

## CHAPTER 6



# A Case Study: The Turin–Milan Motorway

## The Foundation of the Promotional Committee

As early as 16 January 1923, just a few days after the publication of the decree for the construction of the Milan–Lakes, several influential people in the municipality of Turin had “enthusiastically . . . constituted a promotional committee for a motorway between Turin and Milan.” Count Secondo Frola—from whom “the importance of the provision [for the Milan–Lakes construction] had not escaped”—had requested the gathering: Frola, “considering the density of the traffic between Turin and Milan and the benefits that such a modern means of communication would bring to the development of the intense industrial and commercial relationships, promoted a meeting of personalities and representatives from public entities and associations.”<sup>1</sup>

Secondo Frola was nominated president of the promotional committee; he was already a MP and was later appointed a senator, having been mayor of Turin before World War I and after the popular uprising in August 1917. The top brass of the committee, in addition to Frola, included the engineer Emilio Giay, a contractor and member of the Turin municipal council, and Giorgio Ermanno Anselmi, president of the Turin province administration. After the foundation meeting, the committee met again on 14 March 1923 and Frola informed them of the “encouraging reply from the Hon. Mussolini and Carnazza,” and of “a letter from Eng. Puricelli assuring his competent support.”<sup>2</sup> The Turin committee formed a technical commission, presided over by Giay, to study a route, and, to cover the first expenses, they obtained a non-repayable contribution from the municipality of Turin.

The activity of the committee was re-energized in January 1924 when, with the preliminary draft completed and the traffic statistics verified, its members examined the two proposed routes “on a large model of the region, expressly executed and kindly offered by Engineer Puricelli.”<sup>3</sup> The first, called “North,” would better service Biella; the second, “South,” instead headed decidedly toward Vercelli and Casale

Monferrato. The committee selected an intermediate course between the two—different from the one that was eventually constructed—that would go from Turin toward Santhià, touch Vercelli and Novara, and eventually reach Milan at the head of the Milan–Lakes. Obviously, the second choice penalized Biella and its rich textile and industrial pole, provoking objections from the local representatives on the committee: to address their needs, a Santhià–Biella offshoot was approved.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, on 23 July 1924, the committee presented the final route—mediating between the poles of Biella and Casale Monferrato—preparing the definitive project to present to the Ministry of Public Works for the necessary approvals.<sup>5</sup> The planning costs were covered by contributions “from the public authorities on the committee”;<sup>6</sup> in January 1925 the project was presented to the Ministry and the High Council approved the proposal on 27 April of the same year.

Although it had achieved a good compromise on the motorway route and had a favorable reception by the ministry, the promotional committee experienced some difficulties. The enthusiasm of the early days was dissolving in the effort to define the technical and financial specifics of the work and to obtain the necessary funding. In addition, every day the representatives of the municipality of Milan seemed more reluctant to get involved, particularly given the limited interest the Milanese showed in the motorway to Turin.

### **Insurmountable Problems**

On 28 July 1925 there was a new meeting of the promotional committee—this time in Milan—called to decide whether the managing entity of the motorway should be a consortium of local entities or a limited company. On the proposal of the new Milan mayor, Senator Mangiagalli, they decided to present their request in the form of a consortium of the Milan and Turin municipalities, with subsequent subconcessions to other managing entities yet to be defined.<sup>7</sup> However, in February 1926, the Ministry of Public Works rejected the two cities’ application, informing them that they had to define the nature of the concessionaire before the convention would be approved by the state. The committee opted to create a limited company, and to do so, on 30 April 1926 it convened a meeting of the “major interested industrialists.” The who’s who of the Turin and Milan financing and industry worlds participated in the meeting (Giovanni Agnelli, Riccardo Gualino, Piero Puricelli, Vincenzo Lancia, Silvio Crespi, Piero Pirelli, Senatore Borletti, Giuseppe Mazzini) but “none of those present at the meeting saw fit to follow

this procedure [to create the company].”<sup>8</sup> It was evident that no one wanted to form the limited company and take responsibility, not even with the support of the promotional committee, for collecting the 50 million lire necessary (more or less equivalent to today’s USD, as are all the following amounts in this chapter). An agenda, proposed by Riccardo Gualino, was voted on. It stated that, with the aim of completing the construction works by 1928, the capital subscriptions should be opened and closed within two months. If all the subscriptions for funds were achieved by 30 June 1926, the motorway concessionaire company would be formed; if not, the subscriptions would count as nothing.<sup>9</sup>

