

ny's dominant position in the transportation industry made it the driving force that propelled the Italian economy forward in these years. Fiat management's decisions on production, according to some estimates, determined roughly 20% of all investments in the country by 1963-64.

Under these circumstances, Turin's elevation to the industrial capital of Italy became inseparably linked to its transformation into Fiat's "company town". Already in the late 1950s, roughly 80% of the industrial activity in the city revolved around the automobile industry. Precisely in a period when the transportation industry was enjoying its greatest growth, the local textile industry entered into crisis, while the clothing and food processing sectors accounted for a steadily shrinking share of employment in the city and surrounding province. As a consequence, the engineering sector became the dominant employer, providing jobs for three-quarters of the manufacturing workforce by 1971. Fiat, alone, more than doubled the size of its workforce in the Turinese plants from 47,700 to 115,000, or nearly half of all manufacturing workers in the province, in the two decades after 1951. During the same period, the company employed an additional 30,000 white-collar employees and managers, while the economic survival of countless others in the city's tertiary and commercial sectors depended upon its demand for their services and trade. The automobile giant exercised an equally commanding position in the world of mass communications through its ownership of *La Stampa*, the city's premier newspaper and the second most important Italian daily after Milan's *Corriere della Sera*. Not surprisingly, Fiat's ability to influence all aspects of Turin's development gave its leaders enormous clout in city hall, where no initiatives could be undertaken without their tacit approval.

The high visibility of Fiat automobiles contributed greatly to a new myth of Turin as the promised land of prosperity and good life. The explosive growth of automobile industry and mass motoring clearly facilitated the expanded participation of the city's middle-classes and the upper ranks of its skilled workers in the new consumer society that arose in western Europe in these years. Thanks to the booming economy, per capita annual income in the Piedmontese capital soared from 310,000 lire in 1950 to 1.1 million in 1969, a figure that far exceeded the national average. More and more local families were able to spend less of their income on food and to expand their consumption of cars, electrical appliances, clothing, travel and other amusements that would have been unimaginable luxuries a few decades earlier. Middle-class patterns of consumption became, in turn, the model for the city's working classes.