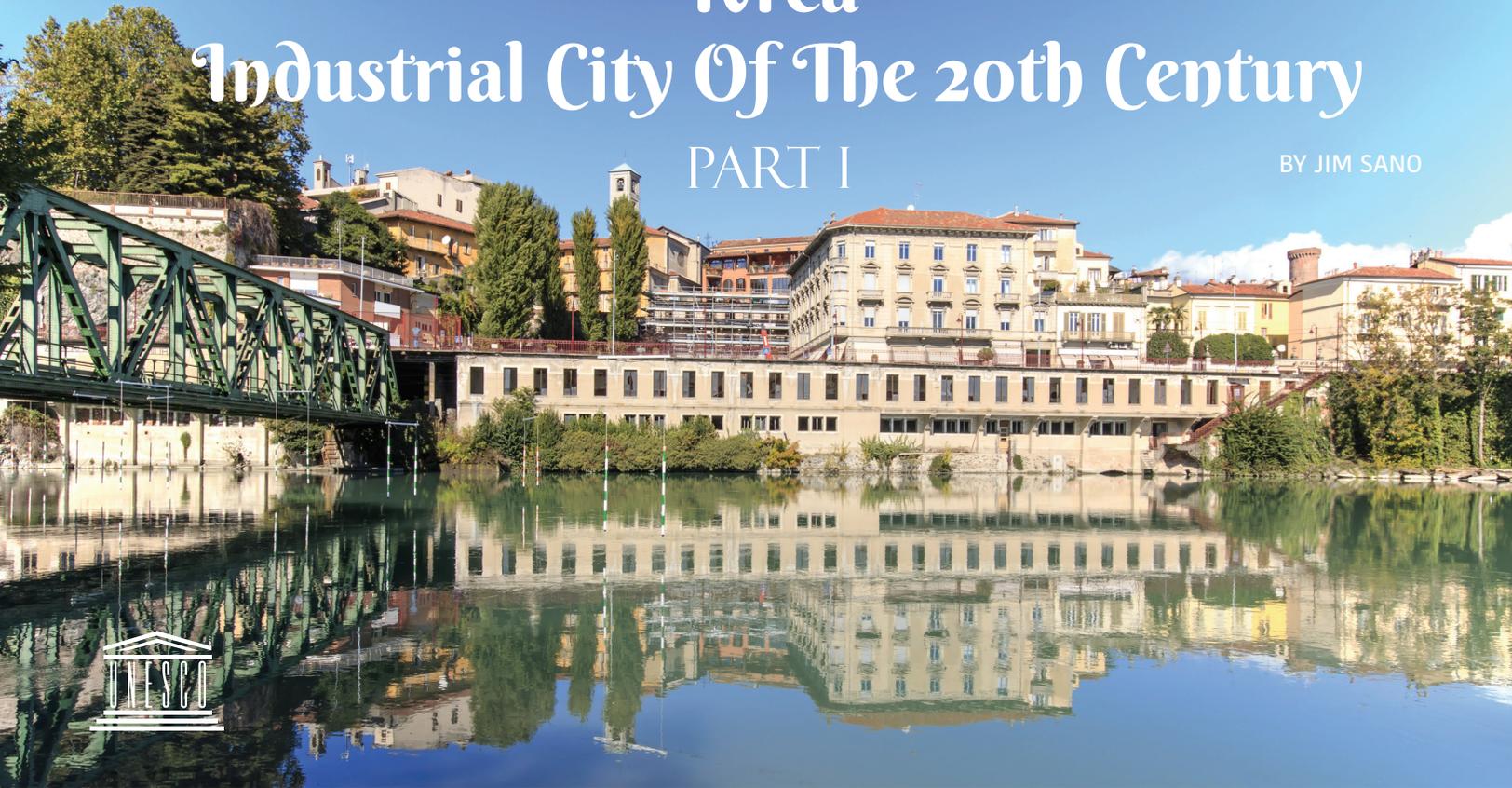


Ivrea Industrial City Of The 20th Century

PART I

BY JIM SANO



Ivrea, a historic town in northern Italy's Piedmont region along the Dora Baltea river, boasts a rich heritage dating back to Roman times. Its picturesque center features medieval architecture and bustling cafes. A highlight is Ivrea Castle, a 13th-century fortress offering panoramic views of the town and its surroundings. Ivrea is famous for hosting the oldest annual carnival celebration in Italy, the Carnival of Ivrea, which includes the "Battle of the Oranges." This historic reenactment involves throwing oranges in the streets and highlights the carnival season. With a population of 24,000 residents, Ivrea is 253 meters above sea level, approximately 54 kilometers north of Turin.

