

Giuseppe Doimo

a life dedicated to furniture

The deepest rivers flow
with the least sound.

Quintus Curtius Rufus

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Giuseppe Doimo, a life dedicated to furniture
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Giuseppe Doimo e Gianna Marin, 1959

Author's note



This book is the biography of Giuseppe Doimo and not a monograph on the Doimo Group and its companies. The clarification is important in order to understand the essence of the book, the direction it was given and the way the events have been recounted. Events which belong to a man of humble origins who, at ten years of age, after Elementary school, became an apprentice in a carpenter's shop to learn the trade, and who, at seventy-five years of age, is the head of the biggest Italian Furnishings Group.

In this book, then, the protagonist is only Giuseppe Doimo, with his personal and entrepreneurial life. The facts and companies, reported chronologically, find noteworthy room, but are always only there in order to understand Giuseppe Doimo and his world, and to fully document everything he has done or to connect it to the furnishings sector, where he had earned attention, fame and respect.

It is the same for the members of his family: his parents; his three siblings, two of whom joined him in the exhilarating entrepreneurial "adventure"; his wife; his four children and their spouses. Highlighting though, that the "second generation" have already acquired high responsibility roles at management level in the companies and the Group. The Group's main characteristic is in fact that it is "family run", which is by no means a hindrance, but a strength.

The many important collaborators, who have contributed to the growth of the companies and the Group, are not mentioned. This was Giuseppe Doimo's choice, for fear of upsetting some-

one, when mentioning a few and leaving out some others. There are only two exceptions: his fellow shop worker, who would become the first operative on his books and who would stay with him for nearly fifty years; and his first architect, who would collaborate with him for twenty-five years, designing in those five half-decades many of the bedroom furniture ranges which were produced. Giuseppe Doimo is not full of self-importance, and moreover, he is entirely devoid of presumption. He likes to listen, more than to talk. And when he talks, he does not like chitchat, he only says what is necessary. His humane and understanding nature marks him out as an exemplary human being, as well as an entrepreneur. He is also quite shy; even though, during the long meetings to get to know and understand him, I thought I could sense in him the “duty of memory”: first of all towards his own family, but also towards others; everybody who will want to read this compelling story. Moreover, during our meetings, he appeared as a sort of treasure chest, which held many memories and which was opening little by little: and those memories, like chromosomes, mould the “passing of time”. Not only his time, but also that of the members of his family and of his companies. A passing of time, which the photographs accompany with empathy, both the ones marked by the years, and the most recent ones.

Biographers are like ancient painters who used to manufacture their own colours; mashing barks, seeds and various materials, in order to obtain the most appropriate tonalities. Basically, the biographer does the same: he gathers notes and sentences harvested from the main character, from those closest to him and from those who know him best, in order to compose the most real and fair picture of him, which will portray him to others in the most realistic way. Neither more, nor less. I hope to have achieved this with this biography of Giuseppe Doimo, because he is a man who deserves the best.



Hard work since a boy

1.

Giuseppe Doimo is born in Mosnigo di Moriago, in the Treviso area, on 4th February 1933 and is the second of four children, all male, of Giovanni Doimo and Angela Corazzin. Silvio had been born before him (1930), the year after Ettore arrived (1934) and ten years later Ferdinando (1943), nicknamed Fernando.

The parents are both farmers, even if the mother has businessmen in her family. *«I really take after my mother - Giuseppe Doimo repeats time and time again, when he tells his story - the same mentality: alert and resilient; the same DNA for business: few words and straight to the point».*

As the main town Moriago, Mosnigo was a small farming village back then, with the soft vineyard hills as a backdrop, often steeped in magical mist, and further back the summit of the Endimione. Around it, an uninterrupted expanse of variously cultivated fields stretching as far as the Piave. From the marshlands (Palù) to the gravel banks (Grave), in the past 50 years these fields have been populated with factories, to such a great degree that it's now an extraordinarily vital and productive area, partially thanks to the Doimo companies.

When Giuseppe Doimo was born, the war - the Great War - had ended fifteen years earlier, but still lived on in people's memories. This is not only because of the damage and destruction to houses and to the Caminesi Tower in Moriago, which served as steeple and whose stump is still standing, a reminder of the destruction brought by the conflict. Especially because it maimed



Giovanni and Angela Doimo with their sons Giuseppe, Ettore and Silvio in 1938.

people's minds and hearts, with the terrible year of suffering between the lost battle of Caporetto and the conquering of Vittorio Veneto. With the return of the Austro-Hungarians, rulers with no respect even towards human life, and with the desolating reality of the evacuation far from the front, which was called "Evacuation Period". All these events that caused many deaths were very difficult to forget!

Moreover, Moriago itself had been involved, from 24th October 1918, (exactly one year after the lost battle of Caporetto) in the final assault of the Arditi Corps on Vittorio Veneto and in the end of the conflict, with the annihilation of the Austro-Hungarian resistance on the Piave. With thousands of deaths on both sides, to the extent that it is said that the river's water remained stained with blood for days on end and washed up a shocking amount of torn bodies for months. To pay respect to the victims, without distinction of nationality, as death tears down all barriers and makes everyone equal, a strip of land of the gravel banks (Grave) beside the river was later named "the island of the dead": a big park would be built, planted in various phases, a war memorial and a chapel-monument would be constructed as well.

After the war, another tragic event hit this area near the Piave and this event is also constantly present in people's tales. People against whose lives, already full of hardship and weariness, fate seems to rage. The night of 26th February 1928, a Sunday, a house burned down in Moriago. This house had been provisionally put to use as a cinema. Out of many spectators death took 35 people, who perished, tormented in the flames.

This was an event of the utmost gravity, which caused desperate mourning for Moriago, Mosnigo and other towns where the victims resided, but which emotionally affected the whole of Italy. The local and national press reported on this event profusely. The "Domenica del Corriere", the best known and most read weekly

magazine then, dedicated one of its famous covers to this event, illustrated and signed by the famous painter Walter Molino. Another popular weekly magazine of the time, the "Illustrazione del Popolo", did the same, with an illustration by Ortelli.

The memory of these two tragic events, the war and the deaths in the cinema fire accompany Giuseppe Doimo and his peers' childhood, a childhood defined for almost everyone by a humble life and many duties. Particularly for children of farming families there is a lot of help needed in the fields, sometimes during the school months, but also the whole summer. *«I didn't like working on the farm - he explains - it was very tiring, especially the sowing period. We used to get home with our backs in pieces».*

In those years living in the countryside still meant empathizing with the seasons and with their flow in time. The hot Summer, whose light at sunset takes on the golden tones of some Renaissance paintings. Autumn, whose rain turns the still unpaved roads into pure mud. Winter, whose numbing sheath of frost



covers the branches of plants for weeks, untouched by an emaciated sun. With the mist and fog which start to stain the air as it darkens and with the sky that seems on the point of freezing at dusk. Barricaded into the house, which is not well heated, the window panes covered in frosted patterns, which not even a thumbnail manages to dent. In the house you listen to every day's events, with real or likely stories, which enliven the vigil (filò) in the hours between dinner and sleep. After the long winter, Spring arrives, with the sun taking the upper hand on the morning mist which then brings on the "good season", Summer, with its smells, colours, and an explosion of life which changes everything: men, animals, fields and woods.

In this flowing of the seasons children take inspiration for their few moments of playtime, like in Winter with snow, which often lasts for a long time, or in the Summer with fireflies, whom they chase on the lawns in the dark or under the moonlight, and with the water of the marshlands (Palù), of the Raboso and Rospes streams and of the creeks which line the fields like wrinkles on a face.

And then there are the festivities, impatiently longed for, but which also hold a little melancholy, because of... the foreboding of their imminent end. This is also true at Christmas, the most important of all festivities. *«Of Christmas - he tells - I remember the lunch, which was a family tradition in every household. But not the presents, as there weren't any for farmer's children or, if there were, they consisted of some clothing or a packet with dried figs, peanuts and mandarins».*

In those times Christmas was exclusively the celebration of the birth of Jesus, who was also poor, and so there was no complaining about him having been strict. Nobody could have foreseen that within a few decades it would have become almost an archaic name, overcome by the more modern Santa Claus, very

wealthy and a spendthrift, who delivers presents to all, good and bad, without requesting the fulfilment of too many duties through the parents.

Then there is school, Elementary School lasted only 4 years back then. Giuseppe Doimo starts school in the Autumn of 1939, just when Europe is at War again, with the invasion of Poland by Germany. Italy is not involved for a year but then - in June 1940 - our country is also drawn into the conflict. This happens the day following the end of the "Giro d'Italia" with the victory of Fausto Coppi, who had fired enthusiasm in the "Marca Trevigiana", the Treviso area fans, big and small.

«The first three years - he points out - I had a female primary school teacher, her name was Zancaner and she was from Rome, while the last year she was replaced by a male teacher. In those times, contrary to nowadays, there were more male teachers than female ones».

At school, learning is based on the "sussidiario", the Elementary School book, which changed every year and which was the indispensable tool to learn to write, count, and assimilate the main notions of History and Geography. And then there are the slightly unfair dictation tests by the teacher, who deliberately tried to put the less clever or attentive pupils on the spot, by pronouncing the words in a tricky way, throwing them off-track. When they must write "province", she would say "provincie", with an extra "i" strong and clear. When they must write "ciliegie", she would say "ciliège", with the "i" practically silent. Now and then she passes by the desks checking, with a serious frown, while the children keep their heads down on their lined exercise books, scraping the paper with the nib or staining the pages with it when there is too much ink.



Giuseppe Doimo at his "First Communion" in 1941.

2.

In Spring 1943, just as he is finishing the fourth year of Elementary School, so in the last days of his schooling, something happens to Giuseppe Doimo which will change his destiny, confirming, if this was necessary, the importance of chance in man's existence.

It is war time and Giuseppe's mother is baking homemade bread. *«One day - he notes, his eyes gleaming - she sent me to get some yeast from a lady who lived in the village: one of her five children, whose name was Savino Pazziaia, was a carpenter. So I peeked into the shop and I saw that he was making a wardrobe. I stopped for ten minutes or so, enraptured by it all. Even by the smell of the wood and the glues».*

Usually, people talk about vocation referring to those who decide to become nuns or priests. It is - as they say - "the call of our Lord", strong, unrenounceable, fulfilling. It is obviously not appropriate to compare the sacred and the profane, nor to show lack of respect, but this choice of words gives a good idea: that day, Giuseppe Doimo receives the... "the call of timber", which is also describable with the three adjectives above.

He goes back home and tells his mum straight away, as he has a very close relationship with her, different from the relationship with his father, who is very good natured but taciturn with his children. *«I want to go and learn the carpenter's trade»*, he tells her, without mincing his words. His mother is always very biased towards him, as he is so like her in personality. She does not make any objections, although she knows that the last word will be her husband's.

That night, when his father Giovanni comes back from the fields, it is his turn to listen to his son's wish, sitting in the kitchen, one opposite the other, with the faint light of the lamp hanging over the table, dancing with the jolts of the electrical current. His father, at first, is not as agreeable as his mother, in fact he expresses doubts and bafflement. Maybe this is due to the job Giuseppe has chosen, or more likely, due to the prospect of losing two more helping hands which were necessary for working in the fields, after the eldest son, Silvio, had left him to become an apprentice in a Blacksmith's Shop.

It is however understandable: he and other farmers like him, who were born in a generation of sacrifice and duty are unaware protagonists of a culture on the decline. Everything they own is the result of hard work from dawn until dusk, in good and bad weather, the fruit of much collective effort by every member of the family, big and small, or maybe even of some contentious inheritance. This had been the culture of the soil for centuries, with



Angela and Giovanni Doimo in 1926 and Giovanni Doimo in 1928.

its meagre but secure yield, even though now and then hailstones would cause massive damage, when the sky would punish the people of the land for incomprehensible faults, and obviously there weren't insurance policies to recover even some of what was lost.

Going back to the talk between Giuseppe Doimo and his father, he also gives his assent to his son's choice. It is still necessary though to speak to the main person concerned, Savino Pazzia, a task which Giuseppe takes upon himself the very next day, with some apprehension, fearing a possible refusal. But he is so convincing and he shows such interest for the trade that the carpenter agrees.

As soon as Elementary School is over he starts working in the shop, with much enthusiasm and a great will to learn. He is ten years old, an age when imagination is far more vital than reality, and many propositions and plans are made, but not many carried out. Giuseppe Doimo on the other hand is determined and unwavering in his choice, with no doubts or uncertainties about his decision.

The shop is small, about fifteen square metres, but he doesn't mind. What matters to him is to rise from the ranks. *«I remember - he points out - that when Savino and I were cutting the wooden boards with a saw, and we were standing one on either side of it, I was always thinking: I need to get to the other side!, which meant...becoming the boss»*. He is clever and intelligent. He is a good and quick learner.

It is still 1943. In September of this year Giovanni Doimo's family reaches its complete number of members, with the birth of the fourth and last child, not a girl, as everyone hoped, but another boy, Fernando. The most important thing anyway is that he is healthy, because during the war finding the money for doctors and medicines would not have been an easy task.

But September 1943 also marks important war events. Italy signs a truce with the Anglo-Americans and, suddenly, the Germans, who were the allies, become enemies, even though this is not so obvious in the proclamation following this event, which remains in history as one of the maximum expressions of the levantine ability of Italian people of implying, of saying without saying.

In reality, the events of the following weeks clearly define the entity of the drama which was about to hit the North of Italy: the settlement of the Nazi troops; the founding of the Republic of Salò, of its Militia and the Black Shirts (Camicie Nere); the formation of the first groups of the Resistance and the resulting start of the Civil War which would become vicious and no holds barred. This Civil War would eventually involve not only armed men but also defenceless civilians.

So it is that the Second World War, which in 1939 had started so far away from this area near Treviso (the “Marca trevigiana”), by the end of 1943 reaches these places, already stricken



Mosnigo just after the Second World War: the current via Aldo Moro and Piazza Albertini.

by the Great War. This is a conflict which terrifies people, because it is fuelled by political hatred, by personal grudges and by a never-ending chain of revenges and because, in that climate, life is worth very little and one can be killed for any reason ever none. This is why Giovanni Doimo decides to “go up to the mountains” - as they used to say - to avoid the combings, which are becoming more and more intense and nasty. For his son Giuseppe this starts several months of anxiety. He is ten years old, adults don't speak to him clearly about what is happening, however, he understands it all, putting together half sentences picked up here or there. Then he sees some dead people along the street. The predestined victims used to be dragged from their homes.

This is when Giuseppe Doimo starts to live in fear, which never leaves him and becomes more and more agonizing. *«Because - he thinks - if my father dies what will become of us? What kind of fate awaits us with my mother alone and four children to bring up, one of which just a baby?»*

But then, finally, in April 1945, the war ends and life slowly goes back to normal for everyone, including Giovanni Doimo's family. His son Giuseppe, in particular, grows not only physically, but also in his apprenticeship, becoming a skilled carpenter. In the shop he works with Guido Bordin, nicknamed “the mute”, whose disability is not only lack of speech but also of hearing. They get on and work together very well. They understand each other just with looks and gestures. And Guido Bordin would become the first operative on his books and would work for him for more than forty years. Just after the war, Giuseppe Doimo widens his experience, dedicating himself to fretwork, a business he would keep doing for a couple of years. He points out: *«It all happened by chance: in a hardware shop I had seen the necessary drawings, the ones to glue onto the plywood. Initially I bought a couple, together with the jigsaw and all the necessary tools and materials*

to carry out the work. I learned it all by myself.

During the day he works in Savino Pazzia's shop and at night and during the festivities, he builds frames, various boxes, especially sewing boxes, lamps and gift items. One of these boxes, full of family heirlooms and mementos, appears in Giuseppe Doimo's hands during one of our meetings and for one brief moment he cannot hold back his emotions...

Once he has finished a few items, he goes to Conegliano by bus to sell them on market day, Friday, and positions himself on the steps leading to the main square, Piazza Cima. *«And just before the market closed - he points out with some pride - I had always sold all the items I had brought with me and I was happy with my earnings. With 30 liras of my first earnings I bought a new bicycle. It was of the Piave brand and had gears: it gave me a great sense of freedom, because it allowed me to go wherever I wanted to and to run like the wind.»*



Giuseppe Doimo with Guido Bordin in 1990.



Giuseppe Doimo at 19 years of age.



3.

A photograph dating back to 1945 shows Giuseppe Doimo in front of his house. His clothes are humble: he is wearing a crew neck jumper, a jacket and long trousers. His face is a young lad's, he is only twelve years old. But what is very striking is his expression, proud and determined, straight to the camera: he seems to be looking at the future with self-confidence, with the strength which comes from his great willpower.

He would greatly prove his character and willpower in 1948. In that year Savino Pazzaia gets ill and, naturally, the work in the shop stops. Giuseppe Doimo, though, doesn't lose faith and asks the carpenter's mother to take over the shop. But she declines, due to her hope that her son would soon start working again.

When one is young, at the age of fifteen, as was Giuseppe Doimo then, it is not easy to direct one's energy all in one direction. It is only later that we learn to distinguish the things that are really worth putting one's efforts into. But this is not so for Giuseppe Doimo, who confidently decides to set up his own business with Guido Bordin. After all, he has learned the trade well.

