

vember 1919. On the national level, the Socialists, who had run on an explicitly anti-war platform, emerged as the largest single party in the Chamber of Deputies, the elected lower house of the Italian parliament. The left made an especially strong showing in Turin, where it won 62.8% of the vote, the second highest total of any city in the country.

In the wake of the elections, the political battleground in the Piedmontese capital shifted to the factories and the campaign to impose worker self-management in the engineering and automotive industries. As the home base of these industries, Turin provided a particularly favorable terrain for such an initiative, which capitalized on widespread worker dissatisfaction with the old unions and resentment of authoritarian discipline in the factories. An alliance between the most politically aware and technically qualified labor force in the country and an imaginative group of militant Marxist intellectuals associated with Antonio Gramsci and his journal, *Ordine Nuovo*, pushed Turin to the forefront of the country's revolutionary movement. Gramsci and his local collaborators embraced the idea of "factory councils" in early 1919 as Italian equivalents to the Russian Soviets that would give the workers a direct role in the running of the factories and prepare them for an eventual revolutionary seizure of power.

While the factory council movement enjoyed enthusiastic support among the rank and file in the city, it encountered resistance from a variety of directions. To begin with, the *Ordine Nuovo* group faced opposition from the national union establishment, whose leadership it challenged, as well as from moderate elements in the Socialist party, alarmed by its revolutionary aspirations. At the same time, the pre-eminent role of Turin in the movement aroused the municipal jealousies of labor groups in other Italian cities, making them reluctant to support Gramsci's initiatives. Above all, the factory councils aroused the fiercest opposition from Turin's industrialists, who viewed them as an unacceptable infringement on managerial prerogatives and began to organize a broad employer front against them.

In this setting, the decisive confrontation between organized capital and labor in post-war Italy took place in Turin during the spring of 1920. In mid-March, the issue of the factory councils triggered a series of conflicts in the engineering and automobile sectors that escalated into a massive general strike in April. At its peak, the strike involved half a million workers and threatened to paralyze the city as transportation and other public-service employees walked off the job. For their part, local industrialists seized the occasion to try to restrict, if not eliminate, the factory councils in the workplace. Accordingly, they responded to