

Chapter x

Triumph and Decline of Italy's Industrial Capital. Turin since 1945

1. *Turin in the Aftermath of War.*

In April 1945, few residents of Piedmont's war-torn capital could have anticipated the dramatic changes that would take place in their city over the next half-century. During these decades, Turin would be in the forefront of an extraordinary process of global transformation that first elevated the city to the pinnacle of Italy's industrial economy, before imposing on it a new and uncertain identity as a post-industrial metropolis. As the embodiment of the Italian "economic miracle", Turin experienced more directly than other urban centers on the peninsula both the dizzying effects of accelerated industrial development and the shocks produced by the subsequent shift of manufacturing to new areas of the globe.

At the end of World War II, the local population had more immediate and pressing concerns that allowed them little time or energy to speculate about the future. After four years of air raids, foreign occupation, and partisan strife, the city faced the daunting challenges of survival, recovery, and reconstruction. From the outset, the Allied bombing campaign had hit Turin with particular force. By the end of the war, nearly two-fifths of the housing stock had either been destroyed or damaged, disrupting public services and leaving large numbers of families homeless. The same years saw a drop in population due to falling marriage and birth rates and a predictable increase in civilian and military casualties under wartime conditions. To make matters worse, local authorities had to contend with food shortages, inflation, a thriving black market, and a general climate of lawlessness that had flourished especially after the summer of 1943. Although Turin's manufacturing plants came out of the conflict with surprisingly limited damage, shortages of raw materials and disrupted markets delayed the recovery in industrial production. A year after the war, output still remained at half of its pre-war levels. Low levels of production in turn meant that unemployment rates continued to be dangerously high. More than a year after the war,