The shop, at the beginning, is a small room beside his father's house, later moving to bigger premises thanks to his maternal grandfather. The new premises also had a porch at the front, which within a few years, would house the first machines.

Initially the business consisted of making doors, windows and restoring old furniture. Basically, everything that people need to live, and not only, as coffins are also part of the... range of products.

His first clients are from Mosnigo and Moriago but soon they come from the nearby towns, as the skills of the young carpenter become more widely known. Giuseppe Doimo works more and more, day and night, until late, sometimes until one o'clock in the morning. This continues during the whole of the Fifties. He basically does all the shifts himself..

«I used to go home for dinner - he remembers - and then I went back to work. Often my mum would keep me company, bringing something to do, a dress, a jumper, some socks to mend, and she would sit with me in silence, only a few words now and then, then we would go home together for a well deserved rest. My father instead, would not come to the shop. He had the farming habits. He used to get up early in the morning, in the Summer very early, before five, and at night he was really tired, destroyed by the hard work».

In a country village like Mosnigo back in those times, night was wrapped in complete silence. So, often Giuseppe Doimo's night work is stopped by the neighbours, exasperated by the noise of the tools, which the silence magnifies and makes annoying. *«Bepi, a tu finio a lavorar?! Basta...»*, - Bepi, (Giuseppe) have you finished working yet? Stop! They shouted. And when he closes the shop, it is a liberation for them, they can finally sleep in peace.

If this wasn't enough, Giuseppe Doimo manages to combine all this hard work with attending the Technical College in Pieve di Soligo, where he attends the furniture drawing evening course for two and a half years. He starts College in 1948, his first year as a craftsman.

The balance of his business at the end of 1948 is on the whole very positive: the customers are satisfied with what he does and how he does it, even though the earnings are not high, especially compared to the hard work and the amount of hours spent working. On this matter, he points out: *«I was young, the customers*

used to haggle for a bargain and they would frequently be late with the payments».

However Giuseppe Doimo doesn't let just any setback get him down and begins 1949 with the same willpower and effort. That year is very important, first of all because the shop is moved to the premises with the porch we mentioned earlier, which were offered to him by his maternal grandfather. These premises are bigger but also offer another advantage: their location will avoid neighbours' complaints for working during the night. This year is also important because business gets steadier, giving a more secure future and defining a tendency towards producing bedroom furniture. And lastly because, still during this year, Giuseppe Doimo's workforce grows: a couple of apprentices join Guido Bordin. So it is that 1949 will in the future be considered the starting year for the Doimo furnishings business, when defining the Doimo Group's story.

Before entering the Fifties, it is worth noting a couple of behavioural traits of Giuseppe Doimo's, who back then was between fifteen and twenty years old. This will be useful in sketching his personality, his will to learn and his clear decision making ability.

One of these regards educated and cultured people. *«In those years - he remembers - I started to spend time with people who had a good education. I was convinced that someone like me, who had only gone to Elementary School, would have lots to learn from them».* He mentions the parish Priest of Mosnigo, Father Dionisio Ragazzon, who had recently replaced a parish Priest who was "memorable" for the local community, Father Angelo Frare, who had been in Mosnigo for 36 years and who had baptised all the Doimo children. He also mentions the general practitioner of Mosnigo, Doctor Buccioli, excellent at his job and always helpful with everyone.

The things he learns quench his thirst for knowledge for a

while, but often feed new doubts and questions, which he tries to find answers to any way he can. With this behaviour Giuseppe Doimo shows the high consideration that often people, who have not been fortunate to have had a good education, have for culture. This consideration, in my opinion, honours them.

The second note regards Giuseppe Doimo's encounter with the banking world, which explains in a much better way than words ever could, the general uneasiness people felt back then when relating to certain worlds. The first time he crosses the threshold of a lending institution he is disoriented, and more to the point, he cannot converse with the clerk, because he uses an incomprehensible language and makes Giuseppe feel uneasy, with his few smiles and perfect aplomb, which were the job's requirements back then. *«That day - he says - I promised myself: as soon as I can, I have to employ an accountant, otherwise I can never move on...».*

This second note already highlights another trait which would set Giuseppe Doimo apart in his life as an entrepreneur: his ability to delegate duties and responsibilities to trusted people, after having chosen them well. He would show extraordinary skill in this as well.



Giuseppe, Ettore and Fernando Doimo (on the left, from the top to the bottom) with some workers and apprentices of the first shop in 1949.



4.

Let us move into the Fifties, which are marked by a constant growth in the business and also by some meaningful events, the importance of which he will realise straight away.

Already at the very beginning of that decade Giuseppe Doimo badly needs new tools: the tools he owns, which were partially made by him, are proving more and more unsuitable and insufficient for the amount of production work. So it is that in 1952 he decides to buy his first machines: a band saw with two fly-wheels, which would save him having to get the timber sawn by Antonio and Giovanni, two local craftsmen; one combined machine which could perform five jobs and a polishing machine for sanding.

«I went personally to purchase those three machines in Milan - he remembers - from the manufacturer Montavoci, after having consulted a technician at Lancia, whose name was Franco and had married a Moriaghese. They cost 360 thousand lire, which my Dad gave me, the proceeds of the sale of some animals from the farm. My father showed all his respect and faith in me with that gesture, as this was a substantial sum of money for him».

The three machines are positioned under the porch in front of the shop. Hot in the summer and cold in the winter: but this doesn't matter, because those machines change Giuseppe Doimo's entrepreneurial life and also demonstrate that the choice of becoming a carpenter which he made in 1943 hadn't only been the right one, but also within only ten years, it was already presenting unthinkable prospects for social growth.

Giuseppe Doimo, maybe without even realising, was turning

into the antithesis of an ancient reality which faded a lot in the second half of the nineteenth century, but has never really completely disappeared. In this reality men were prisoners of a destiny which dished out its dues once and for all, without any possibility of escape. Giuseppe Doimo, the son of two farmers, who were dignified and honest, but poor, with no prospect of substantial change, would tear down the fixed and unmoveable social frame with his life and work, and would gain a very different role from the one which he was almost inevitably destined for, due to the immutable traditions.

Giuseppe Doimo, at twenty years of age, demonstrates he is not one to give up on his aspirations and social growth objectives, maybe in fear of defeat by a really tough competitor. He wants to fight and especially to win, dedicating himself fully, body and soul, to this goal, and investing so much of his time, more than one can imagine.

The second important event happens in 1953, when Giuseppe Doimo's brother Ettore joins him. Giuseppe has been a skilled craftsman for 5 years already. Ettore still has to fulfil his army service duty (he would later join the Alpini corps) and has just come back from Switzerland, where he had emigrated as a farm labourer, after helping his father on the land.

The entrepreneurial partnership between Giuseppe and Ettore Doimo, which lasted - apart from a brief interruption of a couple of years in the Seventies - until the premature passing of Ettore in 1995, would prove to be mutually stimulating and would be defined in time by the strong competition between two very ambitious, strong and tenacious men, who emulated each other in new initiatives. This competition, maybe beyond their will, would prove to be a positive help in the growth and evolution of the Doimo Group in time. Even the inevitable clashes, fuelled by the friction of the two personalities: Giuseppe, more prag-

matic and open to discussion and Ettore, harder and authoritative, would never lead to unhealable fractures. These clashes were always overcome with intelligence and without after-effects. They would actually be treasured by both, thus ending in something to reflect on and to push them to improve.

The confirmation of the positivity of the brother's partnership, which gave them both "strength" and "security", is evident from the start, because in 1954 they already start building a 200 square metre structure on their father's land, which would later become a factory.

Once the new premises are active, the decision is taken to concentrate production on mainly bedroom and dining room furniture. The business is still based on craftsmanship, but the number of employees is quickly rising. «*We train them ourselves - points out Giuseppe Doimo - because they are all farmers and therefore they have no knowledge of our business. The new recruits learn not only how to work with the machines, but also to understand and know the drawings, which was the basis of the product, and to perform quality checks on the items*».

With the increase of work and therefore of the amount of furniture to deliver to the customers, who are still generally private families, comes a new necessity, that of owning a means of transport, to better arrange the deliveries. In 1956 the first van is bought: Giuseppe Doimo gets the 700 thousand lire as a loan from a friend.

At this time the youngest brother, Fernando, also comes into the business. He was born in 1943: after Elementary School, which now lasted 5 years, he attended the Arts and Crafts School in Crocetta del Montello.



5.

The above events of the Fifties are very important for Giuseppe Doimo as an entrepreneur. However in that decade another special event happened, on a personal level, which would mark his life forever: in 1955 he meets the woman who would become his wife in 1959, Giannina Marin. In this book, though, Giannina will be called Gianna, because Giuseppe Doimo modified her name so since their first meetings, and she would be forever known as Gianna within her new family.

1959 would become not only the year of Giuseppe and Gianna's wedding (in April) but also of Ettore and Elsa Tormena's wedding (in August). And this would prove not to be the only coincidence: the two brothers would have the same number of children (four) and the same number of boys (one) and girls (three). But we will come to this later.

This time too, like the yeast for his mother's bread had made Giuseppe Doimo into a carpenter, fate decides his meeting with Gianna. Fate and his craftsman skills, which by now are well known beyond the Piave. Like in Onigo, where Gianna's family live. Giuseppe Doimo recounts: «I had gone to their house for business: they wanted me to build some sitting room furniture».

He is welcomed by the whole Marin family: her father Antonio, a shoemaker; his wife Angela, nicknamed Lina; and their four children, one of whom is Gianna. For Gianna and Giuseppe, though, that would not be just a business meeting. Their eyes would exchange meaningful glances, arousing a great turmoil in their hearts. And Gianna, between one photograph of furniture

and the next, ventures a question, the most a young woman back then could do, and asks Giuseppe his age. Twenty-two. I thought twenty-six - she says - and proceeds to reciprocate the information - she tells him her age, nineteen. It's only an exchange of... personal data, almost a joke, but it's better than nothing. That day though, the living room furniture is the centre of attention, and so the conversation veers back to the types of timber, of finishes, styles, of production time and delivery, ending with the haggling on price, until the final agreement. However, the ice is broken between the two. While the Marin's family's sitting room furniture comes to life, between Gianna and Giuseppe something rather more important comes to life: love.

It is a story which is covered with discretion, like the love stories of the old times. Gianna Marin remembers: *«A significant step was when I decided to remove the photograph of Teddy Reno from my bedside table... he was my favourite singer! To replace it with Bepi's photograph»*. This is when Gianna Marin's naive girl's dream ends, which she shared with many of her peers, who were divided between Teddy Reno, Achille Togliani and the other "heartbreakers" of the Italian musical scene. A new, more "concrete", dream starts: of striving towards a life together, of starting and creating a family with that young man, barely more than twenty years old, whom she had liked straight away and who would become her man for the rest of her life. And that frame with Giuseppe's photograph is still there, on the bedside table, a silent witness to it all, of the happiness and sorrow which inevitably mark the passing of time, like the birth of their children and the death of their loved ones, and this frame turns up in Gianna's hands, who gets very emotional, when she brings her contribution to the memories for this book.

We will find Gianna Marin soon involved in her husband's business, after the wedding and until 1964, and then we will see

her again in her role of wife, mother and grandmother. Often women "feel" things more profoundly than men do, and those who have this sensitivity always know when to speak or act, and when not to. Gianna Marin showed, day after day, to be one of these women, which makes her the ideal partner for a man like Giuseppe Doimo, who would be very preoccupied and busy with his business and companies and who inevitably would bring the tension, the difficulties and the effort of an intense professional life into his own home. And at home he would always find a wise and patient "shock absorber" for it all.

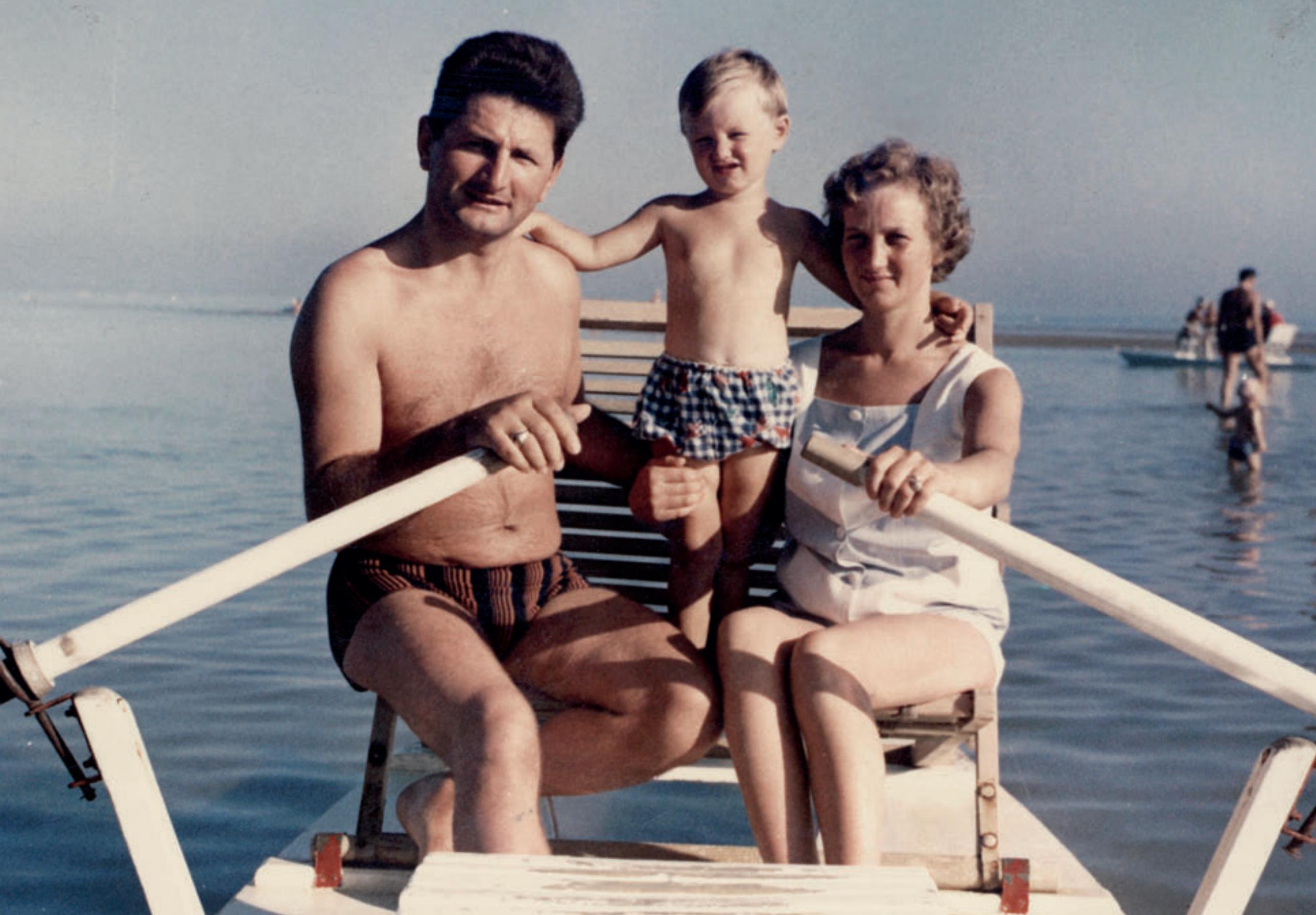




Giuseppe and Gianna Doimo in 1959 and, at the top right, in 1957.



With daughter Laura in 1963.



The first two companies



6.

In 1959 the company Doimo F.lli - Doimo Brothers - is born (F.lli, Brothers stands for Giuseppe and Ettore) and the following year the craft business stops and the industrial business takes over. This decision leads to other two: to shelve sales to the public, concentrating on retailers, and to give up the production of dining room and living room furniture, aiming at the production of bedroom furniture, which at the time returned more profit than the other types. At that time, bedroom furniture consisted of a bed, a wardrobe, generally with 4 or 5 doors, two bedside tables, a chest of drawers with a vanity mirror and one or two small upholstered armchairs to be positioned at the foot of the bed, with a padded seat and back. The first models the company offers are period bedrooms “in stile”, as they used to call them then, referring to the classical, traditional style of furniture, and, more generally, to everything that is not modern.

As a result of these changes it is necessary to extend the operating premises, which in 1962 increase to approximately 3,000 square metres. With this new factory, which is co-owned with their brother Fernando, the premises of the company are those of a real manufacturing plant. New machines are also bought, to increase the production capacity: until then the monthly production stretched to a little less more than twenty bedrooms. This was because there were various manual processes, one of which was the polishing.

The number of employees increases to more or less forty, and the number of clients also rises rapidly, the resellers soon covering

not only the Treviso area, but the whole Veneto region. *«Veneto - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - is assigned to our first salesman, who resides in Mestre and who manages to cover all the provinces suitably, thanks to the traffic being less chaotic than nowadays. There are no catalogues, only large photographs. With those and a lot of sales talk, the shops are talked into buying our bedroom furniture. After the first order it is not hard to make them re-order: this means that they like the furniture, because it is well-made and reasonably priced».*

We mentioned earlier that bedroom furniture comprised also small armchairs. From 1960 the company decides to manufacture directly not only the body of the armchair, but also the upholstered parts. This is in order not to have to rely on specialist suppliers, and having to often fall in line with their production timings and arrange their deliveries accordingly.

