

ernment and the monarchy secretly negotiated and signed the Treaty of London with the Entente powers, committing Italy to enter the war within one month in exchange for sweeping territorial concessions. Meanwhile, a noisy pro-war campaign in the press and streets of the major cities created the illusion of popular support for intervention. The campaign culminated in the “radiant days of May” and Italy’s going to war.

For the people of Turin, Italy’s entrance into World War I ushered in an era of extraordinary violence, social conflict, and political turbulence. Much as in the past, the city occupied center stage especially at pivotal moments in the country’s “age of catastrophe” between 1915 and 1945. Thus, Turin hosted Italy’s largest wartime insurrection in the summer of 1917, an event that opened a new period of revolutionary agitation into the country. Three years later, the city was at the center of the massive factory occupations of 1920, which marked the end of the “Red years” and set the stage for the rise and triumph of Fascism. Fittingly, in the spring of 1943, Italy’s first large-scale strikes in nearly two decades took place in Turin, signaling the beginning of the end for Mussolini and the Fascist dictatorship.

Neither war nor Fascism, however, changed the fundamental social and economic characteristics of the city that had taken root during the opening decade of the century. Between 1915 and 1945, Turin’s population continued to expand, doubling in size, largely as a result of immigration linked to jobs in the automobile industry. Likewise, the sharp division between a socialist working class and a modern industrial bourgeoisie continued to dominate Turin’s social and political life in these years. While the clash of these “two cities” produced monumental confrontations, it also acted as a powerful stimulus to innovation. As a result, Turin further consolidated its position in the vanguard of Italian capitalism. Lastly, the inter-war period anticipated important developments in the post-World War II decades. Well before the 1950s and ’60s, for instance, Turin was already becoming an “Italian” city with people from many regions who had come to work in the factories and were gradually integrated into the fabric of urban life.

## 2. *Turin Goes to War.*

The outbreak of war served to intensify and sharpen pre-existing divisions within Turinese society. While most local citizens opposed Italian military intervention in August 1914 like the majority of their countrymen, the neutralist forces in the city were considerably more ag-