The 30 June deadline passed without the predetermined capital amount being reached, but the committee proceeded with its business nonetheless, determined to realize the work, and looking for additional funds on the Milan stock market. With this objective, they held a meeting in Milan on 8 July of the same year, which did not produce any particular results, except for the appointment of a local financing committee, which named Stefano Benni as its president. Meanwhile, Frola solicited nonrepayable contributions from various local authorities for a total sum of 25 million, with the promise of a contribution from the municipality of Turin as early as February 1927, but from the municipality of Milan only the following year.

Although the committee continued well past the June 1926 deadline, it was difficult to collect all the subscriptions. Further problems appeared in the summer of 1927, when the already-discussed project to constitute AASS entered the stage. Benni resigned as the president of the Milan financial committee, citing the difficulty of raising capital for a project like the motorway. This was made more difficult now that the state roads would be put in order, and the new motorway between Turin and Milan would become useless. Benni’s resignation was the tip of the iceberg of problems in which the promotional committee found itself. The indifference of the Milanese toward the Turin motorway—aggravated daily by the alarming results of the Milan–Lakes and the Bergamo–Milan—and the complications in realizing the project pushed Frola to a *coup de theatre*, and he proposed in July 1927 to construct only the Turin–Biella tract.<sup>10</sup> In the hope of saving the entire project, a new meeting was held in November 1927 in which the Milan *podestà* (the substitute for the mayor during the Fascist regime) reiterated the lack of Milanese interest and advised the committee to indefinitely suspend the execution of the motorway, at least while waiting for a decision regarding AASS. However, faced with the pressure of all the Piedmont delegates (and most likely the Milan prefect), the Milanese *podestà* finally declared himself willing to make a nonrepayable contri-

bution of the same amount as Turin (which was ten annual payments of 700,000 lire each), convinced that the full capital for the construction would never actually be raised and the city would never have to pay.<sup>11</sup>

Reassured by the subscription from Milan, the committee resumed the hunt for subscriptions, coordinated by a new financing committee, which planned to print a propagandistic publication in January 1928 and hold various meetings in Turin, Vercelli, and Biella (but not in Milan).<sup>12</sup> Although the amount of capital subscriptions needed for the limited company had been halved to 25 million, not even this more modest sum was reached: by December 1928 they had only raised 14 million, of which a good 10 had come from Turin and 2.5 from Biella.<sup>13</sup>

### Fiat's Intervention

The problems seemed insurmountable when, starting in 1928, Fiat became increasingly involved. Given the (theoretical) advantages that would be derived from the increase of automobile circulation, the car company had subscribed to shares for the constitution of the limited company, but the directors of Turin industry had demonstrated a certain coolness to Puricelli's initiatives and had also demonstrated reluctance in the case of the Turin–Milan. The plans for a drivable road between Turin–Trieste, the government support for the initiative, the creation of the position of commissioner for the Pedemontana, and the hypothesis of a soon-to-come federation of the existing motorways in northern Italy were (ephemeral) indications of a new phase of planning. These elements pushed Fiat's management to enter the motorway sector directly, via the management of the Turin–Milan. Therefore, as Giovanni Agnelli himself recalled, "[w]hen the fascist government launched the idea of the grand Pedemontana Turin–Milan–Trieste–Fiume," and defined the precise willingness to finance the project by the state, "it seemed to me more appropriate than ever to cooperate with Senator Frola's plan and so I became a promoter and financier of the master plan of the project."<sup>14</sup>