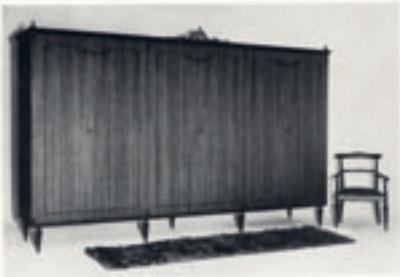
The upholstery section of Doimo F.lli, which is taking up a small area of the plant, is assigned to Gianna Marin, who would remain with the company until 1964, the year she gives birth to Olieve, her second daughter (the first, Laura, was born in 1961). Initially, there are three employees but they would soon increase to approximately ten, when the production starts to include small and large sofas.

«It is then - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - that we employ an expert, whose job is to train the staff in upholstering, an area where I was not very skilled, as it is so different from every other skill in the furniture business».



Cycling race in Mosnigo in 1967 sponsored by F.lli Doimo.

f.lli doimo camere - salotti



MOSNIGO DI MORIAGO (Treviso)
Telefono n. 86.258 (prefisso 0438)

Per le altre camere visitate il sito
Per le altre camere visitate il sito





7.

An advertisement of 15th September 1965 on the bi-weekly magazine “Il Mobile”, which was the most influential and widely spread trade magazine in the furniture sector in those times, shows a wardrobe, a bedroom and a sitting room, positioned under the wording “F.lli Doimo bedrooms - sitting rooms” and beside the logo FD (in three colours - black, red and white - and stylized like logos of the Scandinavian furniture companies, who were the leaders in the sector at that time). Tosca is the name of the bedroom furniture range and of the wardrobe, while the sitting room range is model number 41, whose caption reads: “Empire style sitting room. The wooden bedstead and the Pirelli foam rubber stuffing are upholstered in linen or wool patterned velvet”.

In the Sixties the majority of furniture manufacturers do not show a great interest or care in advertising, not in the graphics nor in the message to the reader: little is done by professional studios, it is often just put together by the publishing house, based on generic inputs received by the manufacturers.

The Doimo F.lli advertisement we have just mentioned has a special meaning because it is probably the very first Doimo advertisement and also because it was published in a magazine would have a very wide distribution within the fifth “Salone del Mobile di Milano” (the Furniture Exhibition in Milan). The Doimo brothers had exhibited their furniture at the trade fair in the Lombardy capital for the first time the year before, in 1964.

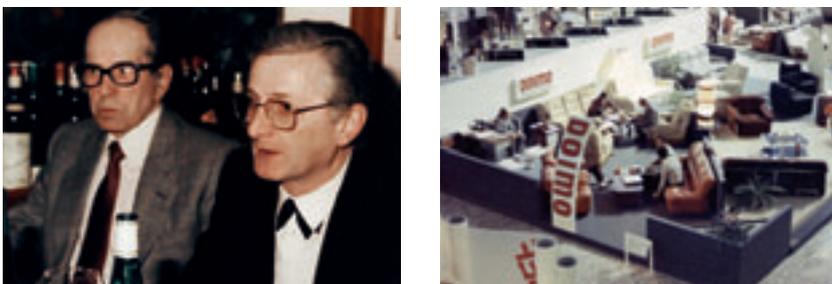
The architect Enzo Strada had pointed them towards Milan. He would design many of the bedroom models, mostly in period

style for the next twenty-five years, and he would also design the exhibition stands which they would use in the trade fairs.

Architect Strada had guessed the potential of the “Salone del Mobile”, even though this would become much more obvious only later, once it became the most important Furniture Exhibition in the World. «Our first attendance - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - had offered us a good comparison with the reality of the Italian Furniture sector, and especially we had understood that we could move well within the national market. This led to the decision to expand the sales to nearly every region».

During the decade we are talking about and the following ones, the Doimo brothers would attend many other Italian exhibitions with their numerous companies. Some of these exhibitions were born to support the Milan Trade Fair, like the “Salone del Mobile Triveneto” of Padova, later moved to Verona, the “Mobilevante” in Bari and the “Fiera del Mobile”, part of the “Mostra d’Oltremare” in Napoli.

Starting from the middle of the Nineties, the exhibition horizon would widen to numerous foreign trade fairs, often under the aegis of the Doimo International Group: worth mentioning, amongst others, the Russian Mebel in Moscow, the Spanish Habitat in Valencia, the Belgian Meubelbeurs in Mechelen and the American Home Furnishing Market in High Point.



Giuseppe Doimo with architect Enzo Strada in 1982.
The Doimo Salotti stand at the “Salone del Mobile” of Milan in 1972.

8.

Going back to the internal story of Doimo F.lli we can pick up from the mid-Sixties. Amongst the employees are now also some seamstresses who prepare the upholstery, which was then obtained from forty metre long rolls. One of these seamstresses, who is still an employee of Doimo Salotti, remembers many things of those pioneering years and especially, the many logistical difficulties due to the small space available.

Just these difficulties lead the Doimo brothers to the decision in 1966 to reorganise their business for the second time, in order to separate the production of the bedroom furniture and that of the upholstered furniture, as these required two very different types of production set-ups.

The land is bought in Mosnigo, and the building work for the new upholstery plant starts. This would be finished by 1968 and it would be called Doimo F. & C. (F. stands for Fernando).

In the first months of that year, the weekly magazine “Epoca” publishes the first editorial on the company on 17th March, which covers a whole page, with a lot of text, as its format was in size 8, and with three photographs. One was an aerial view of the manufacturing plant (which already looks very impressive!) and two were photos of the internal units, one of which with the pneumatic presses.

The text retraces Giuseppe Doimo’s life, his apprenticeship, and defines the business and partnership of the Doimo brothers, describing concisely what is already detailed in the previous pages of this book. The main feature is, however, Doimo F.lli. It already

refers to it as a “big manufacturer in continuous evolution” and describes the various phases of the expansions, in 1962, in 1965 and again in 1967, when - quoting the exact words - “new and modern automatic machinery, the most up-to-date tools of timber technology” are introduced.

The magazine “Epoca”, with this reference to the machinery, touched a very relevant topic: the modernity of the production set-up of the plants would be ever-present. Giuseppe Doimo would always want the best technology available from the machinery manufacturers for his companies.

The weekly magazine also points out the continuous rise in the number of employees, which at the beginning of 1968 is already 150. It then moves onto the production, mentioning the most successful bedroom ranges, made of Tanganyika walnut and Borneo ramin: “Lubiana”; “Fiamminga”; “Brasilia and “Tosca”, already featured in the first advertisement.

Finally, in the latter part of the editorial, “Epoca” touches on the imminent opening of the second Doimo brothers company, the one which would be manufacturing sitting room furniture. In fact, the day after 15th August, the Italian national holiday of “Ferragosto” in 1968, the structural building work is completed, and the fine-tuning of the operational set-up of the new plant starts. After a couple of months the production starts. The personnel initially adds up to approximately forty people, including the employees transferred from the upholstery section of Doimo F.lli and the newly hired employees.



FRATELLI DOIMO

Una grande industria in continuo sviluppo creata dalla volontà e dalla tenacia; accanto alle camere da letto in stile, dalle linee armoniose ed eleganti, questa azienda sta potenziando ora la produzione dei salotti con un nuovo stabilimento in via di ultimazione.

Un giorno, se qualcuno vorrà scrivere la storia dell'industrializzazione dell'Italia, sicuramente un capitolo a parte verrà dedicato ai mobili della Marca Trevigiana, nati in questo dopoguerra ricco di sorprese e di imprevisti per la sola volontà, per l'esclusiva tenacia di un pugno di uomini decisi a fare - qualcosa di concreto anche senza mezzi, con il solo apporto del loro spirito d'iniziativa e della loro abilita lavorativa. E' certo un capovero e se stante toccherà all'industria mobili per l'arredamento dei fratelli Doimo di Morigio di Montebelluna, ai piedi del monte Endimione, in vista del Montello e del Grappa, nella cornice incomparabilmente bella dei luoghi che furono teatro dell'eroismo dei soldati italiani durante la prima guerra mondiale e ora sono teatro di quest'altro eroismo fatto di sacrifici e di fatiche, e di altrettanto luminose vittorie.

Giuseppe Doimo aveva quattordici anni quando, in un angolo della casa dei nonni, cominciò a lavorare il legno. Era il 1947, il mondo era appena uscito dagli sconforti della bufera bellica, dovunque la ricostruzione urgeva, il giovanissimo Giuseppe Doimo riparava mobili, aggiustava serramenti, si industriava a fabbricare semplici ma solide suppellettili per i propri compaesani. Il lavoro, nel giro di pochi mesi, crebbe tanto che il ragazzo dovette assumere due apprendisti che gli dessero una mano nell'attività sempre maggiore. Essere capo-azienda a quattordici anni non è certo impresa da poco e di tutti ma Giuseppe se la cavò ottimamente, sempre meglio, tanto che nel 1951, quando il fratello Ettore, di un anno minore di lui, tornò a casa dalla Svizzera, dovette aiutarlo in cerca di fortuna, lo convinse a costituire una piccola società di fatto, con la prospettiva di ampliare l'attuale attività artigianale. Con i loro pochi risparmi, Giuseppe ed Ettore Doimo costruirono un modesto capannone, e, con una sega a nastro e una « combinata », affrontarono con accresciuta energia il difficile compito della lavorazione del legno. Facevo di tutto: serramenti, assie, falasstre, qualche semplice camera da letto. Nel 1955 l'azienda aveva già settanta dipendenti, e il nome dei due volenterosi fratelli si stava affermando nel circondario in modo sempre più positivo, per la loro serietà, la loro volontà, la forza dei loro prodotti. Nel 1956 — Ettore era appena tornato dal servizio militare di leva — di comune accordo i due fratelli decisero di limitare il grosso salto: continuare su di un piano troppo limitato, mentre le richieste si accuivano, sarebbe stato addirittura scorpiose. Altri due capannoni vennero costruiti, altre maestranze furono assunte, e una vera produzione razionalizzata di camere da letto ebbe finalmente inizio. Lo sviluppo fu crescente: altri reparti vennero costruiti nel 1962, nel 1965, nel 1967, e nuovi macchinari moderni, automatizzati, i più aggiornati strumenti della tecnologia del legno, entrarono in funzione in quella che ormai aveva assunto le dimensioni della vera industria. Dal venticinque dipendenti del 1963 — anno in cui l'azienda era passata dalla fase artigianale alla fase industriale — al centocinquanta di oggi il passo è enorme, ed è la testimonianza migliore

della capacità, della volontà, della tenacia di questi giovani industriali, che possono ben vantarsi di essersi fatti da soli, con l'aiuto esclusivo della loro intelligenza. L'area coperta dello stabilimento dei fratelli Doimo è di oltre 10 mila metri quadrati, con un'attrezzatura tecnica di primissimo ordine. I vari modelli delle camere da letto, in noce Tanganyica e ramin del Borneo, dalla « Lubiana » alla « Fiamminga », alla « Brasilia » alla « Tosca », incontrano il consenso più totale della clientela, servita da una rete commerciale che copre tutto il territorio italiano: numerose sono anche le richieste dall'estero, che però, purtroppo, l'azienda non può ancora soddisfare, per la materiale impossibilità, almeno per ora, di incrementare la produzione. Si tratta, in effetti, di una produzione di alta qualità, creata da architetti di fama mondiale, realizzata con materie prime scottesi-

me, opportunamente propedeutate da una moderna visione presso la clientela, già dimostrativamente affezionata a questo prodotto di pregio e di sicura consistenza. Dal 1958, alla produzione delle camere da letto, si è affiancata — prima nella provincia di Treviso — una produzione relativamente inconsueta, e cioè quella dei salotti. I divani, le poltrone, i tavolini Doimo, studiati da designers specializzati e realizzati da una maestranza qualificata — quasi totalmente locale (è da sottolineare che qui la popolazione era tutta costretta a emigrare, ne voleva vivere e che oggi ha trovato invece all'interno del proprio campanile, grazie a questa iniziativa industriale, la propria fonte di vita) hanno incontrato, come le camere, il pieno gradimento della clientela. Per cui, al fine di sviluppare questo ormai collaudato settore di produzione, e forti dell'esperien-

za ormai decennale anche in tale campo, i fratelli Doimo hanno costituito una nuova società la « Doimo Ferrando & C. » (Ferrando è il fratello minore) e stanno ora ultimando la costruzione e l'attrezzatura del nuovo stabilimento che, a poca distanza da quello esistente, sarà esclusivamente dedicato alla produzione dei salotti e delle poltrone. In una gamma vastissima che va dai salotti classici di linea a quelli moderni, dai divani « relax » trasformabili alle poltrone « Gran riposo », con ripercuote in tessuti di ogni genere, velluti semplici e operati, in fibra naturale, in fibra sintetica. In un arcobaleno di colori e di sfumature. Saranno altri 5 mila metri quadrati coperti che fra qualche settimana ospiteranno le maestranze specializzate, già addestrate, e svilupperanno ulteriormente questo altissimo settore. Un crescendo continuo, per successi più che mentali sotto tutti i punti di vista.



Vue aerea dello stabilimento dell'industria mobili per l'arredamento dei fratelli Giuseppe ed Ettore Doimo a Morigio di Montebelluna; a poche centinaia di metri da questo complesso, fra qualche settimana entrerà in fase di produzione un nuovo stabilimento per la fabbricazione di poltrone, divani e salotti, la « Doimo Ferrando & C. ».

Il montaggio di una « pediera » da letto matrimoniale: uno a uno i pezzi lavorati a ritmi e mano vengono messi insieme, e opera di maestranze all'uso specializzate.



Gli « strati pneumatici », complessi macchinari che comprimono i mobili già a grandi linee formati, prima che siano passati alle successive fasi di lavorazione e alle accurate rifiniture.



Minister Mario Ferrari-Agradi inaugurates Doimo F. & C. in 1969.

9.

The official inauguration of Doimo F. & C. is on 1st February 1969. The next day, “Il Gazzettino di Venezia” the local newspaper, dedicates a whole editorial of three columns with three photographs to this event, published on page two, which is the national section of the daily paper.

The editorial starts pointing out how the furniture industry is becoming a very important chapter in the life of the “Quartier del Piave”. “The most evident example - it writes - is that given by the Doimo brothers of Mosnigo, whose industries were born and grew in one of the poorest and forgotten towns of the “Quartier del Piave”, a town where the economic and social post-war issues were increasing due to the total lack of job sources. Lacking in even the most elementary infrastructures, cut off from all communication channels, the town seemed destined to depopulate in the emigration turmoil which affected the life of many small towns. Men, young and old, left their homes in search of work at the other side of the Alps”.

This context - notes the Gazzettino - renders the entrepreneurial activity of Giuseppe Doimo and his brothers Ettore and Fernando, who later joined him, even more praiseworthy. It gives concrete evidence of this by mentioning the two numbers which define the scale of their business at that moment in time: 20 thousand square metres floor space and 180 employees.

Numerous authorities and celebrities attend the inauguration of the new business, one of which is Hon. Mario Ferrari-Agradi, who was the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, and the

Bishop of Vittorio Veneto, Monsignor Albino Luciani, who would later become prelate of Venice and later Pope with the name of John Paul I.

«Even though organising that event had been very difficult - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - that day I felt proud, for the praise directed to me and my brothers by everyone, and especially by the Minister».

In fact, after the ribbon is cut and the benediction by Monsignor Luciani, Hon. Ferrari-Aggradi has his speech and he... “proclaims - as the Gazzettino writes again - the hard working quality of the people of this land and especially the initiative shown by people like the Doimo family who deserve credit for contributing so decisively to the action of creating job sources”.

The company Doimo F. & C. starts its journey in the furniture world this way, with the benediction of a future Pope and the praise of a Minister. This journey would be marked by a constant growth which would lead it - under the name Doimo Salotti - to become the best known company in the Group. Thanks also to the advertising campaigns, which in time would involve all media (the press; radio-television and the internet) and which would start already in the second half of the Seventies, employing a famous model, Roberta Cifarelli, who was the star of the “Caroselli” (a television program containing advertisements and comical sketches) of big companies on television, such as Peroni Beer, Fiat Cars and Nestlé.

On the right: Giuseppe Doimo with Bishop Albino Luciani, who would later become Pope John Paul I.





On the left and at the top: Giuseppe, Ettore and Fernando Doimo accompany the Minister and the Bishop during their visit to the factory.
Above: the Minister greets Giovanni Doimo.

Giuseppe Doimo, a life dedicated to furniture



Another two moments of the inauguration of 1969.

