

more than 9 million Italians migrated from one part of the country to another as well as from the countryside into the cities. Above all, these decades witnessed a massive exodus of poor rural folks from the southern regions towards the industrial north. During the peak years of the miracle, 1958 to 1963, over 900,000 southerners moved from their ancestral homes to other parts of Italy in pursuit of steady work and higher wages. As the privileged destinations for the great mass of these immigrants, the major cities of Italy experienced the greatest increases in population.

While Turin had already become a magnet for immigration from other areas of Italy before World War II, this earlier phenomenon paled in comparison to the massive influx of southerners into the Piedmontese capital after 1950. The city, which had a population of 719,300 in 1951, mushroomed a decade later to 1,102,600 and then to 1,124,714 by 1967, a rate of growth that far exceeded that of the other major cities, Rome, Milan, and Bologna, in these years. The areas on the periphery of the industrial metropolis grew at an even faster rate, over 80%, between 1961 and 1967. The population in the zone around the Mirafiori plant, for example, skyrocketed from 18,700 to 141,000 in two decades, while the historical center actually lost population. Such demographic change was due almost exclusively to the influx of immigrants, with southerners accounting for nearly half all new arrivals by the early 1960s. By the end of the decade, Turin had emerged as the third largest "southern" city in the country, behind only Naples and Palermo.

A number of circumstances contributed to making Turin the principal destination for immigrants in those years. At the peak of the boom in the late 1950s, industrial expansion generated tens of thousands of new jobs each year and drove down unemployment rates to historic lows. The powerful appeal of Fiat and its automobiles as symbols of economic progress, freedom of movement, and the promise of a better life also helped to draw southerners to Turin. Northern recruiters encouraged these dreams, enlisting tens of thousands of the new arrivals in so-called "cooperatives" that provided cheap labor to factories without contracts, pensions, or insurance coverage. Valletta and Fiat played their part in the growth of immigration by deciding not to build factories in the south on the grounds that the area lacked the required markets, raw materials, labor skills, and power sources. The industrial leader's determination to concentrate automotive production in Turin thus dictated a certain pattern of development, in which a steady flow of poor folks from other regions ensured an abundant supply of labor, contained wages and gave management greater discretion in the selection of its workers. Iron-