

the strike by preparing for a major shutdown of their plants and by subsidizing groups of volunteers to preserve order in the city and maintain vital municipal services. Despite strong mass support in the Piedmontese capital, the workers' cause suffered decisive setback when the leadership of the national labor movement and the Socialist party refused to extend the general strike to the rest of the country. With the local workers isolated from their comrades in rest of Italy, the confrontation ended the third week of April with a resounding defeat for the factory council movement.

The general strike of April in Turin prefigured a larger national confrontation in the fall of 1920. This time around the industrial leaders provoked the conflict with their steadfast refusal to grant any wage concessions to the unions. When managers ordered a lockout in one plant in Milan, it sparked a wave of factory occupations in early September that rapidly spread throughout Italy and eventually involved half a million workers. Once again the movement assumed its most massive and militant form in Turin, where 150,000 took part, red guards maintained discipline in the plants, and factory councils attempted to maintain production. As in the spring, divisions within the labor movement and Socialist party at the national level left the revolutionary vanguard in Turin isolated. Pressure from the government induced the industrialists make a few token concessions and strikers began to leave the factories in late September.

The final settlement gave industrial workers in Turin and elsewhere modest wage increases and thus the appearance of a victory, but the settlement was clearly a psychological defeat, since it fell far short of the sweeping social revolution they had come to expect. Disillusionment and dissension replaced the enthusiasm and militancy within the ranks of the Turin's labor movement. The onset of a new recession late in the fall of 1920, with its accompanying layoffs and weakened bargaining power for the unions further demoralized the workers. Turin, where the ranks of the jobless quintupled, was the city hit hardest by unemployment in the country during 1921. Employers took advantage of the new situation to cut payrolls, fire labor militants, and restore managerial authority in the factories. The inconclusive outcome of the strikes also sharpened ideological divisions within the Socialist party that culminated in January 1921, when Gramsci and other leaders of the extreme left withdrew to form the Communist party. The shift in political momentum from the left to the right was already evident in the municipal elections of November 1920. In Turin, an anti-communist coalition of moderate liberals and Catholics, with the support of the Industrial League,