

conomic crises of these years exposed the inadequacies of traditional clerical charitable activities and led to a new type of mutual aid organization, the Catholic Workers Union, which had been founded in 1871. Turin and Piedmont took the lead nationally in the development of these mixed associations that embraced a model of inter-class cooperation to bring together industrial workers with artisans, merchants, and employers. In addition to medical care in time of illness, members received a variety of services, from access to a circulating library to employment services and recreational activities. At the same time, the founding of new parishes in the working-class neighborhoods on the periphery of the city and the renewed growth of the principal religious orders led to the expansion of evening trade schools, nurseries, and other forms of assistance for workers.

The optimism of Turin's industrial boosters rested upon more than the power of positive thinking, even in the darkest years of economic decline. One sector in particular, the cotton industry, avoided the worst effects of the agricultural and banking crises and managed to achieve significant growth in the decades between 1880 and 1900. To begin with, the principal cotton manufacturers in Turin were self-financing family operations that were less dependent on large-scale capital markets and therefore less exposed to the effects of the bank failures in the early 1890s. This sector gradually expanded its markets from the region to the national level and, in the last years of the century, developed new international outlets for its products in Latin America. The cotton industry further benefited from the involvement of a number of Swiss manufacturers who immigrated to Turin in these years, bringing with them financial, technological, and managerial innovations. Developments in this sector contributed to the formation of a new group of entrepreneurs who served as a model for the rest of the city's business class. They and private bankers like Geisser, Kuster, and the Ceriana brothers were well-situated to seize the opportunities that began to appear with the cyclical upturn in the Italian economy as the nineteenth century came to a close.

5. *Industrial Take-Off in Turin: 1901-1914.*

By the spring of 1901, the Italian peninsula had already entered into a period of unparalleled industrial growth. With the chemical, metallurgical, and engineering sectors leading the way, manufacturing production more than doubled, the annual rate of growth reached record