Doimero pensioni

crementi dell'indice generale delle retribuzioni»; le pensioni poi dovrebbero essere calcolate non già sulla media dell'ultimo triennio di lavoro, ma sulla media delle 156 settimane di paga « più favorevoli » nel decennio antecedente la data del pensionamento; opportunamente rivalutate sulla base dell'indice generale. Si accetta l'unificazione dei minimi delle pensioni non contributive a 25.000 lire mensili e si chiede per le contributive un aumento immediato di oltre il 10 per cento, riliquidando le pensioni femminili sulla base delle aliquote stabilite per gli uomini. Altre richieste, infine, riguardano il collegamento tra assicurazione obbligatoria e prosecuzione volontaria, l'abolizione del divieto di cumulo pensione-retribuzione ed altre clausole minori. Sembra ovvio ritenere che queste clausole verranno esaminate nella riunione di lunedì ma in rapporto a ciò che il piano economico-finanziario di riforma può consentire soprattutto nei prossimi dieci anni, per la realizzazione dei capisaldi della riforma stessa, costituiti dall'aumento graduale dell'importo delle pensioni verso il traguardo dell'80 per cento. Per quanto in particolare riguarda l'abolizione del divieto di cumulo, il Governo si è già dichiarato disposto ad esaminare la possibilità di un parziale ripristino del cumulo ed è tutto ciò che sembra poter essere attuato nel quadro di un graduale, ma concreto aumento del rapporto tra pensioni e salari.

A. Z.

Ceausescu mediatore

(SEGUITO DALLA PRIMA PAGINA)

questo momento uno scontro fra Romania e Unione Sovietica. Mercoledì scorso il leader repubblicano del Senato degli Stati Uniti, Everett Dirksen, asserì che si poteva prevedere una prossima invasione sovietica della Romania, ma tale previsione non è condivisa da

LA «DOIMO-SALOTTI»

Ha inaugurato a Mosnigo un nuovo complesso alla presenza del ministro Ferrari-Aggradi

Se si farà la storia del Quartier del Piave, una breve pianura a semicerchio il cui diametro è costituito dal Montello e l'arco dai colli stupendi del Soligo, un capitolo importante dovrà essere dedicato all'industria del mobile, non solo per aver essa operato una trasformazione radicale nella vita della zona, ma per il modo con cui è sorta e si è affermata.

L'esemplificazione più evidente di tale fenomeno è quella fornita dai fratelli Doimo di Mosnigo, le cui industrie sono nate e cresciute in uno dei paesi più poveri e più dimenticati del Quartier del Piave, quello in cui nell'immediato dopoguerra i problemi economico-sociali si andavano esasperando per la mancanza totale di fonti di lavoro.

Privo delle infrastrutture più elementari, tagliato fuori da ogni via di comunicazione, il paese sembrava condannato a spopolarsi nel fermento delle trasmissioni che caratterizzarono la vita di tanti piccoli centri della penisola. Gli uomini e i giovani partirono infatti in cerca di un lavoro al di là delle Alpi.

Intanto un ragazzo, Giuseppe Doimo, in un porticato del rustico paterno, s'era messo ad aggiustar mobili e serramenti, a fabbricare qualche camera e qualche tavolo per i compaesani.

Incominciò presto ad assumere qualche coetaneo e pochi anni dopo, d'accordo col fratello Ettore, appena tornato dal servizio di leva, decise di dare una nuova, più robusta dimensione alla piccola azienda.

Sono sorti così i mobilifici Doimo che oggi danno lavoro a 180 dipendenti.

Attorno a questa matrice, sono sorte altre aziende, sicché l'emigrazione a Mosnigo sta per scomparire.

Ha assunto quindi un significato particolare la presenza a Mosnigo del ministro Ferrari-Aggradi che ieri ha inaugurato il nuovo complesso «Doimo Salotti».

Ricevuto da Giuseppe, Ettore, Fernando Doimo, il Ministro è giunto alle quindici. Erano presenti anche il vescovo di Vittorio Veneto mons. Luciani, il prefetto di Treviso Blandaleone, l'on. Fabbri con tutte le maggiori autorità della provincia, del Comune, di Enti ed Associazioni. Operatori economici e



Il ministro Ferrari-Aggradi taglia il nastro inaugurale del nuovo stabilimento Doimo-Salotti di Mosnigo.

rappresentanti del settore da tutta Italia.

Dopo il simbolico taglio del nastro e la benedizione impartita da S.E. mons. Luciani, autorità, ospiti e maestranze si sono radunati in un vasto capannone ove ha preso per primo la parola uno dei titolari dell'azienda il quale, dopo aver ringraziato il Ministro e le Autorità, ha spiegato i motivi per cui si era voluto dare un particolare significato all'inaugurazione del nuovo complesso.

Ha preso alla fine la parola il ministro Ferrari-Aggradi il quale ha tenuto ad esaltare la laboriosità della gente di questa terra e, soprattutto lo spirito di iniziativa di persone come i Doimo a cui va il grande merito di aver recato un contributo decisivo nell'azione tesa a creare fonti di lavoro con una produzione che si va imponendo per la sua alta qualità.

E' stato quindi offerto agli ospiti ed alle maestranze un grande rinfresco al termine del quale il Ministro e le Autorità hanno fatto visita agli stabilimenti che si sviluppano su una superficie di 20 mila mq., soffermandosi in particolare nei reparti di montaggio, ove hanno potuto ammirare la rifinitura, la solidità e l'eleganza dei mobili che si sono imposti sui mercati nazionali.

Si tratta in effetti di una produzione d'alta qualità progettata da architetti di chiara fama, realizzata con materie prime scelte da una mano d'opera specializzata.

La giornata ha segnato un'altra tappa sul cammino del progresso del piccolo centro della Marca Trevigiana che per la laboriosità della sua gente, per lo spirito di iniziativa di uomini come i fratelli Doimo saprà andare avanti ancora.

ASSEGNATO A ROMA CON UNA SIMPATICA CERIMONIA

Il premio «Bacco d'oro 1968»



10.

IERI POMERIGGIO A MOSNIGO DI MORIAGO

Fuoco in un mobilificio Danni per cento milioni

Non sono ancora state scoperte le cause del sinistro - Lo stabilimento dovrà restare fermo per un certo periodo di tempo

Da Conegliano, da Treviso e da Montebelluna i pompieri sono accorsi nelle prime ore del pomeriggio di ieri a Mosnigo di Moriago per fronteggiare un grosso incendio che minacciava di distruggere completamente il poltronificio Doimo.

L'opera tempestiva dei vigili del fuoco e la loro massiccia presenza sono valse a contenere e poi a domare le fiamme che pur tuttavia hanno distrutto macchinari e quanto contenuto in un capannone arrecando un danno valutato ad oltre cento milioni di lire.

Poiché il reparto devastato è proprio quello iniziale di lavorazione, il ciclo di produzione rimarrà interrotto

per qualche tempo. Dopo la opera di sgombero e prima di provvedere a nuove macchine, dovrà essere attentamente controllata la struttura del capannone e non è escluso si debba almeno in parte operare delle sostituzioni e dei ripristini agli elementi portanti e alle coperture.

Il sinistro sulla cui origine non si sono potuti raccogliere elementi precisi è avvenuto all'improvviso verso le 13,45. Gli operai erano già al lavoro e si sono subito dati da fare con i mezzi antincendio in dotazione ma mentre le fiamme si diffondevano con impressionante rapidità alimentate dai materiali di lavorazione estremamente in-

flammabili, legno, mastici, solventi, gommapiuma, pelame, il capannone si è letteralmente riempito di un denso ed acre fumo che ha costretto tutti ad uscire all'aperto ed a rimanere a distanza.

Quando sono arrivati i pompieri, hanno infatti dovuto usare le maschere per entrare nel capannone ed aprire innanzitutto degli sfoghi al fumo che si è alzato in un grande fungo nero visibile a molti chilometri di distanza.

Piazzatisi in posizioni strategiche i vigili del fuoco hanno quindi energicamente affrontato il braciere impedendogli di progredire mentre gli operai dello stabilimento

si prodigavano per portare all'aperto quanto si poteva salvare e il materiale, le poltrone e i divani semifiniti che si trovavano nei capannoni limitrofi ed erano esposti ad imminente pericolo. Essenziali al contenimento del fuoco sono state le portiere di ferro di separazione dei vari reparti che erano state tempestivamente chiuse.

L'opera dei pompieri, dura e difficile, si è protratta per diverse ore ma alla fine le fiamme sono state domate e si è potuta iniziare l'opera di sgombero delle macerie interrotta solo col sopravvenire dell'oscurità.

Come si è detto una prima stima fa ascendere i danni, coperti da assicurazione, a oltre cento milioni di lire.

The journey of Doimo F. & C. was destined though, to soon have an unforeseen setback: on 13 November 1972, less than four years since the inauguration, a raging fire badly damages the building, which was very disheartening for Giuseppe Doimo and his brothers.

“The accident - writes the Gazzettino the following day, under the title 'Fire in a furniture factory / Damages to amount to one hundred million lire' - happened suddenly towards 13:45. The operatives were already at work and they started attacking the flames with the fire fighting equipment they had but, while the flames were spreading with shocking rapidity, fuelled by extremely flammable production materials like timber, putty, solvents, foam rubber and leathers, the factory literally filled with a dense and acrid smoke which forced everyone to get out into the open and to keep at a distance. When the firemen arrived, they had to use masks to enter the factory and first of all open vents to let out the smoke, which rose like a giant black mushroom, visible for kilometres”.

The article in the Gazzettino touches on the extent of the damages, already mentioned in the title and also talks about the insurance cover. «*But it wasn't really like that - bitterly remembers Giuseppe Doimo - because the insurance evaluation dated back to the time of the start of the business and therefore we were not fully covered*».

Moreover there is the inactivity due to the time required to repair the building and its functionalities. The orders to fulfil, at

that moment in time, are approximately one thousand: the clients, contacted one by one, confirm they are happy to wait. *«In such a great misfortune - states Giuseppe Doimo - it really is the evidence of the trust that the clients had in us which encourages me and my brothers and gives us the strength to start again».*

They spring into action to start again as soon as possible, with an almost wild alacrity and with an extraordinary involvement of all the workers, which would remain in Giuseppe Doimo's mind forever. They work day and night, even though winter is coming and the cold proves a tiresome companion, especially in the first weeks, in the damaged building.

The magic is worked in less than three months and, already at the end of January, work starts again and the pending orders start to be dispatched. So the business is on its way again. The Doimo brothers delegate its management to a leader until the beginning of the 2000s, under whom the company will reach the aforementioned goals.



The Doimo Salotti stand at the "Salone del Mobile" of Milan in 1972.

11.

It's the end of the Sixties. At this point of the story it is worth surveying the reality of the furniture sector at that time, at a national and regional level for the Veneto, to understand the context in which the two Doimo companies operate.

Towards the end of that decade people in the furnishings business started talking of the "Veneto phenomenon", a fortunate phrase coined by Giuseppe D'Amato, one of the first scholars of the sector-based economy. It would find motivation in the extraordinary growth which had happened in the region in terms of businesses, employees, quantity of products and especially in the fact that this growth was defining a readjustment in the national furniture making business as a whole, affect everyone.

In summary, one could say that there had been an evolution of the production methods in the Veneto, with a more marked industrialization than elsewhere. A real break with the past was happening, with reference to the production of furniture with specific features, that is, furniture manufactured in mass quantities and with resultant prices.

«All this - notes Giuseppe Doimo - triggered with an exceptional expansion of the internal demand, which was caused by the rise of the pro-capita income; by the increase of the tendency to own more furniture; by the undergoing social and economic transformation and by the diffusion of new behavioural and consumption patterns typical of more advanced countries».

On one hand the possibility to manufacture industrially, with businesses which were often completely new in their layout, and

therefore without any ties to production systems which were rapidly becoming obsolete, and on the other hand the distribution reality, with an ever increasing demand, lead to remarkable profit on the investments into the furniture business.

This value of profit remains at a good level for the whole of the Sixties, allowing the majority of businesses to work out a profitable self-financing process. The alternative to self-financing, especially in less socially and economically favourable moments, which would mark this sector's life in the following decades, would be the favourable and forward thinking credit policy, which was adopted by the banks and credit institutions.

Some of the outlined arguments - in particular the expansion of the internal demand and the possibility of self-financing - were not an exclusive prerogative to the Veneto and therefore, if the furnishings sector in this region has grown in time more than elsewhere, it means that the specific reasons already listed, and more, turned out to be decisive first in determining the "Veneto phenomenon" and later in preserving it.

Basically, since the Sixties, entrepreneurs in the Veneto have constantly proved to be able to best "read" reality and the requirements that were emerging along the way. They have been able to get organised with more modern, dynamic, pragmatic ways of doing things, adapting to the continuing changes without traumas, and they have also always been able to keep their businesses at the adequate levels of efficiency and industrialization.

This reference picture finds one of its best objectifications just in Giuseppe Doimo's and his brother's businesses, whose Group - forty years later and certainly not by chance - would reach the summit of the Italian furnishings industry, so much so that often it is referred to by journalists, workers and by sector-based operatives, as the "Furniture colossus from the Veneto".

When people start to talk about the "Veneto phenomenon",

though, the Doimo brothers are still supporting actors. The region boasts some big industries, like Dal Vera in Conegliano, which was born at the end of the 1800s, and which had five factories back then. Moreover, there are numerous more senior companies who have gone further, and occupy more important positions.

To some of these realities Giuseppe Doimo looks with attention, as he respects the entrepreneurs who created them and who are guiding them with experience and a firm hand. He remembers two out of them all «*My fellow countryman Alfredo Battistella, from Pieve di Soligo, and Luigi Dall'Agnese from Friuli, from Maron di Brugnera*». Approximately forty years later - in 2004 - the Dall'Agnese business would be bought by the Doimo Group: but we will come to this later.

When talking about the relationships with the other entrepreneurs, Giuseppe Doimo also considers bitterly: «*I never minded the inevitable clashes, the hard rivalries, which were understandable and even justifiable, but I did mind the obvious disloyalties, just like the nasty games. Personally I think I have behaved loyally with everyone...*». This is proved by the high esteem in which he is and always has been held and has been shown by his entrepreneurial colleagues, so much so that he has been a member of the "Collegio dei Probiviri di Federlegno-Arredo" for years, the association which unites the Italian timber and furniture industry, which is part of "Confindustria".

The Seventies and Eighties



12.

The story starts again, cadenced by decade, and the 70s come to the fore. The Doimo brothers face the 70s with the two companies that we have seen protagonists of the previous pages: Doimo Flli, which would later become Doimo Arredamenti, and Doimo F. & C., which would later become Doimo Salotti.

The Doimo Group is activated almost immediately, an entity above all, whose name is initially Doimo Interliving. Nowadays the word “group” is widely used, or rather even abused, as happens with any successful thing, but at that time, at least in the furnishings sector, it was unusual. However Giuseppe Doimo, with one of his ingenious intuitions and with his brothers’ approval, decides to create the Group. *«The main goal - he points out - was that of creating synergies which would be useful to the companies and to offer them the possibility to approach the market as individual expressions of a cohesive structure with a high potential».* In time the Group’s objectives would become more precise, translating into very effective initiatives: but this will be addressed in the conclusive part of the book, when we will take stock of everything.

Just at the beginning of the decade, at the same time of the creation of the Group, the first acquisition takes place (1971): that of “Zampa Salotti” (Zampa Sitting rooms), which is based in Cassacco, near Udine. Initially the Doimo brothers join the company with a minority shareholding and then, after a few months, they buy it completely. This decision leads both to the change of name of the company, from “Zampa Salotti”, to “Linea Italia”

and to the construction of a new manufacturing plant (1973) which was erected on an expressly purchased piece of land.

«The acquisition of Zampa Salotti - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - was for us a sort of training in this subject. At least at the beginning we had not evaluated all the issues of the operation, so there was no lack of unforeseen difficulties. At any rate our intervention to save that struggling company was also due to the company being a business partner of ours».

In 1978 they carry out the acquisition of another furniture manufacturer, also on the verge of bankruptcy. *«This time - notes Giuseppe Doimo - the operation is performed in conjunction with a partner, who had been an employee and who had set up his own business».*

The new company, built on the ashes of the previous one, is called “DOC Mobili” (DOC Furniture), and “DOC” is the acronym of the two surnames. The manufacturing plant, extensively refurbished in its operational set-up, is located in Follina (Treviso). The management is put in the hands of the business partner, while the production consists of bedroom furniture.

Due to irreconcilable differences, this partnership is not destined to last for long: therefore, in 1992, DOC Mobili would become completely owned by the Doimo brothers and, in time, it would also extend production to sitting room furniture.

13.

The 70s, however, are especially defined by the union conflicts, which start after the student insurrections of 1968. These inflame at first the cities and very industrialized areas, starting from large companies, especially in the engineering sector, with the contractual battles of 1969. Then they rapidly spread to the rest of the country and they protract for more than a decade, until the historic march of the “forty thousand white collars” of Fiat in Torino, which took place in October 1980. With this march, the “silent majority” of the most important industry in Italy decides to say “enough” of the battles and of the abuse of power which had been happening for far too long. This basically puts an end to strikes, tensions, clashes and changes the relationship between workers, unions and companies forever. Because, in fact, it brings about a positive self-criticism in everyone, with the admission of guilt and of the mistakes made, and furthermore sets the basis for a new collective sense of responsibility, which appeared to have vanished in the troubled “wall against wall” years.