On 21 July 1928, in his unofficial (and insincerely held) role of "promoter" of the Turin–Milan motorway master plan, Agnelli asked the prefects of Vercelli and Turin for access to the private land lots required for the preliminary construction activities. The request was received positively within ten days (an incredible achievement for usually slow Italian bureaucracy!), and on 1 August, the Turin prefect issued a prefectural decree granting access to the territory, with a similar deposition coming from Vercelli the following day.<sup>15</sup> On 28 November 1928, with a

deed from lawyer Annibale Germano, the limited company Autostrada Turin–Milan (*Società anonima Autostrada Torino–Milano* or *Saastm*) was formed, based in Turin, with an initial capital of 500,000 lire, which could be increased to 25 million by a simple deliberation by the board of directors.<sup>16</sup> The founding members were Giovanni Agnelli “in his role as Fiat president,” Silvio Ferracini, and Giovanni Vianino. Both Vianino (president of the confederation of Turinese merchants) and Ferracini were close to Agnelli (before the latter fell out of favor and was distanced from his duties in the industrial association).<sup>17</sup> Together, the three made up the first board of directors of the company.

The members of the promotional committee—who, from all evidence, hoped to obtain recognition and profit from the project—were in the dark about Fiat’s moves. Not even Senator Frola, who was president of the committee, was informed about Agnelli’s initiative until October 1928, when in a committee meeting “it became clear during the discussion that he was creating a limited company to construct the motorway.”<sup>18</sup> An open conflict broke out between the old promotional committee members, who had so exhaustingly gathered the subscriptions, and the new society created by Agnelli. This conflict was naturally resolved in favor of the Fiat president, partly thanks to his support from the government and prefect. It was Suardo, in a “highly confidential” report sent to Mussolini in December 1928, who highlighted how in Turin there were “strong divergences, due above all to the old promotional committee continuing its activity—presided over by Senator Frola, who intended to exercise a sort of unacceptable patronage over the construction company. With the valuable help of Prefect Maggioni and Federal Secretary [of the national Fascist Party] Basile, the situation has been resolved, by liquidating the old committee, with due honor, and forming a new company.”<sup>19</sup>

Frola was appointed honorary president of the newly constituted motorway company, while, under Fiat’s thumb, the company benefited from the solicitation of capital subscriptions that the committee had carried out, and from the nonrepayable funds that the local authorities had committed, often begrudgingly, to a value of almost 25 million. Those events made it evident that the promotional committee had completed its work: it held its last meeting on 20 January 1929, with Frola absent, probably already ill,<sup>20</sup> and declared its own dissolution.

Silvio Ferracini and Giovanni Agnelli used all the means at their disposition to locate capital. They insistently “invited” the entrepreneurs who were members of the local industrial association to buy share subscriptions in the motorway company and managed to get the Turin association to approve a contribution from its members of 30 lire for every

employee. "Certainly the contribution was not obligatory, but Agnelli insisted that the companies be pushed for an answer even if it were a negative one: the list of subscribers [and obviously of nonsubscribers] would be sent to the political authorities."<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, in a report that was unsigned (but prepared by Fiat offices), Mussolini was asked to "let his disapproval be felt regarding the fact that, against 11 million share subscriptions in Turin, Milan had only reached 1.3 million lire, against the already limited forecast of 5 million lire. The direct interest of the head of government would certainly be useful to get subscriptions from banks, savings banks, and insurance companies."<sup>22</sup>

On 15 April 1929, before the increase of share capital, the engineer Francesco Cartesegna—new motorway planner, in Agnelli's complete trust—was appointed director general of the company, "given that he has in effect been functioning as director since the creation of the society."<sup>23</sup> In that role, he had ample power, which soon became total with his successive nomination as CEO.

