

to limit the appeal of Fascism in the Piedmontese capital. In contrast to the commercial farmers and landowners of the Po Valley, the local industrialists were able to rely on their own strength and organizational resources rather than external force of Fascist punitive squads to achieve victory over the Socialist labor movement. Without any real threat of communist revolution on the horizon after 1920, many of them were more interested in re-establishing harmonious relations with their skilled labor force than in promoting another extremist group. In fact, some industrial leaders worried that the violent excesses of the undisciplined squads might provoke a resurgence of worker militancy and thereby undo their hard-won success. Although the Turinese fascio took part in a coalition of non-socialist parties, the National Bloc, in the parliamentary elections of 1921, it did so as a decidedly junior partner of the conservative and nationalist right. The outcome of the voting marked another defeat for a now divided left in the city and a personal triumph for De Vecchi, who was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. These results, however, did little to bolster the popularity or political clout of the Turinese fascio, which remained isolated in a political no man's land between a solidly leftist working class and confident moderate conservative industrial and political establishment when Mussolini assumed governmental power at the end of October 1922.

Local Fascists vented their anger and frustration over their marginal status in the city two months after the March on Rome during the so-called "Massacre of Turin", an event that briefly refocused national attention on the Piedmontese capital. For three days in mid-December 1922, the city became the scene of indiscriminate violence by roaming gangs of armed black shirts, who rampaged through working-class neighborhoods, sacking socialist and union offices and assaulting anyone whom they deemed to be a communist or a subversive. By the time the situation returned to normal, the Fascist raids were responsible for eleven to twenty deaths, including a communist municipal councilor, and another thirty wounded. Such violence quickly made Turin a national *cause célèbre*, alarming Fascism's conservative allies at court and in the government, the army, and the business community who expected Mussolini to restore order and curb the illegal excesses of the squads. To placate public opinion, the Fascist party leadership disbanded and reconstituted the local fascio in January 1923 and dismissed De Vecchi five months later after he had threatened Agnelli. Nonetheless, the Fascist party organization in the city continued to be beset by factional rivalries and frequent changes of leadership in the following years.

The violence and instability of the Turinese Fascist movement re-