The very bitter battles and disputes of that decade obviously also involve the Doimo Group, presenting Giuseppe and Ettore with a scenario for which - like many other entrepreneurs - they are not psychologically prepared. This is because they are men who totally live for, and in, their companies. Therefore, to them work and the hierarchy in the workplace are everything. To them it is especially incomprehensible that the trade unionists, on top of concerning themselves with the salary claims and the improvement of working conditions, would interfere in the company's activity, aim-



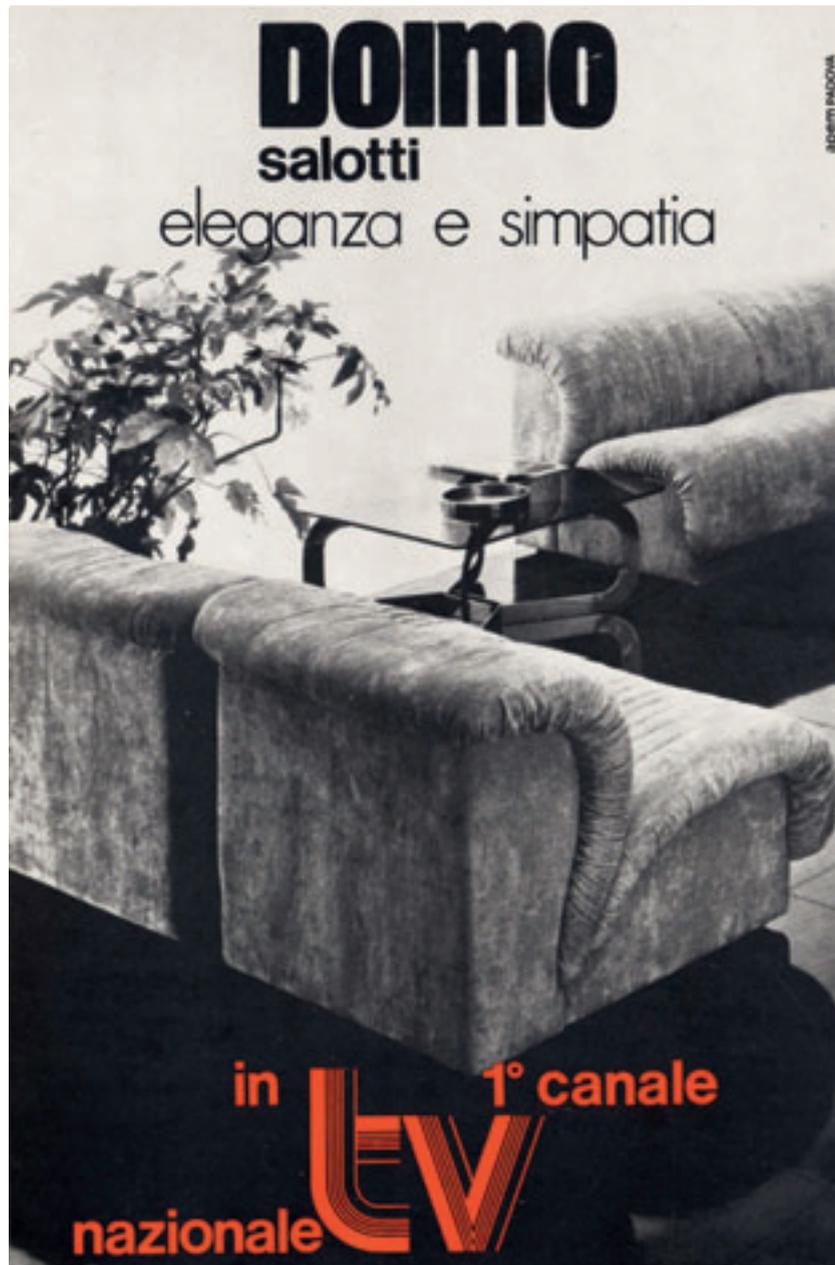
Giuseppe Doimo during a sales meeting in 1980.

ing to discuss together what should be done and how, all in a very aggressive climate.

It is especially Ettore, with his decisive and less amenable character, who lives that period of time in a more traumatic way, to such an extent that he would detach himself from the furniture business for a couple of years, setting up entrepreneurial and business activities in other fields. Giuseppe, instead, manages to live with that oppressive situation of conflict, even though with difficulty. He constantly looks for dialogue with everyone, even though his efforts in this are frustratingly stunted. Nevertheless he is not a man who would let anything deter him, so he stubbornly continues to want to reason, to understand, without being paternalistic, but rather in his trademark down-to-earth way.

Giuseppe Doimo carries inside episodes of that period which time would partially heal but not fully erase, as if they were sculpted in his memory. In particular he remembers one incident which embittered him more than others. One day in a bar in Mosnigo, he is confronted by one of his ex-employees, who resolutely reprimands him in front of the regular customers: "You have embezzled 2,600,000 liras from my severance pay..." Giuseppe Doimo, there and then, does not have elements to retort. He thinks of an error by the accounts department. He asks the person in charge of this for an explanation. He finds out that the dispositions on severance pay include a discretionary entry. The money corresponding to this entry is not clearly defined as due to the worker. In the case of his ex-employee, this amounts however to 68,000 liras, and not the high sum he mentioned at the bar! He is summoned; Giuseppe Doimo explains the misunderstanding and hands over this money to him.

This incident however has upset Giuseppe Doimo considerably, even though he knows that the greatest majority of his workers - apart from the current battles - hold him in great esteem and consideration, as they appreciate his loyalty more than anything else.



Doimo Salotti does press and TV advertising already in the 70s with the sofa Amapola.



"Bonaccia" by Doimo Salotti in 1972 and the bedroom "Giada" by Doimo Arredamenti in 1976.



Gianna and Giuseppe Doimo in 1976.

14.

However, his family represents the safe haven and the best antidote to any adversity. A family which is united and in agreement and which has grown in members. After Laura and Olieve, whose births have already been mentioned, Giuseppe Doimo has had two more children, Ivonis (1968) and Doris (1973).

Initially the schooling of the children is the same for all: Elementary school at Mosnigo state school and then the continuation at private school “Collegio Balbi-Valier” of Pieve di Soligo. Olieve and Ivonis would achieve their High School diploma, while Laura and Doris would achieve a University degree, respectively in Business Studies and in Law.

Family has a fundamental importance for Giuseppe Doimo. The companies, which take up so much of his time, and the many business trips in Italy and abroad, which often keep him away from home (and there are no mobiles yet, which make interpersonal communications instant), are obstacles to leading a “normal” life. However, he does not waste any of the time he has left, dedicating it all to his family, which is well looked after by his wife Gianna anyway.

He establishes a custom which he would never forgo, unless for undeferrable commitments: that of getting together with the whole family, at least once a day, at lunch or dinner. This results in the chance to speak to one another, to look in each other’s eyes, to get angry at anything gone amiss, to rejoice at the good news and also never to leave until the following day what can be addressed and resolved immediately.

The children, and especially Doris, the youngest in the family, and therefore the last one joining in the daily “rendezvous”, remember also a sort of set of rules put together by their father, which among others included... “never tell lies, never leave anything unfinished and to always buy only what is needed”.



Giuseppe Doimo's Fiftieth birthday, in 1983, with his daughter Doris.



Olieve and Laura in 1965 and in 1969. To the side: Ivonis at four years of age.



Giuseppe Doimo in 1979.

15.

Before entering the Eighties it is appropriate to survey the reality of the Italian furnishing sector again, with some data which will allow us to evaluate its consistency: there are approximately 20,000 companies and the global turnover is estimated to be more than 6,000 billion liras, approximately 1,150 of which are put down to exporting. This makes Italy the second largest exporting country in the world, after West Germany (at the time there were still two Germanies and the Berlin wall was more solid than ever...).

Of the approximately 20,000 companies, just 6,000 are “remarkable”, meaning that they have a couple of machines and an even minimal commercial size. Out of all these, five have more than 500 employees and 2,000 more than twenty.

The Doimo brothers’ companies, together, are amongst the first 100. It is therefore a huge step forward compared to our previous survey of the situation, which dates back to fifteen years earlier and concerned only the Veneto context.

However, this is not the most interesting data, but what we are about to mention is. The analysis of the data just related above, shows a general lull in the renewal of the production equipment. This is mainly due to the economic situation of the internal market, obviously far from the flush years but also caused by a certain climate of disaffection brought on by the trade union battles of the previous decade, which had discouraged the entrepreneurs from planning investments. This situation would partially continue into the beginning of the Eighties.

The Doimo brothers instead behave in exactly the opposite way than the majority of their colleagues. They continue to invest in production equipment and they automate them more and more. Moreover, they aim to achieve a more and more rational utilization of the machines, thanks especially to the rigorous planning of the various phases of workmanship.

The scenario described here is achieved by generally investing in electronic data processing systems, which, at first introduced almost exclusively for general accounting, perform more and more “complete” services. They are put in charge of not only the production planning, but also the first task, the management of purchasing and of the stock keeping of materials and semi-finished goods. They are also in charge of the last task, the warehouse management of the finished goods and of the delicate sector of the sales, resulting in constant and quick company data checks and the ability to operate with minimal supplies.

In the reality we have just highlighted lies one of the principal reasons for the unstoppable growth the companies of the Doimo Group experienced in the Eighties and later. Because they were at the leading edge of everything then, and would always be in the future. This is thanks to the continuous re-investment of the earned profits and *«thanks also to - points out Giuseppe Doimo - the funding obtained from the banks, which I always found very appetizing»*. Yes, he really uses the noun “appetizing”. It is appropriate to leave it, as it really paints the right picture, defying the probable smirk of recent graduates from Masters in Business Management.

«On the topic of banks - he continues - I would like to make an observation: in the past years banks have become notorious for negative events they have been involved in. Personally though, I have always had a very fair relationship with the banks and they have always been very cooperative with me. They have trusted me from the

start of my activity, and I have never betrayed that trust. They have never lost out with me. Also because no Doimo company has ever gone bankrupt! As far as I am concerned, without their funding I would definitely not have achieved what I have achieved».

But going back to the Eighties it is worth making a general introductory note. At the beginning of that decade a continuous rise in costs is recorded, which had already been highlighted in some entries towards the end of the 70s: this rise in cost affects primarily the raw materials (not only timber but also the glues, adhesives, paints, etc) and in personnel (for the 2,000 biggest companies the first item represents 35-40% of the total cost, and the second item 30-35%).

The Doimo brothers manage to offset the rise at this time with the savings achieved with the production and organisational improvements which we just mentioned: the general situation, though, looks quite worrying just because of the rise in cost, on top of the economic situation of the market.

The reality of the increase in cost just described allows us also to confirm that this is not a recent issue, but a constant one which entrepreneurs have been dealing with for a long time. At present the rise in cost is mainly caused by oil and everything related to it, but between the Eighties and the Nineties there was - it is worth remembering - also inflation, which was increasing in double figures yearly, with the understandable difficulties it brought, inside and outside businesses.



Doimo Design advertising from 1985.

16.

As with the previous decades, the Eighties will also be cadenced by the most remarkable events, like new companies, acquisitions and changes. It is just one of these changes, one not of little importance, which defines the crossing from old into new decade: it is the role reversal between Giuseppe and Ettore Doimo. The first, who had always managed the companies and who, consequently, had “internal” responsibilities, takes charge of managing the sales and of monitoring the activity of sales agents, whose number has grown significantly and who are by now operating as a national capillary network. On the other hand, the second leaves the responsibility of sales and moves to the management of the companies and of their production set-up.

«During the time when I was responsible for the sales - remembers Giuseppe Doimo - I also lowered the price list of sitting room furniture, as towards the mid-eighties the cost of rubber had fallen by 20%. I could have kept the prices unchanged and made more profit, because the economic situation was not unfavourable. Instead I chose to invest in our customers, demonstrating concretely that, whenever possible, the Doimos would lower their prices. It was a winning initiative, both in the immediate present and in the prospective future, because the customers appreciated and remembered our reliability».

In 1981 the creation of Doimo Design takes place within Doimo Arredamenti. *«We wanted - states Giuseppe Doimo - to support the production of traditional “in stile” furniture with design furnishings for the whole house, aiming to respond adequately to the*

taste and needs of that ever expanding part of the public, which was sensitive to the trends which had evolved in those years».

This note by Giuseppe Doimo is confirmed by the official data, which records a big growth in the models catalogued under the entry “contemporary furniture”, with the resulting in the considerable reduction of traditional “in stile” furniture (69 and 31 are the respective percentages in 1980).

Doimo Arredamenti and Doimo Design would work together in the market for more than twenty years, during which their operative structure would constantly improve, until the expansion and the total refurbishment in the year 2000. Subsequently, from 2003 Doimo Design would remain the only representative on the market and, from 2005 it would widen its product range, re-introducing sitting room furnishings beside the ones for the bedroom.

In 1986 “Doimo Materassi” is created in Volpago del Montello (Treviso), which presently manufactures mattresses, bed bases, pillows and accessories with the name “Doimo Armonie del Sonno”.

Two years later, in 1988, they take over Ennerev, a company which specialised in mattresses. This company, born in 1956, was going through a very difficult time then, but it had been a leading brand. At the end of the 60s, especially, it had been at the summit of the Italian market not only for the quality of the products but also for its fame, which was the result of dynamic and aggressive entrepreneurial politics, using innovative marketing strategies much earlier in comparison to its competitors.

Thanks to robust investments, Ennerev is taken to a good level of efficiency immediately by its new owners. Its production would expand in time to pillows, upholstered beds and furnishing accessories.



The Doimo Arredamenti plant through the years.



Olieve in the Linea Italia plant (1994).

17.

The Eighties record the entry into the family companies of three out of Giuseppe Doimo's four children. Olieve, is the first, in 1984. She joins Linea Italia to gain experience, first in Cassacco then nearer home, when the company would be moved to Mosnigo (1992). Nowadays Linea Italia is still managed by Olieve, who since 2003 has also taken on the much more onerous responsibility of leading Doimo Salotti, one of the "battleships" of the Group.

In 1989 Ivonis and Laura follow suit, almost at the same time. Ivonis, after his military service in Friuli, in the Julia Division of the Alpini Corps, starts at Linea Italia with his sister Olieve, then moves to the company "Summer by Doimo", producer of accessories and occasional furniture, and subsequently to the management of the Group's international relations. This would make a "citizen of the world" out of him. He also holds the responsibility of one of the most recently created companies, "Doimo Idea", which produces furniture and accessories: we will talk about this company at a later stage.

Laura instead, after graduation and her marriage to Dario Donadel (1989), starts working in Doimo Arredamenti, the historic company in the Group, and in Doimo Design, both companies later becoming her managerial responsibility. Dario Donadel, on the other hand, comes into the Group in 1991, looking after first Doimo Cityline and subsequently the companies in Follina, all of which have been under his management for years: DOC Mobili, Follina Components and Linea D Interni.

Giuseppe Doimo, a life dedicated to furniture

«The entry of my children into the companies - notes Giuseppe Doimo - was for me a source of worry and happiness. Worry because I wanted them to do well straight away and happiness because this was a sign of continuity...».



In this pages' photographs: Laura (2008), Ivonis (2003) and Doris (2008).



The 90s and 2000s

18.

When starting to write about the 90s, one needs to focus immediately on “contemporary design”, because this is what defines this decade. Even though starting from the second half of the 70s it had found space in some companies, like Doimo Salotti and Linea Italia, and from the early Eighties it had already penetrated the name of the company Doimo Design. This move was to clearly highlight - as we said when commenting on its creation - its production orientation.

But it is from the early Nineties that design becomes more and more relevant to the Group, drawing general growing attention. In concrete terms, starting from then, designers become “like one of the family” in the Group, contributing to the realization of innovative ideas and significant projects. With these ideas and with these projects the companies would characterize their presence in the market, thanks to the overall production improvement. The construction quality (historical “plus”) and the aesthetic quality (more and more pervasive “plus”) would become the essential mark.

«Design - asserts Giuseppe Doimo - is important: just consider the role it has taken in the evaluation of furniture. However it is worth clarifying that manufacturers like us cannot adjust to the ideas of designers. It is the designers who must be in tune with our production techniques and who must best understand our inputs, which take precise business requirements into account. After all, the professionalism of the designer stands to gain not only from the product in itself but also from its suitability to be produced in mass

quantities and its popularity».

Very true words, which engage with a cyclically adversarial relationship between manufacturers and designers. The most recent diatribe is the one started by Ettore Sottsass a few years ago with his statement “design is dead, murdered by industry”, which the newspaper “Il Corriere della Sera” published as a main headline, taking up almost the whole page on 13th April 2005, just when the “Salone del Mobile” was taking place in Milan. Gaetano Pesce joined Sottsass, in that circumstance and remarked that “industrialists have a lucrative vision of design”.

Many of the most successful architects and designers like Piero Lissoni and Philippe Starck stepped back from these statements. In the same article of “Il Corriere della Sera”, they retorted that “a good object is still made by the two people together, just as it used to be in the past”. At any rate, the lack of understanding between the two worlds is... under their skin and now and then they resurface.

19.

However, the 90s start for the Group not only in the name of design, but their emblem is also Doimo Cityline, created in Mosnigo in 1991 for the production of junior bedroom furniture. This would remain its core-business even though in time it would widen its product range to bedroom furniture, sitting room furniture and more.