After six years of preparatory works, great difficulties in raising capital, and fatuous and improvised financial planning, the motorway could only be realized because of the strength of the Fiat group in obtaining generous public and private contributions for the construction. Both due to the fact that the traffic was greater toward the prealpine areas than toward the rice-growing zones of the plains, and because of the financial involvement of the Biella industrialists,<sup>24</sup> Agnelli decided to modify the route. The motorway would now pass around 18 kilometers from Biella (a condition evidently considered adequate for local needs) and around 15 kilometers from Vercelli, having been shifted north.

The project was presented to the Ministry of Public Works in this form in April 1929, for the approval of the High Council, asking just four weeks for the approval, which was given on 19 May. On 12 June, Agnelli met with Mussolini, to whom he had already presented a financial plan with the complete cost. With the modifications made to the original project taken into account, the cost was now 145 million, covered by 30 million in capital shares, 20 million obtained from nonrepayable contributions, and 95 million "to be obtained through capitalization of sufficient government annual contributions."<sup>25</sup> Mussolini, however, committed to an annual contribution that would cover only half of this amount (that is, a third of the costs), and so it was decided to cover the missing portion through "preferred bonds with the guarantee of the majority of the interested public authorities [meaning the Turin and Milan municipalities] that the work would be completed."<sup>26</sup>

Mussolini's commitment was followed by a contrary decision from the minister of finance, who "advised that the decision of the state

contribution for the Turin–Milan motorway had been postponed indefinitely.”<sup>27</sup> Determined to complete the project, Agnelli again contacted Mussolini and sent him a detailed memo that, as well as reminding him of the employment benefits that the motorway construction would bring, forewarned him that further delays risked ending the project due to the “default of several of the most important subscriptions so laboriously achieved.”<sup>28</sup> A telegram was also sent on 6 July 1929, reiterating the risk of a definitive cancellation of the project. “The Hon. minister [of finance] Mosconi telegraphed the decision regarding the motorway, that it is for now suspended. I understand that I must cease activity regarding the motorway for an indefinite period. Permit me to observe, Your Excellency, that such a suspension would nullify the subscriptions so laboriously collected, making any further actualization of the work impossible. I would appreciate your definitive decision in regards to this.”<sup>29</sup>

Mussolini’s response, sent through the Turin prefect, was not long in coming and represented the final point of the agreement between the government and Fiat: “Communicate to Senator Agnelli that the Turin–Milan motorway question is defined, remaining with the understanding that the contribution of the state is limited to a third of the costs.”<sup>30</sup> The delimitation of the government commitment finally made it possible to create, on 30 November 1929, the convention “for the construction and management of the Turin–Milan motorway,” subsequently ratified with a decree on 26 February 1930.<sup>31</sup> The company had the concession for the construction and the management of the motorway for fifty years. The road—about 126 kilometers in length—would be constructed of a single carriageway with an entire width of 10 meters, of which 8 meters was for automobile transit and 2 meters was lateral shoulder, which was nondrivable.

At the termination of the concession, the equity would be paid to the shareholders and the motorway would pass into the possession of the state, which had committed to an annual contribution to the company of 3,725,166 lire for fifty years, to be repaid with the earnings. The company was authorized to capitalize the annuity in banking and insurance institutions; the tax discount, at the time, of 7.5 percent, determined an amount of 48,350,000 lire, that is, equal to a third of the estimated cost of 145 million lire. The remaining part was covered with the 30 million in shares, 20 million from the nonrepayable funds from the local authorities and around 50 million in bonds, with profit guaranteed by the local authorities. The estimates for the first year predicted a transit of four hundred vehicles a day along the entire route and just as many along half, for an income of around 7 million. To this would

be added 1.5 million lire in income from advertising concessions and sales of petroleum products. The maintenance costs were estimated at 630,000 lire a year; the management costs (including the amortization of capital) at 670,000 lire. There was also around 3.5 million lire in interest, the amortization of the bonds, and the return of the government annuities and their interest. The expectations, already positive for the first year, would be even better in the following years, because “every year there is a notable increase in traffic and consequently in two or three years of operation at most, an adequate return can be made also on the share capital.”<sup>32</sup>

