

people to have fewer kids, consume the same products, and buy their own homes. At the same time, efforts by the Catholic Church, unions, and political parties to enlist the support of the immigrants helped to reduce prejudice and the isolation of their communities. Finally a new wave of young workers, who arrived from the south in the 1960s, was less tied to their old communities and anxious to share in the benefits of the new industrial consumer society.

The easing of ethnic tensions in the city did not lead to a new era of social peace and political stability, however. On the contrary, Turin once again became a major battle zone in the impressive resurgence of labor militancy and student radicalism that enveloped Italy's urban centers in the late 1960s.

### 5. *Toward the "Hot Autumn" of 1969: The New Left in Turin.*

Some of the very circumstances that made Turin the industrial capital of Italy and the setting for chaotic urban expansion after 1950 also created the environment for a revival of labor militancy in the city's factories. By the early 1960s, the city's industrial workers differed in important respects from their predecessors. To begin with, their ranks included much larger numbers of rural immigrants and fewer women than in the past. As a group, they were much younger; nearly three-quarters of the workers in 1962 had been hired after 1953. Moreover, the predominance of assembly line production had reduced the need for specialized skilled labor and thus favored the growth of a more homogeneous workforce concentrated in huge plants, in which there was little differentiation in terms of age, sex, work, and wages. The situation in the factories of Turin was made all the more explosive by the hardships faced by the southern immigrants outside the workplace. Bad housing and inadequate services accentuated the anger and resentment of workers over the discipline and pace of work on the assembly line. These conditions, together with the rebellious peasant traditions of the recent immigrants and their desire for new consumer goods, set the stage for a turbulent era in Italian labor relations.

After ten years of relative calm, Turin re-emerged into the national spotlight as a hotbed of working class militancy in 1962. Significantly, this new militancy involved innovative forms of organization and decision making that relied less on union hierarchies than mass assemblies and elected delegates. After a series of strikes, marches, and demonstrations in the spring of 1962, a general work stoppage in July by met-