Giuseppe Doimo says: «*We had already perceived that junior bedroom furniture would be a range of products with excellent development prospects because families were showing more and more interest in the junior world and in all the related products*». «*We were so sure of this - he adds - that just two years later, in 1993, we would decide to create “Linea D Interni” for the same range of products*».

We will be able to talk about Doimo Cityline later, when we will mention its new manufacturing plant and its expansion in the past ten years.

In 1992 the Group carries out its most important takeover, that of the company “Frezza” of Vidor (Treviso), which operates in the office furniture sector and which is already a group of companies in itself. Part of this group are other companies in the same sector and “Casamania”, which makes furniture and accessories for the home.

Between the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992 “Frezza” is overwhelmed by a serious slump, which drags it to the verge of bankruptcy within a very short time. For a couple of months a famous partnership from the Treviso area enters the equation, a company which at that time was in great expansion within the exterior cladding building sector. Then the Doimo brothers arrive

before summer.

In those years I was responsible for Frezza and its companies' press releases: this way I was able to follow the whole incident very closely, as I had to hold my own with the pressure from journalists, who were interested to find out about the vicissitudes of a company that, up to a few months earlier had appeared to be enjoying strong growth. The employees' anxiety increased day by day. It continued even when the first "saviour" partnership appeared at the horizon, but then vanished quickly when Frezza is taken over by the Doimo brothers. So I asked myself: what is the reason for this? Why so much trust in them? Frankly, it did not seem enough to me, that they were furniture manufacturers and that therefore they were knowledgeable in this sector and its production and business issues. "It is because the Doimos are honest and reliable people. They are renowned for being entrepreneurs who keep their promises" that was later explained to me by someone who know them well, with words which I would have fully understood only later, spending much time in their company. When one lives in fear of losing their job, this security means a lot. One just needs to take a look around: the current events and the news, especially in the past few years, are full of unabashed and unscrupulous entrepreneurs.

The acquisition of Frezza is important also from the financial point of view, because it involves a great investment. Moreover, the task of uplifting the company from its slump appears to be a difficult one, as the situation of the market at the time was negative - especially in the office furniture sector.

Ettore Doimo takes care personally of Frezza and its related companies, while, after his death in 1995, his son Eros and daughters Enza, Edy and Elis take his place. All of Ettore's children achieve a University degree, at that time some of them were still engrossed in their studies. *«Personally»* - clarifies Giuseppe Doimo - *I have always felt more affinity towards home furniture than office*

furniture. I have never specifically taken care of these companies: therefore the merit for all the achievements goes to my brother Ettore and to his children».

"Office world", the headliner of the Frezza companies, currently encompasses the following companies: "Colmas", "Della Valentina Office", "Emmegi", "IB Office Italia", "Meco" and "Target". Furthermore the already mentioned Casamania joins this group. Casamania would always be at the forefront with regards to design, which was brought to the limelight at the beginning of this chapter. Or better still, in time it would highlight its design-oriented tendency, collaborating with famous, even international, architects.



The "Opus Incertum" bookcase by Casamania from 2005.



Brothers Giuseppe and Ettore Doimo in 1993.

20.

On top of the creation of Doimo Cityline and the acquisition of Frezza, the 90s record more news. In 1993 Doimo Cucine is born, its creation and activity managed by Ettore Doimo. Its manufacturing plant is located in Nervesa della Battaglia (Treviso) and its production range is concentrating more and more on the medium to high quality target. In 1994 Linea D Interni is created, like the division of Follina Components, a company producing semi-finished goods and panels which had previously been acquired by the Doimo brothers (1992). At the time of its launch, Linea D Interni exclusively manufactures junior bedroom furniture but then production expands to encompass bedroom and sitting room furniture, office and commercial furniture. The latter branded with the new name “Work Space”.

A new acquisition, this time outside the Veneto, takes place in 1996: it is “Arrital” of Fontanafredda (Pordenone), born in 1979 and active for nearly thirty years in the kitchen furniture sector, boasting an ample and exhaustive product range. In 1997 Arrital is joined by Birex, another company which is taken over by the Group. Founded in 1988, it currently specialises in furniture for the bathroom and for the home’s service areas.

Still in 1997, Doimo International Group and Doimo Contract are created, both based in Mosnigo. Doimo International Group deals exclusively in the international markets and, in time, it would give a strong impulse to the Group’s expansion, maturing in experience and exceptional competence. Doimo Contract, on the other hand, expresses a very precise business interest in the

hotel, residential and community furniture sector, both in Italy and abroad, offering a “turnkey” furniture solution service.

We touched on Doimo International Group. It is within this company that straight after her graduation in 1998, Doris Doimo starts her activity within the Group, leading the international sales operators. In 2000 Doris marries Emanuele Vendramini, who graduated in Management Engineering. He is already working within the Group: after initial experiences in DOC Mobili and in Doimo Cityline, in 2004 he moves to Dielle, which he takes on the management of.

After Doris, in 2001 Ivonis also ties the knot, with Cristiana Rosada, who comes into the Group the following year, later taking on the responsibility of the companies Doimo Domus Interiors Gallery and Doimo Decor, two new entities which we will talk about in the following pages dedicated to the 2000s.

To the side: Ivonis and Cristiana’s wedding, in 2001, with Giuseppe and Gianna Doimo.





The spacious reception space of the Doimo Domus showroom, created in 2002.

21.

Moving to the next century, we approach the current events. The growth of the Group continues without a break, in its number of companies, turnover and employees. The growth, however, had recorded a marked acceleration in the 90s: at the start of that decade, in fact, the Group had risen to the top fifty in the ranking of the furniture sector but, by the end of the decade, it found itself much further up, within the first ten, thanks also to the expansion in the office furniture sector.

In 2000 in Mosnigo “Doimo Sofas” is born, which specialises in leather upholstery. From 2003 the company has a production plant in Matera at its disposal. This plant, in addition to the modern organisation, currently allows Doimo Sofas to have a production capacity twice as large as initially, and it also allows it to constantly improve its position on the market, both in Italy and abroad. The recent addition (2008) of the “Relaxtime” division will also contribute to this. The product range of “Relaxtime” is a line of armchairs and chaise longue for relaxing and massage.

In 2001 “Dielle” of Pieve di Soligo (Treviso) is acquired. Founded in 1971, it manufactures junior bedroom furniture, wardrobes and sitting rooms. With this acquisition, the Doimo Group takes on a leading position in the junior bedroom furniture sector, where it is active with three companies and offering a range which in terms of wide choice has no equal on both the Italian and international markets.

In 2002 in Mosnigo the permanent exhibition of the Group

opens, named Doimo Domus Interiors Gallery: its aim is to suitably and engagingly present the products of the companies of the household sector. The structure of the building was created with high aesthetic standards and with remarkably versatile features. It is ideal not only to display the products at their best but also for various activities: information, training, research, marketing and more. The building, in fact, hosts twelve offices, a large equipped and sound proof meeting room, four web corners and several refreshment halls.

«Doimo Domus - states Giuseppe Doimo - was an exceptional commitment for us, but undoubtedly it is reaping its rewards. Often some resellers come and visit it and they then become customers to several companies of the Group».

In 2003 “Sedit” is created: located in Polcenigo (Pordenone), it specialises in tables and chairs; and in 2004 “Doimo Décor” is born in Mosnigo, which operates in the sector of the furnishings and household items like rugs, lamps, vases and textiles.

When on the subject of Sedit, Giuseppe Doimo points out: *«It was born out of a meeting between me and a young man who managed a small chair manufacturing business and whom we supplied chipboard panels. I appreciated his determination and competence, and the idea of doing something together was put into concrete form: Sedit, as we were saying».* He notes: *«When creating a company, finding the right people, who are able to lead it, can be more difficult for us than activating its structure and machinery».*

In 2004 the most important acquisition since that of Frezza takes place. It is that of “Dall’Agnese” of Maron di Brugnera (Pordenone), which we have touched on earlier, when Giuseppe Doimo mentioned its founder - Luigi Dall’Agnese - as one of the entrepreneurs he looked up to the most at the time when he was making his way in the furniture sector.

The company, which specialises in the production of tradi-

tional “in stile” furniture, has fallen prey to a financial and productive crisis which is getting more and more fierce and it is crunch time, also because some time had been wasted previously in failed negotiations. The acquisition completes quickly and satisfactorily, despite haste dictating the timing of the operation.

The local newspapers and media from Veneto and Friuli focus their attention on this event. The 12th March Pordenone edition of the “Messaggero Veneto” of Udine publishes an ample and detailed eight column article with the title: “Dall’Agnese to Doimo, the agreement is settled” and with a summary which highlights that “the company and the 127 employees are saved”. The “Gazzettino” echoes this on the same day with many articles in the national edition and in the various local editions, whose recurring title is “Doimo buys Dall’Agnese”. Practically the same title - “Doimo buys Dall’Agnese” - appears also on the “La Tribuna di Treviso”, again on 12th March. The summary of this last daily newspaper points out that “the Doimo Group, after attending to the recapitalization, will progress the business renovation plans”.

The words of praise for the Doimo Group are many, coming from all the parties involved, including the trade unions, who state their appreciation for the concreteness of the person leading the negotiations on behalf of the Group and their willingness to come to an agreement before it was too late, before the bankruptcy swallowed the company and its employees.

«The restoration of Dall’Agnese - states Giuseppe Doimo - has turned out to be an extremely onerous commitment for us. We still have not seen the first profits, despite the improvements we have carried out to restore this obsolete structure to efficiency, and despite the almost complete revolution of production, which now encompasses a good percentage of modern furniture».

22.

We have now almost reached the past few months' events. 2008 records the birth of the already mentioned "Doimo Idea", which produces furniture and accessories and replaces Summer by Doimo: its debut on the market was in April, during the Salone del Mobile of Milan, and it already boasts a complete range of products.

2008 is marked, however, especially by the opening of the Doimo Cityline manufacturing plant. Since 1994, Doimo Cityline has been managed by Marco Meregalli, Olieve Doimo's husband since 1993. This "cathedral of work", erected less than one kilometre from the historical headquarters of the company, has a modern architecture and in the summer, it sprouts with its large outline in amongst the green corn fields, which wrap around it on many sides. It possesses a logistical and productive system which is at the leading edge for the furniture sector, not only within this country: it is remarkable, in fact, due to the utilisation of the most modern technologies, supplied by the best Italian and German manufacturers, and due to the total automation of all departments, of all processes and of all functions.

Even before its launch, the new Doimo Cityline manufacturing plant was already the centre of attention of the two most important trade magazines which deal with timber machinery: "Xylon" published it in its February 2007 edition and "IDM / L'Industria del Mobile" (the Furniture Industry) in its May edition of the same year.

«In this new entity of ours - notes Giuseppe Doimo proudly - we have poured all of the experience gained in many years and we have created the premise to ensure that this entity can operate at its

best, in efficiency, productivity and flexibility. In short, on top of being a statement of the technological level we have achieved, it is our "world-beating weapon" to best compete within the Italian market and especially within the international market, because exporting - not only for Doimo Cityline but also for all the companies within the Group - must absolutely be incremented».

It is necessary however to talk some more about Doimo Cityline, as in the past few years it has proved to be amongst the most dynamic companies of the Group. Testimony of this is, above all, the fact that it has divided into several sections, to best face the markets and to offer strong and recognisable products. These divisions are currently five, mentioned below in order of year of launch and with their specialization: "Doimo Desktop" (2000, office furniture and partition walls), "Doimo Cityline Kids" (2005, nursery furniture), "Passport" (2006, sitting room and bedroom furniture, sliding doors), "Doimo Cityline Contract" (2007, "turn-key" furniture solution service) and "SmartFile" (2008, clever system for secure filing).

Another confirmation of the dynamism of Doimo Cityline is in the continuous effective marketing initiatives; in the massive advertising and promotional campaigns, conveyed on multimedia (the press, radio-television and the web) and of focused sponsoring, which contribute to both the rise in sales and to enlarging the fame of the brand and to take it to the highest levels.

This is constantly demonstrated, for example with the inclusion of the company's case history in the book "Lavapiubianco.com / Pubblicità e Web" (Washitwhiter.com / Advertising and the Web) by Lorenzo Montagna (Edizioni Hops Libri, 2004), beside remarkably famous international companies, such as BMW and Procter & Gamble.

The list of companies pertaining to the Doimo Group, or that have been fully owned or with a majority share by the

Doimo family has ended. This list has highlighted a total of 37 entities, which Giuseppe Doimo has commented on with his opinion and judgement. He closes with a general consideration: «Our companies have more than one thousand employees, not considering the linked industries. For an entrepreneur, this means a considerable social responsibility, which I think about everyday».





The important topics



Gianna and Giuseppe Doimo with their four children in 2001.

23. The management of the Group

When portraying the growth of the entrepreneurial activity of Giuseppe Doimo we have written about many of his companies, but we have not given due attention to some topics specifically regarding the Group, starting from its management organisation, in order not to fragment the chronological account of the events too much, thus allowing a better reading. Therefore it is necessary to highlight these topics, also because Giuseppe Doimo has expressed opinions and made some comments on them, starting with the management of the Group.

Giuseppe Doimo presides over a “family run” Group, a characteristic which - observing the end results - is by no means a hindrance, but rather a strength. In the highest managerial rankings he is supported by the members of his family and by the members of his brother Ettore’s family, who have direct responsibility for leading several companies (everyone heads up one or more companies). Moreover, they act as reference points for the managers leading those companies that they do not directly manage.

The higher management level of the Group has a horizontal structure, strongly chosen by Giuseppe Doimo. *«Because this - he clarifies - basically means maximum responsibility and consequently maximum motivation for the person holding managerial roles».* *«Better still - he adds - it means the Group can prescind me. It is the Group which counts and that has become a valuable asset, beyond myself».*

Just the fact that the Doimo Group has on one hand this family set-up, but on the other hand it is a famous entity with re-

markable potential has attracted the attention, especially in the past few years, of the companies who specialise in listing companies on the stock exchange, because - to put it lightly - the name Doimo is decisively considered to be alluring.

On the subject of the stock exchange, Giuseppe Doimo is clear: *«We have been approached, several times in fact, with a proposal to take this step, which - according to the experts - has the potential to grant us a strong capitalization. Technically we could create a holding and head with it towards "Piazza Affari" (the stock exchange). This is not the problem. In my opinion, leading a Group quoted on the stock exchange implies very complex responsibility towards the shareholders and demands some strategic behaviours which involve a specific mentality, typical of the financial world, which frankly we do not possess».*

24. The never random acquisitions

As mentioned before, acquisitions have been a very important chapter of the Doimo Group history and they will probably continue to be. Therefore this topic must be looked at more deeply, starting from a general note. Acquisitions are never made at random or dictated by chance, on the contrary they are always directed to a global plan, which is to manufacture every type of furnishings both for the home and for the office and, especially as far as the house is concerned, from complete furniture ranges for the fully furnished room, to the small accessory, for the first and second time buyer.

On top of this consideration though, the convenience of the operation from a financial point of view is always kept into account and other reference data, specific to the company to be bought, is also closely weighed up. Giuseppe Doimo says: *«Any acquisition, in order to avoid any misadventures, must be preceded by an attentive and painstaking analysis carried out at various levels, starting from the soundness and customer loyalty of the brand, from the efficiency of the production system and the employees' motivation».*

Every shift in ownership is a different story, not only for the buyer but also for the seller. Various motivations for the counterparty include, for instance, the impossibility to continue running the business with their own means or strength or, more simply, the owner's old age and, contemporaneously, the lack of generational replacement.

«Most of the time - points out Giuseppe Doimo - the company to be bought is unfortunately affected by the consequences of the limited

or, sometimes, total lack of investments, both with reference to the equipment and to product research».

«On this matter - he continues - our experience allows us to exactly evaluate when a company becomes obsolete. Generally, nowadays, three years of “non-investments” already constitute a problem; should it prove to be even more years, it can clearly be stated that the company in question is irreversibly in decline».



25. Technology and human contribution

The attention the Group pays to the operational set-up of its companies has been a constant in time, to the extent that - as the reader will surely remember - the weekly magazine “Epoca” had already mentioned this in its editorial feature dedicated to Doimo F.lli, back in the 60s.

«This “historical” behaviour of ours - earnestly notes Giuseppe Doimo - has a precise reason, because keeping up with new technology, in reality, means increasing productivity, improving production and securing a whole range of resulting advantages, like the availability of high quality furniture at competitive prices and the reduction of delivery time».

Moreover, in conjunction with the above there has always been a focus on improving the whole organisation of the companies within the Group, of all the functions in which their business activity is divided. This is done without ever forgoing the increase in the number of employees, because the human contribution is still considered a fundamental value.

«A company - is Giuseppe Doimo’s thinking - develops well only if everything improves together in harmony, both the operational structures and the men, at every task level». «Through the years - he continues - I had a lot of able, good, cooperative people with me, who have contributed to the growth of the companies. I hired hundreds of them myself. I would say that 90% of them had the required skills. This makes me proud. On the other hand, I am sorry if I have ever not known how to help and emphasize the skills of any worthy employee». «Many times - he adds - I re-hired some

valuable employees who had left, through my initiative or through their wish to come back to us».