Ivrea's modern significance lies in its close association with the Olivetti corporation, established in the early 20th century. Olivetti, renowned for manufacturing typewriters, calculating machines, computers, and office equipment, revolutionized urban planning and architecture in the city. The Olivetti factory in Ivrea transcended mere production, embodying the ideals of the Community Movement initiated by Olivetti in 1947. This movement introduced a new economic model that redefined the relationship between companies and workers. Ivrea was named a UNESCO World Heritage

Site in 2018 for its industrial significance and 20th-century urban development.

The site spans 71 hectares and features 27 Rationalist-style buildings dating from the 1930s to the 1960s. These Olivetti buildings and industrial complexes are the focal points of the UNESCO designation, showcasing various facilities for production, administration, social services, and residential purposes. Olivetti's innovative approach to manufacturing and architecture revitalized the region's development, fostering technological advancement and prosperity. Ivrea is a testament to Olivetti's enduring legacy of progress and innovation.

Olivetti and the Industrial City of the 20th Century

In July 2018, the inclusion of "Ivrea, a city of industry in the 20th century" onto the UNESCO World Heritage list was a momentous occasion, honoring the incredible efforts of Adriano Olivetti to advance industrial, social, urban, and architectural initiatives. As a city of industry in the 20th century, Ivrea represents a remarkable approach to the swift transformations of industrialization. Ivrea is considered one of the most significant industrial "utopias" of the 20th century, comparable to socially conscious models of industrial development in America and Europe.

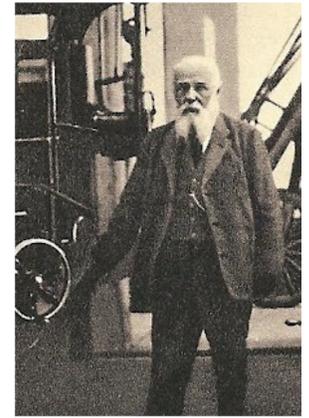
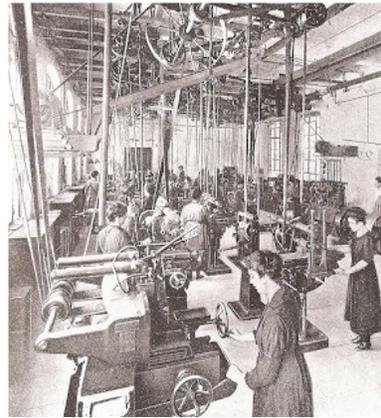


Adriano Olivetti was a transformative leader who turned his company into a visionary factory. He championed alternative industrial models and architecture that placed the well-being of citizens at the forefront. Shaped by Olivetti's influence and Adriano's vision, the company aimed to establish a utopian community that harmonized production with the needs of its residents after World War II. This transition prioritized the welfare of citizens over mere economic growth and employment opportunities, positioning Ivrea as a model for modern industrial cities that strive to tackle the challenges of rapid industrialization.



The Story of the Olivetti Company - Early Years

The saga of the Olivetti family finds its roots in America. Camillo Olivetti (1868-1943) journeyed to the United States in 1893. Accompanied by his mentor, the renowned engineer and scientist Galileo Ferraris, they visited the World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. This exhibition showcased the latest technological advancements driving America's rapid industrial growth, leaving a profound impression on Camillo Olivetti. Upon Camillo Olivetti's return from America, he founded an innovative industrial company that manufactured electrical measuring instruments. This endeavor started in 1907 when Ivrea was just an overgrown village. The Olivetti factory, situated half a mile from the town in an open field, initially employed only four inexperienced workers who received training from Camillo Olivetti in tool usage. Camillo Olivetti encountered a significant delay in establishing his typewriter factory, during which



time he conducted thorough preliminary studies over two years. By 1909, typewriter production commenced, leading to the establishment of "Ing. C. Olivetti and Co." in Ivrea. This venture propelled the company to international recognition, solidifying its position as a pioneer of industrial innovation in Italy. Camillo Olivetti's dedication to crafting a unique typewriter led to the meticulous design of every aspect. Workers brought the Olivetti M1 typewriter to life, incorporating new features that improved speed and performance. Notably, Olivetti's design for key and typebar linkage allowed for an adjustable motion of the typebars, enhancing the typewriter's functionality. Using forged steel in the moving parts also improved the machine's functionality.