### Signing the Concession Agreement and the Start of Work

As recorded in the financial agreement, on 31 August 1929, the company's equity was increased to 30 million and a new board of directors was appointed, composed of fifteen members, including Giovanni Agnelli and his son Edoardo, Piero Puricelli, and Curzio Suckert Malaparte, the famous writer, then director of *La Stampa*, a daily paper owned by Fiat.<sup>33</sup> In its first meeting, the board confirmed Giovanni Agnelli as president of the society, appointed Piero Puricelli and Tommaso Folia (president of the Constructors Association of Turin) as vice-presidents, and appointed Francesco Cartesegna as CEO.<sup>34</sup>

Despite Agnelli's commitment and the small value of the shares—which were each worth 100 lire—capital subscriptions proceeded slowly. Other than 4 million from Fiat and 2 million from the Industrial Finance Institute (the IFI was controlled by the Agnelli family), the biggest subscribers were some important Italian banks and industries, including Puricelli roads and quarries, Lancia, Michelin, the Italian cement company, and Alfa Romeo. Alongside the big groups, the book of shareholders shows capital spread between a myriad of small shareholders, who held a handful of shares: two, five, ten, at the most twenty, mostly in the hands of small firms or private individuals, almost all living in Turin or Biella.<sup>35</sup> Despite these efforts, in October 1930, they were still 6 million short, with the IFI covering the shortfall—although just provisionally, because the tender conditions required “6 percent of the subscriptions for the project in company shares,” a percentage that later increased to 10 percent.<sup>36</sup>

The works for the first part of the project, meaning the carriage-way, amounting to over 45 million, were subdivided into thirteen lots, entrusted to eleven different companies with headquarters in Turin, Alessandria, and Milan. The works for the bridges, underpasses, over-



passes, and the like would be done by other companies, while the surfacing was assigned exclusively to Ferrobeton, from Rome, and Puricelli roads and quarries, from Milan. The cement itself, for "economy of scale" would be purchased directly by the motorway company from the Italian cement company, which was also a shareholder in the motorway company. The construction began on 15 January 1930, before the approval of the convention decree (26 February) and before the Ministry of Public Works approved the master plan.<sup>37</sup> By 18 January, the publicity campaign on the employment effect of the work had already begun:<sup>38</sup> according to the company's sources, the motorway works employed around a thousand people in 1930, and increased to sixteen hundred in December of the same year, and almost three thousand by April 1931.<sup>39</sup> The hike in employment can be seen as a direct consequence of the protests in the piazzas by the unemployed that happened in November 1930 in Turin, following which Agnelli committed himself, at the request of the prefect, to taking on "manpower" (sic!) for the motorway works.<sup>40</sup>

The convention allowed the company to issue bonds for 50 million, to finance the last third of the works. These bonds were preferred, and guaranteed by local authorities that had been identified in the Turin and Milan municipalities, provinces, and provincial economic boards (which replaced the dissolved chambers of commerce). The affair of the guarantees from local authorities had a tormented history that dragged on, eventually concluded only because of strong pressure from the central government.

The question of the guarantees was clear evidence of the widespread mistrust of uncertain, or even hasty, entrepreneurial activities—as the motorway works had proved to be. The ministry's officers were also becoming less benevolent toward the motorway's business. In March 1931, Agnelli told the company's board that "in consequence of the decrease in costs caused by the noted government provisions,<sup>41</sup> the Ministry of Public Works intends to revise the annuity [of contributions to the works]. They have started negotiations in recent days; we will try to keep the reduction as limited as possible."<sup>42</sup> The strong drop of current manpower (sic) and prime material prices, linked to the 1929 crisis, had reduced the construction costs, estimates of expenses that had of their nature been "prudential, as a way of producing large financial contributions from the interested public authorities."<sup>43</sup> The additional issues of decreasing traffic following the economic crisis, and the weakness of the financial markets, pushed Agnelli to reopen the tough negotiations about the state contribution, threatening in March 1931 that he would withdraw the project and "asking for early buyout of the concession and its transfer to the AASS."<sup>44</sup>