On the topic of operatives, it is worth making a general remark on not only Giuseppe Doimo and his Group, but on all entrepreneurs. In the past twenty-five years, work has undergone such a radical change that it leaves us perplexed. It was the pillar of our world. On top of the financial security, it gave us an identity and gave substance to our existence. Furthermore, it gave us a strong sense of belonging to a class; a project; a company, yes, also to a company.

Then work has become “alienated”, maybe an unusual but probably appropriate term. On one hand the so called “refurbishments”, the outsourcing trend and the lack of stability in jobs. On the other, egalitarianism amongst the workers and the abolition of meritocracy have corroded what had been, for many decades in the 1900s, our “bearing value”: work, rendering it flexible, ephemeral, insecure, less stimulating, in fact the object of growing disaffection.

Globalization, of people and goods, took its part in increasingly emphasizing this sense of transiency in the workplace and is contributing to the climate of indifference which involves everything, even the things that have always been essential reference points in life.

Giuseppe Doimo agrees, however he has an additional comment on the matter of disaffection towards work and on the matter of this indifference shown towards everything, especially when these are felt and demonstrated by young people: *«I believe the fault lies especially with the parents. It is they who have taught their children few principles, few real values in which to believe. They let them do anything they want. As a result they grow up... “with no backbone”. Any difficulty throws them into crisis. I barely had bread to eat, nowadays they have bread, butter, dessert, everything. They are never content with anything. This is not good enough!».*

Anyway, even in the above mentioned current context, the companies of the Doimo Group continue to value work and workers more than ever. After all Giuseppe Doimo is not a man to easily lose faith, as we have mentioned many a time in this book. He remarks that he does not want to desist in his huge efforts *«not only - are his words - to help and emphasize the skills of those who show will and ability, but also in order to build a teamwork between the workers and keep the team spirit alive».*

Numerous events through the years have contributed to creating that team spirit, like year-end parties, and anniversaries of the founding of the various companies, all occasions to celebrate together, owners, employees and friends. Amongst these events it is worth remembering the twenty-fifth anniversary of Doimo Salotti, which took place in 1993, because in that circumstance it was decided opportune to bestow a carrier award to a great journalist, Carla Giagnoni, who at the time was the editor of Brava Casa.



The four Doimo brothers during the party for the 25° anniversary of Doimo Salotti in 1993.



26. Distribution and the relationship with clients

Another important topic is distribution, which in time has become more and more complex. This is especially true since Italy was joined by other European and International countries, where the Group is becoming stronger and stronger year after year. Italy and Europe are slowly merging, even though every market still retains its differentiations. The Group is active in European countries with its own trading network, while, in the rest of the world, it relies on importers, who adopt the most appropriate strategy for their area's distribution setup.

As far as the Italian market is concerned, Giuseppe Doimo and the management of the Group currently do not think it necessary to activate different distribution channels from the traditional one, which is constituted of “manufacturer - independent reseller - consumer”. This belief represents a clear demonstration of trust towards their business partners, also because the Group would have both the fame and the potential to opt for a franchising approach.

However, in order to understand the reason for this belief it is necessary to take a look at the current furnishings tertiary sector, with an essential premise: in this country, the manufacturing world and the distribution world interact through the so-called “*filiere cortissime*” (short distribution chain), with evident advantages for the consumer. In Italy in fact there are no mediations, which are often parasitic and which upset the running of many other areas like the food farming sector. This grants the furniture industry close control over the distribution chain and its behaviour.

In Italy there are approximately 22,000 furniture shops. Out of these, 10% are elite dealers, who stock high quality brands, while 25% sit at the opposite end: nondescript shops, nondescript products, with often a... border-line behaviour. Focusing our interest on the almost 14,500 remaining resellers, on the whole their evaluation is positive, for two reasons in particular. The first reason is that they managed to adjust to the consumers' reality, coming from the old into the new millennium. Consumers generally do not have the same purchasing power or the same tendency to buy that they had in the past, when furniture and home were amongst the first consumer goods. The second reason is that they have managed - specifically in the past five years - to suitably read the new scenario, which shows an increasingly less impulsive and propulsive sales trend. In fact, the trend is more reflexive, segmented and complex (not to mention complicated...).

The credit? It goes first of all to the resellers themselves, and especially to the new generation, who often bring innovative ideas and stimulating initiatives. In particular to the family-run businesses (the great majority of the approximately 14,500 shops we are talking about), who adopted a more intuitive than managerial approach. This has also left space for numerous capitalizations, especially in the more financially favourable years.

The manufacturers are also contributing to the improvements in the distribution situation. For example, the companies of the Doimo Group have launched strategic collaborations and persistent important operations. They have always concentrated in particular on their relationship with the resellers, to the extent that the promotion of customer loyalty in their clients constitutes one of their main objectives.

The promotion of customer loyalty is based on various motivations. Like the availability of excellent value-for-money

products and the ability to offer pre-sales advice and post-sales service adequate to market requirements. A market which wants to make an informed decision before buying, and which wants to be able to count on punctual deliveries and on proper support in any situation.

«In order to ensure clients get the best quality of service - points out Giuseppe Doimo - a lot of resources are invested in the operators' and the sales force's training, running recurring training courses, which sometimes are attended by the resellers' employees as well».

The increasingly close relationship with the clients has stimulated the creation of dedicated displays (sales points or corners) in the dealers' shops for an increasing amount of companies within the Group. They are designed to display the products at their best, giving the customers a chance to make an informed decision. These sales points are setup both individually and jointly by several companies of the Group.

«I have an important remark - states Giuseppe Doimo - about our clients. Our relationship with them is almost always based on mutual esteem and often on friendship, both of which have built over time. We especially have our clients to thank for our growth, the trust they show us every day, participating in our production choices and behaving accordingly».

Before closing on the topic of the customers it is also worth mentioning that, through the years, they have frequently been involved by the Group in prize holidays around the world, holidays in which Giuseppe Doimo and his wife Gianna took part.



Giuseppe Doimo and Emanuela Folliero in 2003.

27. Integrated Communications

We have made reference to the communications of the companies within the Group several times, in particular in the first chapters, when we mentioned the first Doimo F.lli advertisement (in 1965), the first editorial dedicated to the company (in 1968) and when we mentioned the advertising campaigns that Doimo Salotti used to organise, already as far back as the second half of the 70s.

However, it is only in the early 90s that an increasing number of companies within the Group started to give organicity to their communications, thus implementing the so called “integrated communications” approach, which at that time was in the spotlight due to its continuous development.

It is necessary at this point to quickly remember that the term “integrated communications” refers to a set of activities aimed at informing existing and potential clients; opinion leaders, starting with journalists; financial operators and naturally also the public about everything concerning a company and its products.

Integrated Communications is constructed of not only press, radio and television channel advertising and, like in the past few years, the internet, but in addition - to mention one of the most important examples - company literature; external relations; press releases, sponsorships and the management of portals and of the whole complex presence on the web.

With regards to integrated communications, the first to achieve the aspired organicity- almost contemporaneously with advertising - were the press releases in 1992: from then until to-

day there have been thousands of editorials in the Italian and International media every year, which have definitely contributed to the growth of interest and approval towards the companies of the Group.

«When - states Giuseppe Doimo - I get the volumes of the press reviews, I think of them a little bit as if they were a litmus paper of our success, because if many newspapers have talked about us and about our products it means that we have produced many pieces of furniture worthy of attention. Moreover, if one considers that, only in Italy, there are several hundred companies in the furniture sector which regularly communicate their news, then it all means even more...».

The press releases generally focus on the products but at times the Group, and its companies, are the centre of attention for the newspapers. The press reviews, which have been accumulated over the years, document many editorials. These were absolutely excel-



lent in the amount of space dedicated to the feature and in the quality of information provided, with detailed and accurate assessments, especially when in the context of the increasing diversity in the positioning of the companies within the market.

Amongst the editorials dedicated to the Group, one which deserves to be mentioned was published in the monthly magazine "DDN / Design Diffusion News" in October 2000. It is maybe the best one of all: on a total of six pages, the journalist Luciana Cuomo completely analyses - through an interview with Olieve Doimo - the Group in its complexity (*"Il Gruppo fa la casa"* - the Group makes the home - recites the title, while the beginning of the text imperatively states "Fully expresses the soul of the North-East of Italy..."), focusing with precise notes on the competitive pluses which distinguish the Group.

In autumn 2002 the press is invited to visit Doimo Domus Interiors Gallery, the showroom which had been opened a few months earlier. Many journalists had a chance to experience the Group's wide product range, highlighted by Giuseppe Doimo in the welcome speech to the guests: *«We are the only Italian Group which deals with the whole house and we do it with many companies for each type of furniture. With the enthralling display in this new building, we believe we have managed to emphasize this fact, and to underline our production capacity and our potential, demonstrating that we know how to best match product research and product quality».*

As we said, internet is now a fully qualified part of integrated communications, exploiting the strength in its numbers. In Italy alone, the numbers are as follows: in 2007 web users have reached 24 million, an increase of 40% since 2005.

The Doimo Group is operating on the internet since the mid 90s, and it does so with considerable effort, convinced that it constitutes an increasingly important strategic factor for companies,



especially for those operating all over the world. The lavish effort on internet has had a significant result: for three consecutive years (2000, 2001 and 2002) the portal of the Group - www.doimo.it - ranked amongst the first ten companies, at the WWW prize, announced by the daily financial paper "Il Sole-24 Ore".

The internet is used by the Group to interface both with clients and with consumers, offering them always up-to-date documentation on its companies and further supplying news and furnishings advice on request.

«The Group - states Giuseppe Doimo - invests a budget on the internet, which increases every year. Personally I believe in the importance of the web, mainly for the future, when so much of our life and of our business will have the internet as the main reference».

When listing the components of integrated communications, we mentioned sponsorships, which the Doimo companies ventured into already back in the 60s, and often - as far as sports sponsorships are concerned - thanks to the efforts of Fernando Doimo.

Historically the majority of sports sponsorships were focused on professional cycling. The first, which started towards the mid 60s, and which lasted for more than a decade, was the "Circuito degli Assi" (the circuit of the aces), which used to take place in Col San Martino, near Mosnigo, boasting the presence of the most famous racers, like Eddy Merckx, Felice Gimondi and Gianni Motta. In the 70s there was the sponsorship, which also continued for years, of many cyclists taking part in the "Sei Giorni" (six days) race in Milan. Recently the company Frezza, and then Frezza and Doimo Salotti together, have associated their name with the "Liquigas" team.

Moving on to a different sport, we must remember the motorsport sponsorship of the Formula One "Minardi" team, from 1995 until 2000, and of other teams of different formulas. In sail-

ing, the sponsorship of the “Mascalzone Latino-Capitalia” team for the America’s Cup in 2007 and that of the “Fantic Motor” team in motorbike racing, which competes in the Endurance, Motorally and Supermotard championships in Italy and Europe. Unlike the first two, this last initiative - which is still running - is exclusive to Doimo Cityline, which has given its name to the team itself.

Throughout the years, there have been numerous sponsorships of television programs and many cultural events. On the small screen, just to mention one, we remember - repeated several times year after year by Doimo Cityline and by Doimo Salotti - “*Chi vuol essere milionario?*” (Who Wants to be a Millionaire?), the lucky program presented by Gerry Scotti on Canale 5.

Amongst the cultural events it is worth mentioning the “Biennale di Venezia”: Casamania has associated its name, as official sponsor, with the 2007 “Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte” (International Art Exhibition) and with the 2008 “Mostra Internazionale di Architettura” (International Architecture Exhibition).

«*Sponsorships - states Giuseppe Doimo - contribute to creating attention and popularity towards our companies. Some especially give us remarkable visibility, and others allow us to involve our resellers, like we did for Doimo Salotti, with the “Carovana del Giro” (the Giro’s convoy), during the last two Giro d’Italia.*»



Two promotional events tied to Formula One and the “Giro ciclistico d’Italia”.



Taking stock of it all



28.

Starting the final part of this book, it is clear that it has been an interweave of family and work, for a deducible reason, which should however be highlighted. Life normally has two layers: a private layer and a public layer. However for Giuseppe Doimo, there is only one: family and work together. There is not much of what usually fulfils life, like entertainment, holidays and dedicating time to other things.

At the moment of considering the past and looking to the future, Giuseppe Doimo forces himself to “split himself in two”. He also - and this is the most important thing - does not shirk the questions, dressing it all with the usual frankness and wisdom, because they are both part of his DNA and come out naturally.

We start with the entrepreneurial part, given that Giuseppe Doimo is not just any entrepreneur but the chairman of the largest Italian furnishings Group. The first remarks are about the furniture world, listing first of all its most recent data, from 2007.

The Italian furnishings sector is made up of approximately 37,000 manufacturers, 5,000 of which can be described as “industrial” (the largest of these are mostly group structures) and 32,000 of which can be described as “craftsmen”. The data, processed by the “Centro Studi Cosmit/Federlegno-Arredo” appears to be positive on the whole: the furnishings sector turnover has grown (it is now almost 40 billion euros), along with the increase in the previous year (+3%). The performance is caused both by an increase in the internal market (+4%) and by a good expansion in exporting (+8.4%), which has reached 13.7 billion euros.

«On the whole - notes Giuseppe Doimo - our sector is vital, proactive, and it has always overcome any difficult periods, as its notable growth from the 50s onwards confirms. Moving on to current events, it is worth saying that internal sales are quite slow. The export sales data is remarkable, instead. It shows growth, which confirms that the world's respect for "Italian Lifestyle" remains intact, as corroborated during the last "Salone del Mobile" of Milano. This reference frame, in itself not particularly worrying, joins with a situation in Italy, in Europe and the world which is permeated by adverse events, by several negative data reports, to the extent that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to predict what is going to happen».

Unfortunately the future of any sector, including the furnishings sector, is increasingly interrelated with the general situation. Therefore, according to many people, we are living in a time when it is necessary to scrape together the last remaining traces of optimism in order not to drown in "force 9" negativity. Maybe it is all true, however it is worth saying that our era has lost the habit of seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. Moreover, there are people who deliberately and stupidly toy with ruin.

«The post-war boom in this country - states Giuseppe Doimo - was not organised from above and, in the 50s, the climate was definitely more precarious than nowadays and opportunities were uncertain. However the really... "subversive" strength, back then, was the will to grow and to improve which many of us showed, without expecting other people to do it for us».

This willpower to get things done seems to have vanished nowadays, or at least, to be diluted in many contradictions, in many false objectives.

There is also a daily battle with the high cost of living and with speculation. The new financial predators, gambling on the "future", move hundreds of billions of dollars and of euros. They push up the price of everything, they inflate oil quotations, con-

tributing to the growth of inflation. As a consequence everybody becomes poorer. Furniture, though not part of the non-essential goods bracket, the ones we can do without, is still not as indispensable as primary needs goods. From here results the slowdown in expansion, especially in the internal market, with all the consequences for companies and resellers.

However, even in this situation, there is still hope for the future, as Giuseppe Doimo earnestly notes. Life has led him to deal with every scenario, both the good ones and those that looked capable of sinking everything *«I believe - he says - that the entrepreneur must always do his job. He cannot be an entrepreneur when things are going well and then not be one when there are difficulties. Personally, I have managed to survive many adversities by not preemptively giving in to fear, which is always a bad adviser, and by activating the most opportune initiatives to counteract these adversities, sometimes going against the tide, when later that proved me right».*



29.

Giuseppe Doimo, during his many years as an entrepreneur, has always demonstrated to be able, like the pragmatic “man of action” he is, to interpret all frustrations properly, matching the ability to manage daily processes with the strategic medium to long term vision.

The umpteenth proof of this arrives just in the period when this book is coming to life. In the Basilicata region, near Matera, where the Group is present with the company Doimo Sofas, there is a crisis in the upholstery sector, the division in which that production area specialises. It is a very serious crisis which involves many companies, big and small, which means that the difference in size cannot be considered the reason for the crisis. The weekly magazine “Economy”, which is part of “Panorama”, dedicates a large editorial to this event in its 16th July 2008 edition, opening with the sensational title - “Sofas upholstered in debts” - and railing against the entrepreneurship from the area in an unforgiving way.

The local daily newspapers, the “Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno” of Bari (Basilicata edition) and the “Nuova del Sud” of Potenza-Matera, detail the worrying situation in their daily news. They both point out, on 9th and 10th July, that nearly all companies are in serious trouble apart from very few, like Doimo. The name Doimo is the only one to get a positive mention in the articles.

Giuseppe Doimo is pleased by this reference to this company. However, at the same time, he bitterly laments the vastness of this phenomenon. He notes: *«it is always worrying when a crisis in-*

volves the whole sector or an entire productive area. This is because it means that there are complex reasons for it, more than if the crisis was limited to only one company».

He then continues: *«I can say, if this constitutes a reason for our “dissimilarity”, that we have poured many years of upholstery production experience into Doimo Sofas and that we have supported the company with remarkable investments, aimed at helping its pricing policy. Therefore: well-made products at definitely competitive prices. The market has understood and it has behaved accordingly, rewarding our efforts. Basically we have chosen to earn less now in order to earn more in the future, widening our client base and our range of sofas and securing even more display areas within the resellers shops».*

When speaking to Giuseppe Doimo everything appears simple and easy to explain. There is a contrast in the same problems, which, when dealt with by financial experts or financial journalists, first of all constitute topics for cultural analysis, quoting full-blooded economists, and which then determine solutions which are almost always... a little bit typical of one who lives Finance in University lecture halls or in newspapers editorial units. In short: on one hand, the concreteness of an expert entrepreneur and on the other hand the usual aseptic and inconclusive blah blah.