The debut of the first Olivetti typewriter on April 29, 1911, at the Turin World's Fair marked a significant milestone in the company's history. Two typewriters were showcased in the Newspaper Pavilion, accompanied by demonstrations of the machine tools used in their production, highlighting Olivetti's commitment to innovation and craftsmanship. Interestingly, Camillo took more pride in demonstrating his innovative methods and modern approach to manufacturing than in showcasing the final product to the public.



The official fair catalog listed Olivetti as the "first and only typewriter factory in Italy" and its product as "a first-class typewriter, patented by C. Olivetti in Italy, France, Germany, England, Austria, Switzerland, and the United States." The typewriter featured an original design, legible characters, a standard keyboard, a two-colored

ribbon, a decimal tabulator, a backspace, multiple margin adjustment, modern workmanship, and absolute precision. Shortly after the fair ended, Olivetti was awarded a contract to provide the Italian Ministry of the Navy with 100 typewriters.



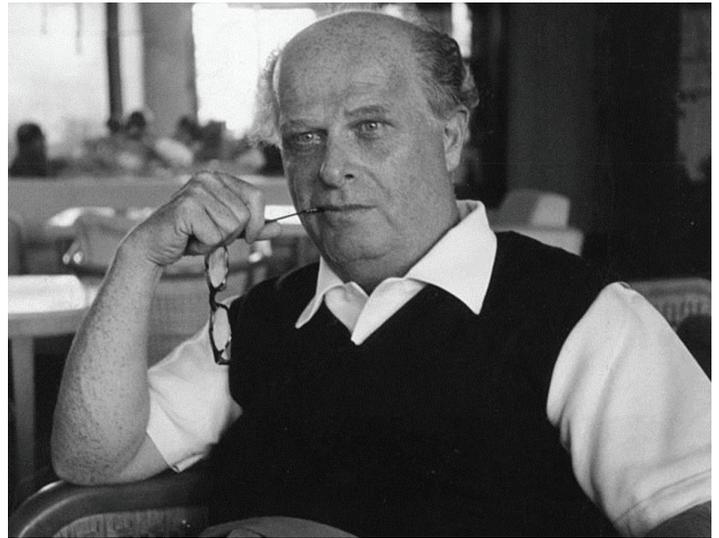
In 1911, Ivrea workers at the Olivetti typewriter factory manufactured the Olivetti M1. This clunky cast iron typewriter weighed approximately 38 pounds and had 42 keys divided into four rows, eight tabulator keys, and a space bar. Italy's postal service ordered 50 more Olivetti typewriters. Camillo expanded by opening sales branches in Milan, Genoa, Rome, and Naples. By 1914, the Olivetti factory grew from 20 workers producing 20 typewriters weekly to 100 workers making four machines daily. Eventually, 6000 M1 typewriters were produced, followed by the M20 model.

In 1924, 400 employees produced around 4,000 machines per year. By 1926, production had doubled to 8,000 machines with 500 employees. In 1929, production increased to 13,000 typewriters.



The Story of the Olivetti Company - 1930's - 1960's

Adriano Olivetti was born in Ivrea in 1901 and started his career in his father's factory as a young boy. His father's progressive ideas brought him up in an atmosphere of innovation and social reform. In 1924, he obtained a chemical engineering degree. The following year, he journeyed to the US to explore innovative production methods and learn about company organization from Henry Ford in Detroit. He later implemented Ford's "Taylorist" system to enhance production efficiency in his family business. In 1926, Adriano Olivetti began



his career at the factory as a worker, eventually rising to plant manager in 1933. He oversaw significant milestones during his tenure, including introducing Olivetti's first portable typewriter, the MP1. By 1938, Olivetti had ascended to the role of president. Beyond his achievements in business, Olivetti was a staunch advocate of Modernism in architecture and politics, leaving a legacy in both fields. Having worked in the factory, Olivetti understood the tedium and burden of repetitive tasks. He aimed to free workers from this degrading slavery and sought ways to lighten the burden of work. When Adriano took over the company, emphasis was placed on industrial innovation and architectural experimentation inspired by the Modern Movement. In 1934, he commissioned two young Milanese architects, Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, to create a new urban plan for Ivrea, the model industrial city. Adriano's strong commitment led to the fusion of technology and socialist ideals.