Due to the new economic landscape generated by 1929 crisis, in May 1931 the Fiat president went further, sending the government a renewal plan for the motorway: the state, according to Agnelli, should buy back all the Italian motorways, opening them to traffic and abolishing any form of toll, and cover the maintenance costs with an increase in the price of petrol. In substance, he proposed:

- (a) the transfer to the state of the motorways and the assumption of their management by the AASS;
- (b) the free use of the same;
- (c) the imposition of an additional charge of 0.10 lire per kg on petrol, so that it provided for all the commitments, assumed by the state, of the public authorities and concessionaires, for the construction of the motorways.<sup>45</sup>

Besides the evident struggle between FIAT and the government, and Agnelli's plot to enlarge the area of discussion, the basic conflict was about the malicious "exaggeration" of the costs of the motorways in order to increase the state contribution: just as the ministry was proposing a reduction, Agnelli threatened the withdrawal of the project, an act of blackmail that ensured that the contributions remained the same. Therefore, due also to a careful policy regarding subcontractors, who built the prewar Turin–Milan motorway for the lowest cost per kilometer, "the private business . . . enjoyed the advantages of the motorway, while risking only a fifth, roughly, of the cost of it."<sup>46</sup> Fiat, in its turn, controlled the society—which had equity of 30 million—with less than 20 percent of the shares. In other words, FIAT firmly and completely controlled a 90 million lire business having only about 6 million in share value.

### The First Years of Management

The motorway was opened to traffic on 28 October 1932, the anniversary of the march on Rome, a date ritually chosen for the inauguration of public works in the fascist era. As early as 25 October, Mussolini's motorcade traveled the route for the first time from Turin to Milan. An enormous commemorative fasces "in wood and stucco" (promptly redone in stone)<sup>47</sup> was placed in Turin at the start of the motorway, after the idea of a triumphal arch was abandoned.

The entire length of the motorway could be driven on, with only the ancillary works still needing to be completed. Several of these were particularly important, such as the organization of the refueling stations.



**Figure 6.1.** Turin, starting point of Turin–Milan motorway, early 1930s. Autostrada Torino–Milano Archive. Courtesy of SATAP, S.p.A.

But by the annual shareholders' assembly in March 1933 these were also completed, and in the context of the Italian panorama, the motorway had a fair amount of traffic. With the conclusion of the works, Piero Puricelli stepped down as a member of the board of directors, although not as a shareholder (which, considering the type of shares and the Italian stock market, he could not have done anyway).

The company had few variations in official appointments: Giovanni Agnelli remained in the office of president, and Francesco Cartesegna stayed on as CEO up to the 1950s. Starting from the completion of the construction works, the percentage of directors from the Fiat entourage became increasingly conspicuous. Meanwhile, from 1936, the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI)<sup>48</sup>—which had inherited the motorway company shares of several banks that had suffered through the 1929 crisis—also took over the shares of the Puricelli companies, becoming a major shareholder in the company, with 15 percent of the total shares.

In 1933, the motorway had an average daily transit of 889 vehicles, with an average length traveled of around three-fifths of the entire length of the Turin–Milan, and a preponderance of light traffic. The



**Figure 6.2.** Turin–Milan motorway, early 1930s.  
Autostrada Torino–Milano Archive. Courtesy of SATAP, S.p.A.

tolls that were applied were less than those indicated in the estimated budgets and were the lowest in the entire Italian motorway network, to the extent that they caused “complaints from its sister companies.”<sup>49</sup> The toll policy was aimed at capturing the maximum traffic potential, and in effect, considering the times and the vehicle diffusion, the company obtained decent results. Still, the income never reached the 8,500,000 lire hypothesized by the budget estimates, not even coming close, and in 1938—a year of maximum transit for the prewar period, with an average of 1,695 vehicles/day in both directions—the total income from tolls, concessions, and advertising was 4,425,859 lire. In contrast, the costs of activity and maintenance were higher than had been budgeted for, equal to a good 2,101,488 lire per year, added to the 2,000,000 lire depreciation rate of the motorway itself.<sup>50</sup> This was three times higher than the estimates had allowed for.

