

tance also accelerated the process of industrial concentration in the basic sectors and the largest firms that had begun before 1914. Those firms possessed the technology and organizational scale required to meet the extraordinary demands of the wartime production. Moreover, their size gave them the political clout to win the most advantageous governmental orders. Spokesmen for the Industrial League, for instance, dominated the newly formed Piedmontese Committee of Industrial Mobilization, a regional body that fused private and public power in the coordination of industrial production, the resolution of labor disputes, and the determination of the companies with privileged “auxiliary” status. This status provided state-imposed labor discipline in the factories as well as other significant economic advantages to its recipients.

Fiat emerged as the chief industrial beneficiary of the wartime economy in Turin. Already the largest auto manufacturer in the country on the eve of war, Agnelli’s company enjoyed a remarkable period of growth in the four years after 1914. Between 1915 and 1918, Fiat rose from thirtieth to third place among all Italian corporations, increased its capital more than seven-fold, quadrupled its production of motor vehicles, and enlarged its workforce from 3,500 to more than 40,000 or a quarter of all the workers in Turin. The same years also saw the firm diversify its production by taking over other enterprises and by setting up new companies. By the end of the war, Agnelli presided over an industrial empire that controlled three-fifths of Piedmont’s engineering sector and accounted for 92% of the country’s production of trucks and 80% of its airplane engines by the end of the war. At the same time, Fiat expanded its exports to Italy’s allies, whose armies absorbed almost half of its production.

### 3. *Social Unrest and Revolutionary Agitation in Wartime Turin.*

The exceptional growth of Fiat and the rest of Turin’s engineering sector after 1914 had a profound impact on the city’s social structure and class relations. Above all, World War I propelled the Piedmontese capital into the ranks of the major European industrial centers. In the process, it accentuated and sharpened pre-existing social tensions and cultural contrasts in the rapidly expanding city. Despite high mortality and low birth rates, the urban population climbed from 456,440 to over 525,000 by 1918, the second largest increase of any city in the country during the conflict. Immigrants, who were drawn by jobs in the war industries, accounted for the lion’s share of the population growth.