

On the eve of the Olympics the city is engaged in an attempt to meet a challenge, to find a new identity. If the future of Fiat is still uncertain, in Turin and the surrounding area many small hi-tech industries have grown up, which draw on the resources of the research institutes and university departments. Many of the city streets contain building sites. New districts have arisen, and continue to arise, in areas that were formerly occupied by now disused factories. After many decades of waiting work has begun on the building of an underground railway, which had long been impeded by the motor industry lobby and the short-sightedness of some left-wing politicians; and it is to be hoped that the first line will soon be followed by others. The high-speed rail link to Novara is near completion; and soon it will reach Milan, and from there the rest of Italy, while the small-minded resistance of the towns of the Susa valley are irresponsibly slowing up the link with France. Many old buildings are being restored, and the Roman heart of the city seems to have been reborn. Turin will certainly not be what it was before, the city which based itself on the Ford model; it will be a post-industrial city, with a network of businesses that is less in evidence, no longer mono-centric but widespread. More than business, the crucial role will perhaps be played by cultural institutions, first and foremost the university and the Polytechnic, provided that they are able to continue to produce research, and not only applied research. In short, the city is now engaged in a process of transformation whose final outcome is still uncertain. But, unlike the situation a few years ago, there are at least reasons for hope. And hope is not merely the *ultima dea*; it is also the indispensable impulse to the building of a better future.

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