

The refusal of the Academic Senate to make any concessions led the student movement at the University of Turin in the spring of 1968 to pioneer the tactics of "cultural guerrilla warfare" as a way to undermine the traditional authority of the faculty. Activists interrupted lectures, confronted the professors, challenged their arguments, and pressured them to address contemporary political issues. At the same time, the student movement attempted to develop procedures that replaced "leaders" and formal hierarchies with mass assemblies, in which participants were collectively responsible for all decisions. Most of the student radicals broadly subscribed to a Marxist vision, but they tended to prefer direct action over what they dismissed as the "book fetishism" of revolutionary theory.

By the summer of 1968, the student movement began to find common ground with militant working-class activists in the city. As the academic year drew to a close, student radicals shifted their attention from the university to the factories, where they became involved in a series of labor protests and demonstrations over issues of work rhythms, wages, and discrimination. While the unrest in the industrial plants had arisen independently from events at the university, the young radicals helped nourish a climate of insubordination towards all authority, including that of the unions and the Communist party, among the workers. Similarly, they reinforced the preference of young workers for direct action and collective decision making by mass assemblies. The alliance of students and workers led to the formation of a "new left" embodied in small revolutionary groups like *Lotta Continua* (Continuous Struggle) and *Potere Operaio* (Workers' Power) that aimed to forge a new revolutionary consciousness in the industrial labor force of the city.

Beginning in the fall of 1968 and continuing into the following year, these groups attracted a broad following among workers in Turin and the other industrial cities of the north. Wildcat strikes, aggressive picketing outside of the factories, and eventually demonstrations within the plants themselves help to make 1969 one of the most tumultuous years in the history of the Italian labor movement. Much as in the past, the surge in the factory insurgency at the national level reached its apex in Turin at the Fiat plants during the summer of 1969. After a series of conflicts in the Mirafiori factory during the previous two months, a general strike called by the national unions on July 3 to demand a freeze on rents took a far more violent and radical direction in the Piedmontese capital, where demonstrators chanted: "What do we want? Everything!" Thousands of workers and students protested in front of the Fiat plant before heading out into the surrounding streets of the city, where