30.

The Matera upholstery industry crisis and Doimo Sofas topic leads straight to the Group. It is now time to take stock of the Group and to try to explain the reasons of its success.

The first mention of the group is in the chapter about the 70s, when Giuseppe Doimo created it to bring together the strength of two companies. Then we mentioned it in the chapter about important topics, albeit only with reference to its organisational management. The first time we also said that we would better define its objectives and potential later on.

In effect, the potential of the group would reach its highest level when it managed to cover all types of furniture and it achieved a really unique complete range, both in the Italian and International markets, well expressed in the effective slogan “360 degrees furnishings”. The aim is to fulfil the demands, all the demands, of the medium and medium-high band of the market.

Moreover, throughout the years, another advantage has clearly appeared. This second advantage is that it is easier for a group to “work as a system”- to use an expression which is very popular recently - compared to companies which are partnerships, especially when they are under the aegis of government bodies. Working as a system, specifically on the international market, means facing the difficulties in the markets with more strength, and offering a very wide but manageable range, thanks to the connections between the relevant companies. It also means agility notwithstanding the size, maintaining the achieved position in the market more easily and defending them both from occasional,

and in some cases, even adventurous competition, and from competitors who move on an informed basis.

Therefore, the companies of the Group have the chance to relate to the furnishing world as entities of a structure with great capabilities and moreover, they have the chance to activate inter-company synergies, with continuous exchanges of experience, research and know-how. All this offers considerable advantages, at the same time without any company having to lose its managerial, production and business autonomy or its precise position on the market.

In short, the Group is an entity of remarkable significance, which contains the reasons of its own success, as we can understand from these words by Giuseppe Doimo: *«We never stop. We are passionate about our work. We love the furniture we produce. For the emotions they can create, first in us, and then in the customer who puts them in their home. Striving to be better; understanding the trends and possibly predicting them; always looking forward: these are our inputs. Bringing to the world, with increasing consistency, one of the things that Italy knows how best to make: Furniture. It is a demanding mission - as they say - but one in which we strongly believe, and when one strongly believes in something the results are always forthcoming»*.

Some of these words remind me of a quote which I have carried inside me since a few years ago: “If you are reacting to change, it is already too late: it is necessary to predict change, understand it before it takes place and transform it into opportunities”. It is a quote by Jurgen Hambrecht, chairman of the multinational BASF, which Paul Laudicina inserted in the foreword of his book “World out of balance” (Mcgraw-Hill Book Company, 2004).

For the Group, Giuseppe Doimo has fought many years of his life. It is then understandable why, when talking about it, he

always shows a certain passion. Like when he makes this wish: «I would like it to continue in time and to grow even more!». He accompanies this with a word to the wise: *«I would like there were no clashes on what is already there. On what to be done later, it is a different matter...»*. This “word to the wise” is directed at the “second generation” (his children, their spouses and Ettore’s children), who - as mentioned in the author’s note - have already acquired high responsibility roles at management level in the companies and the Group.



31.

The success of the Doimo Group can also be measured in other ways.

For example the fact that many entrepreneurs have looked and still look at it with the understandable desire to follow in its footsteps. Or the fact that its name is often quoted as the best reference by manufacturers of woodworking machines or by industry services suppliers. Or the fact that, when discussing important topics, such as globalisation, outsourcing and insourcing, the Group is often mentioned as a reference point.

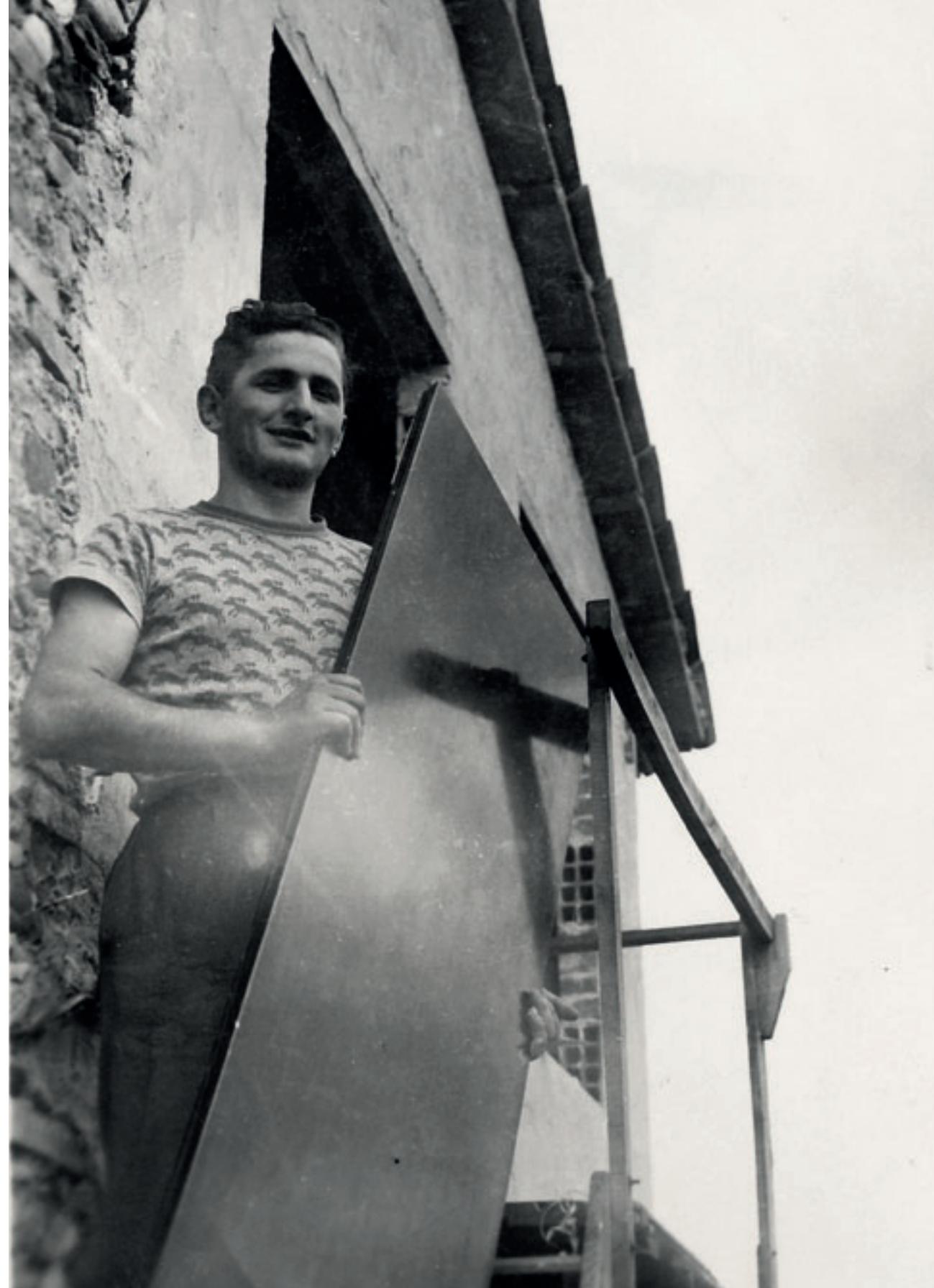
Lately the Group has been just that, due to the topic of insourcing. The first to write about it was Guido Lorenzon in his book “I nuovi re dell’industria” - The new kings of industry (Giano Editore, 2006), speaking about the acquisition of Dall’Agnese and naming Giuseppe Doimo amongst the entrepreneurs who “have put into action a strong opposition against the logic of outsourcing”. The same concept has been expressed more recently by the press, relating it to the new Doimo Cityline factory.

«In effect - Giuseppe Doimo says - as an entrepreneur I have always been... parochial. The facts are proving me right. Take Romania, the first “Promised Land” of Italian outsourcing. The reality is now this: not only are the products made in that country becoming less and less competitive, since it has become part of the European Union, with all the consequences, like for instance the inevitable adjustment of wages, but the local labour is starting to be in short supply, to the extent that they are turning more and more to

workers coming from China and Bangladesh. Outsourcing is probably destined to become never-ending nomadic wandering».

Until now, then, the Group has shown an exclusive national vocation in respect of the production setup, but - as we already mentioned - Giuseppe Doimo is a pragmatic entrepreneur, who loves the motto "never say never". After all, there are already some international joint ventures with entrepreneurs from several countries, and not only in the furnishings sector. Moreover, with reference to the foreign trade, there could be acquisitions of trading companies, operating in markets considered relevant, to be made in the future.

At this point, after the conclusion of his thoughts and taking stock of the Group, when asked to do the same for himself as an entrepreneur, Giuseppe Doimo stops suddenly for a few seconds and then is adamant: *«I do not feel like I want to express a judgement about myself as an industrialist, I believe that what I have done speaks for itself».*





Gianna and Giuseppe Doimo in 2008.

32.

The personal balance of this stocktaking starts from the illness instead. It is November 2007. In the evening everything seems normal. The next morning he tries to get out of bed and he cannot walk. Life changes suddenly. Without having time to prepare, to ensure it is not a trauma for anyone. The hospital. The tests. The results. «It has been like a car crash, which in a split-second upsets everything», remembers Giuseppe Doimo.

On the matter of his illness I decided to give him pause for silence, letting him know that, if he wanted to say something, I was willing to listen, but I would not ask questions which could sound inopportune.

Physical suffering often isolates people into a bubble, no one can reach who is in pain to really truly console them. In suffering, sometimes, there is also a feeling of affront, an undercurrent hostility towards the world. Everything becomes a grey desert, where the question “why?” often receives no answer. Life becomes gloomy. Fear slips into the deepest meanders. However, then one day, light comes back. One can start to clear one’s mind.

Giuseppe Doimo can see that his illness has stricken his body but not his mind. He can see that his wife, his children, all his family are closer to him than ever before. They go to the hospital every day. They want to fight alongside him, as if the illness had hit them all.

He goes back to his old self, his usual self. He confronts the illness, he expresses the lucid and brave willpower not to give up. He also searches for the answer to the question “why?”. «*I don’t*

know - he says - if God Almighty was right in giving me a blow like this. What did I do wrong?!». However he points out immediately: «An illness can make you lose your faith, leave it unchanged or make it stronger. I think it has made it stronger for me. I have always believed in God. I have been devoted to Padre Pio for many years».

Moreover, during the days when he has nothing to do and during the often sleepless nights, he starts to retrace the length and breadth of his life. He travels on the tracks of his memory to recall people and events of his personal and entrepreneurial life. He thinks about everything he has achieved, and it seems almost impossible to him to have come this far. He reflects on matters which have been left pending for when he would have time to face them and solve them, and he deals with them straight away, as soon as he is feeling better, with his usual determination. Then he wants to pass on his story. Not by the spoken word, but on paper. This is when the idea of this book is born.

When we meet for the first time after what has happened to him, at the beginning of July 2008, Giuseppe Doimo sees my embarrassment, typical of one who does not know what to say, apart from the usual pleasantries. He helps me out of my quandary with two questions which I did not expect: *«How did the Federlegno-Arredo AGM go? What do you make of the new president?».*

He lets me give him a perfunctory report on this event, which had taken place a few days before and he also lets me briefly tell him my opinion on the newly elected president, then he remarks ironically: *«Once again people from the Veneto have been left empty handed. We were relying on one candidate and the other one won».*

At once I feel reassured, in the certainty to have found the same Giuseppe Doimo as always. He then, almost as if he wanted to confirm this, surprises me once more, because he starts talking about the illness. He does it without much preamble, without delivering a self pitying image of himself.

He starts with the notes we have already reported and then moves on to his family. He talks about his wife Gianna and remembers that in 2009 they will be celebrating an important anniversary together, 50 years of marriage, a premise for the future when people think about themselves more and more. *«I would like to celebrate this occasion properly. With my wife and my family».* He says, and then adds: *«Maybe outsiders could say that my wife was lucky to have married me, because I have been successful in life. Instead, I think it was me who was lucky, because I married her».*

He talks about his children. *«The illness - he states - has shown*



me how great their love is for me. I thought that some unmanageable barriers had accumulated between us through the years. I've always been very strict with myself, not forgiving myself any mistakes: I have applied this same strictness to them. Therefore, as father and entrepreneur, I have always demanded a lot from my children. I am lucky that there were no barriers. So I think I can say, when drawing up my own personal balance, that I have been a good father. I was

convinced of this before but now I have their ... official endorsement». He has more to say about his children: «When Ivonis was born, after two girls, it was for me an immense joy. Maybe this is taken for granted, but to a father the birth of a boy always holds a special meaning: in my case it meant not only the continuation of the surname but also the probable continuation of the company. Nowadays this is not my outlook anymore, because my daughters have proved to be excellent managers, with nothing to envy from men. In fact my daughters have the same personality as me. Anyway I have no preferences, to me they are all the same».



He then talks about his grandchildren. *«At the moment there are seven and, if they wish so, they will be the “third generation” who will lead the companies of the Group».* For now he can see Alberto, Giuseppe, Andrea, Marta, Giulio, Emma and Rita growing up: the older ones already attend high school, while the younger ones are still only toddlers. They are often at his house, lively, vivacious and lovingly looked after by his wife Gianna, who could get an

honorary degree, thanks to the experience achieved first with her children and then her grandchildren.

Giuseppe Doimo moves on to the memory of the celebrities whom he has met through the years, celebrities from every area: entrepreneurial, political, religious, sports and artistic. He remembers well, especially his meeting with Gianni Agnelli in the early 80s, who was the chairman of Fiat. *«It took place in Treviso - he recalls - during an event which had been promoted by the industrialists. We went to one side for ten minutes to talk about the issues in entrepreneurship. He also showed interest in the companies of the Group».* Giuseppe Doimo, on the other hand, took advantage of that occasion to get something off his chest, after a good few misadventures with a couple of Fiat cars: *«You must tell your managers - he urges him - to make better cars!».* He still has a keepsake of that meeting, a letter subsequently sent to him by Mr Agnelli. *«To thank me»*, he concludes.

His memory then takes him to other moments of his life, sometimes pleasantly unusual. Like when at the beginning of the 2000s he was invited to give a talk to the pupils of the Intermediate School of Moriago, to tell his story. *«The boys and girls - he remembers - asked me many questions, showing interest in my story, especially the events regarding the beginning of the business».*

As life is a kind of roulette, which encompasses joy and sorrow, Giuseppe Doimo remembers also the sad moments. Like the deaths of his parents, first his father Giovanni in 1979 and then his mother Angela, two years later. Like the death of his brother Ettore in 1995, an event which we already mentioned, and that of his elder brother Silvio, in 2005. *«Silvio - he notes - was the only brother who did not join me in my furniture business. However we were very close, because we both lived and ran our businesses in Mosnigo».* We spoke about Silvio at the beginning of the book, when he left his father Giovanni and his work in the fields to start

working in a blacksmith's shop to learn the trade. In his personal life he would marry Gemma Gambin and become father to Silvana, while in his professional life he would crown his efforts by creating the company Doimo & Gambin, a precision turned parts manufacturing business which has been active for more than forty years.



Angela and Giovanni Doimo in 1976.

33.

Before winding down the balance of it all, Giuseppe Doimo reveals a wish he has carried inside for some time, not a small wish, but an important one, because - should it come true - it would constitute a sort of “imprimatur” on his whole personal and entrepreneurial life.

This is the reason why he expresses this wish with a certain passion, to the extent that, while he talks about it, the look in his eyes becomes more intense, as if the words he is uttering were lighting him up from inside. He starts from quite far to describe it, remembering that he has never asked for any special office, favours, or honours. This has been the case, in particular, for the positions he has held or still holds: member of the board of directors of “Unindustria Treviso” for 2006-2009 (he has also been a member of the Board of Auditors), counsellor and member of the Committee of “Banca di Treviso” (Cassa di Risparmio di Ferrara Group) from 1998 until 2003, vice president of the Board of Directors and member of the Executive Committee of “Banca di Treviso” from 2003 until 2006, member of - as we previously mentioned - the “Collegio dei Probiviri” of “Federlegno-Arredo”.

As far as honours are specifically concerned, he has refused the title of “Cavaliere della Repubblica” (Knight of the Republic) several times. *«I don't want - he says - to show lack of respect towards the Republic nor offend anyone who has received this honour, however frankly I have never understood neither what it really means nor its aim. Therefore, it has never been of interest to me».*

«I wish instead - he states almost spelling out his words - for

Giuseppe Doimo, a life dedicated to furniture

the title of “Cavaliere del Lavoro” (Knight of Labour)».

I do not know if this wish can ever come true, because I am not familiar with the legalities around this honour and I am not privy to Roman affairs, however Giuseppe Doimo is definitely the ideal candidate for an award regarding work.

His life, in fact, can be successfully summed up in his motto “always work”. A lot and well.



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