

while the local clergy offered sanctuary to Allied soldiers, wounded partisans, and Jews. Local Catholic officials also worked closely with the management of Fiat to create "a religious and morally healthy environment in the daily workplace".

At the same time, the power vacuum created by the disintegration of the Fascist regime allowed the re-emergence of political activity. A number of young liberal anti-fascists, for instance, joined with the survivors of older clandestine organizations to launch the Turinese Party of Action in the summer of 1942, while in the fall a network of Catholic friends founded the local Christian Democratic organization. Above all, the tightly disciplined and ideological motivated Italian Communist party enjoyed the greatest success in Turin during the war years, especially among the industrial workers. The Communists not only capitalized on the heroic myths of the Russian Revolution and the Red Army, but also won converts by strongly supporting worker economic demands, collaborating with other non-fascist parties, and supporting national reconstruction over violent revolution.

These new political forces had little opportunity to pursue any normal activities in the chaotic months between the fall of Mussolini and the armistice with the Allies. They were certainly not prepared to handle the situation created after September 8, by the disintegration of the Italian army and collapse of the municipal government. In the absence of any clear direction from Rome, the local military commander handed over the city to the Germans two days later. In this context, Turin's anti-fascist parties constructed a role for themselves as the political and military leaders of the armed resistance against the Nazis and the Republic of Salò over the following eighteen months. Although the Committee of National Liberation provided a degree of coordination among the various political forces, each party formed its own partisan bands in the surrounding mountains and countryside. Reflecting their strong popular base, the Communist "Garibaldi" units emerged as the largest of these bands with some 14,600 fighters operating by the beginning of 1945. As the Anglo-American forces swept up the peninsula and the military position of the German army rapidly deteriorated, the ranks of the Piedmontese resistance movement swelled in the spring. In anticipation of the end of the war, the partisans joined with the local population to launch a week-long insurrection that finally liberated the city on April 30, 1945. As one local observer subsequently recalled, when the Allied troops arrived in Turin a few days later, they found a city, in which "the streets were clean, the trams were circulating, the civic guards were at their posts, [and] the people were well-dressed".