Olivetti improved working conditions by offering cultural and welfare programs, such as books, courses, inventions, and artwork, transforming assembly line work from discomfort to fulfillment. He also advocated for social reform and inclusion, providing his factory workers with amenities like a cinema and library. The Olivetti M20, a new model, was introduced with keys for uppercase and lowercase letters, a return key, and more. Despite these additions, it still weighed 38 pounds. The company was manufacturing 13,000 units annually and started exporting to foreign markets. During this time, they also unveiled the M40 model before World War II. Adriano was an absolute powerhouse when it came to modernizing Olivetti. He worked tirelessly to implement new, innovative methods, reorganize management, and expand the sales network. His dedication to the company was truly remarkable!

Although against the rise of fascism initially, he began a brief relationship with the regime. The prohibition on foreign product importation imposed by fascism favored the dizzying growth of Olivetti sales. As a



The plan aimed to provide affordable housing, focusing on improving worker's social lives and ensuring that each building complements the landscape and it's surroundings.



converted Jew, he clashed with authorities under Mussolini's regime. The racial laws and the outbreak of the Second World War convinced Adriano to initiate subversive activities. In '43, he ended up in prison, accused of having warned the Americans not to trust the government. Once freed, he spent the last two years of the war in exile in Switzerland, supporting the resistance and assisting the Americans. Without access to a typewriter, he manually wrote his most significant work, "The Political Order of Communities." This work proposed blending urban planning with politics, promoting self-governing communities of 75,000 to 150,000 residents. He aimed to replace large factories and congested cities with balanced lifestyles, striking a balance between central and local authorities. Olivetti expanded his concepts of human-sized capitalism to include not only assembly lines but also amenities such as canteens, clinics, kindergartens, libraries, adult education courses, exhibitions, and conferences to promote cultural values and understanding. Olivetti was determined to create a model of a different work organization that blended scientific and humanistic culture at the Ivrea factory.

Adriano Olivetti returned to Ivrea after his WWII exile and resumed control of the factory. In the next 30 years, Adriano Olivetti transformed Olivetti from a small family business into a massive company with factories in five countries and distribution networks in over 100 countries. The town of Ivrea also changed, evolving from a small provincial town into a major manufacturing hub, attracting engineers, designers, and workers from all over Italy. The company's expansion doubled the town's population between the 1930s and 1960s. New factories were constructed, and Olivetti initiated a significant transformation by installing new windows in the buildings. The windows allowed workers to see outside and passersby to observe the activities inside. The company introduced various amenities, including cafeterias, playgrounds, debate rooms, film screening rooms, and libraries with extensive collections. They provided quality healthcare, social services, and free recreational facilities. On-site education and trade school courses were available. Cultural activities,

such as performances by actors, musicians, and poets, were organized during lunch breaks. Olivetti invested in nursery schools, the first hospital in Ivrea, and mountaintop retreats for workers' children. The company offered excellent benefits, including nine months of paid maternity leave for women, wages almost 20% higher than the national average, Saturdays off, and reduced weekly working hours from 48 to 45. Retirement was secured with substantial pensions, emphasizing dignity. In July, employees engaged in small-scale farming, reconnecting with their agrarian roots and bridging the urban-rural divide. The company hired renowned architects to construct modern homes and apartments for its employees, underlining their vision of quality living.

Additionally, Olivetti financed the initial master plans for the city and its surroundings. In 1959, a new plan for Ivrea was approved, involving integrated residential areas, a ring road, a new bridge, industrial expansion, and the revitalization of the historic center. Adriano Olivetti's vision of creating a more "human" industrial city in Ivrea, emphasizing holistic city planning, was on the verge of realization. His innovative holistic approach to employee welfare and commitment to design transformed Ivrea into a thriving company town, prioritizing the well-being of its workers and setting a new standard for industrial urbanism.

Adriano Olivetti's vision encouraged harmony and progress in corporate communities and criticized the materialistic expansion of Italian cities without a cohesive plan. Olivetti's factory quickly became the most modern structure in Italy. Olivetti is seen as a symbol of pride in Italy's history, particularly in its role in the country's post-war economic success, making it the world's eighth-largest economy.

Recognizing the importance of politics and urban planning in his vision, Olivetti established a political party called Movimento Comunità. He was elected mayor of Ivrea in 1956 and later became a member of the Italian parliament. Olivetti aimed to promote his ideas of integrating business, politics, and worker well-being to create a progressive society in Italy and beyond.