

progressive social legislation, and public works. In pursuit of these objectives, he recognized the legitimacy of unions, tolerated peaceful strikes, provided state aid to labor cooperatives, and respected the civil rights of the Socialist party.

The new policy of government neutrality in workplace disputes had an immediate impact on labor relations throughout the country. The number of strikes quadrupled in 1901, while the ranks of strikers increased ten-fold over the previous year. Turin anticipated this surge in labor militancy in 1900, when metalworkers went out on strike for higher wages and over-time pay, the ten-hour workday, and the abolition of piece-rates. Although the strike ended in defeat, it inspired other categories of workers to take action. Metalworkers walked out again in 1901, broadening their demands to include management's recognition of labor representation within the factories and obligatory union membership as a condition of employment. This strike and another work stoppage the following year by gas workers encountered broad support from laborers in other industries and trades, giving rise to the first general strike in the city's history early in the spring of 1902. By the middle of the decade, Turin had become the scene of strikes in virtually all sectors of the local economy as workers walked out in support of wage hikes, shorter hours, and labor representation in factory decision-making.

The surge in labor militancy coincided with the rapid growth and transformation of Turin's labor organizations, which moved decisively to the forefront of the Italian union movement. In the new climate created by the Giolittian system, the pace of unionization accelerated, so that by the end of the decade the local Chamber of Labor represented fifty-eight unions. Moreover, these years witnessed a major shift from trade to industrial unionism, which developed first in the automobile manufacturing plants and then spread to other sectors of the engineering industry. In February 1906, the Federation of Italian Metalworkers, or Fiom, was founded in Turin. The Fiom quickly established itself as the strongest, best organized, and most influential union in the country by winning major concessions from the auto industry. Later in the same year, Turin also became the home of the General Confederation of Labor (Cgil), the first umbrella organization representing chambers of labor and union federations throughout the country.

The discipline and militancy displayed by the local unions forced Turin's manufacturers in turn to take the lead in developing first regional and then national organizations of employers as counterweights to organized labor. After a year of discussion and preparation, Giovan-