

there were 53,000 workers without jobs; in June 1948 the ranks of the unemployed had risen to 62,000.

At the same time, the experience of universal wartime hardships and suffering also helped to forge a new sense of community among Turin's residents that seemed to bridge the old divisions of class, culture, and neighborhood. In the immediate post-war years, this community found expression in a broad alliance of anti-fascist forces, in which the leftist workers collaborated with the democratic middle classes and the industrial elite in a joint effort to rebuild their city. The leading role played by the Communist and Socialist partisans in the patriotic wartime resistance to the Nazis initially assured their parties a prominent position in city government, the unions, and the factories. In the municipal elections in November 1946, the first under the new Italian Republic, the two principal Marxist parties prevailed, capturing 60% of the vote. Since Turin was the largest municipality in the country to be led by a "popular front" administration, the city became a showcase and testing ground for the reform projects of the Italian left. The unity of anti-fascist forces also carried over to the labor movement, with workers belonging to the Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties collaborating in pursuit of improved wages and work conditions in the factories. A similar optimism affected many of Turin's leading intellectuals, including a number of former Fascist fellow travelers, who came out of the years of dictatorship and war with the goal of creating a new democratic culture accessible to the masses.

A mix of immediate political vulnerability and long range economic considerations dictated that the management of the most powerful private institution and principal employer in the city, Fiat, cooperate with its union adversaries in the immediate post-war years. The victorious partisan forces had opened investigations of Giovanni Agnelli, who died at the end of 1945, and his designated successor at the helm of Fiat, Vittorio Valletta, for their wartime dealings with the Nazis, but both were eventually cleared and the latter regained his position early in 1946. In this delicate situation, Valletta focused on unemployment as the most immediate threat both to the economic future of the company and to the larger social and political order in Italy. Accordingly, he abandoned the standard market criteria in his hiring policies to ensure that Fiat's workforce remained stable at 64,500 throughout 1946. Similar concerns led the new Ceo to collaborate with elected internal factory committees, dominated by the parties of the left, in the administration of the company's benefits program. Such collaboration ensured that workers at Fiat continued to receive higher wages than those in other firms, good