It must be remembered, however, that the concession established the reimbursement of the government annuity in case of profit: by claiming, as it rightly should, the interest payable on the government annuity as a deductible expense, and creatively rounding the depreciation rate up to 2 million, activities closed not only without generating profits and dividends, but even in loss, and therefore without paying the state the

reimbursement. From 1934 on this practice was contested by the Ministries of Finance and of Public Works, who suspected hidden profits,<sup>51</sup> but the situation dragged on without final consequences for many years. Some solutions were discussed in 1939 by reshaping the government annuity reimbursement plan, but it was not until 1944 that the Ministry of Finance took action, ordering repayment of the annuities.<sup>52</sup> However, by then the high inflation during the war and postwar period completely obscured the real value of the annuities that had to be reimbursed.

## Notes

1. "Relazione generale di Secondo Frola al Comitato Promotore dell'autostrada Torino–Milano" dated 28 December 1928, page 1, in Asct, Fondo *Servizi pubblici e industriali*, cart. 156, f. 2.; indicated from here on as "Relazione Frola."
2. "L'autostrada Torino–Milano," *La Stampa*, 14 March 1923.
3. *Autostrada Torino–Milano Biella* (Torino: [s.e.], 1928), 15.
4. The route is reported in *Autostrada Torino–Milano Biella*, 12, 13.
5. See "La riunione del comitato Autostrada Torino–Milano," *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 23 July 1924.
6. "Relazione Frola," 3. In particular, the city of Turin arranged contributions with approvals from the prefect on 6 February 1924 and 14 May 1924.
7. See "Per l'autostrada Torino–Milano. Una riunione di enti interessati," *La Stampa*, 29 July 1925.
8. "Relazione Frola," 5.
9. See "L'autostrada Torino–Milano. Sette milioni e mezzo sottoscritti," *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 1 May 1926.
10. "L'autostrada. La proposta di esecuzione di un primo tronco Torino–Biella," *La Stampa*, 6 July 1927.
11. See I. Besozzi, "L'autostrada Torino–Milano," *Torino* 9 (1929), 33–39. Of the total sum, 25 million would be the responsibility of local authorities, 25 million would come from private capital, around 50 million would come from the state, and the remaining sum of 50 million would be collected with bond subscriptions.
12. See "Una conferenza dell'Ing. Giay per la Torino–Biella–Milano," *Torino*, 1–2 (1928), 45.
13. See "Relazione Frola," 11.
14. Minutes of the board of directors of Saastm on 18 September 1929 in Archivio Astm, where the books containing the minutes of the board of the directors, managing committee, and shareholders' registry are held.
15. Copy of prefect's decree in Asct, fondo Lavori pubblici, cart. 608, f. 7 and fondo Servizi pubblici e industriali, cart. 142, f. 2.
16. Deed of 28 November 1928 from Dr. Annibale Germano of Turin, Rep. 16114/10701, in Archivio della Cciaa di Torino, fondo *Registro società*, cart. n. 483/1928, vol. 1.
17. See Giulio Sapelli, *Fascismo grande industria e sindacato* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1975), 88, 89.
18. "Relazione Frola," 12.

19. Report from Giacomo Suardo to the Pcm dated December 1928, in Acs, Pcm, 1928–30, 7/1-2/2616, *Autostrada Torino–Trieste*.
20. Secondo Frola died on 4 March 1929 at the age of seventy-eight; see Gerhard Kuck, "Secondo Frola," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani, volume 53* (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1998).
21. Mario Abrate, "50mo anniversario dell'autostrada Torino–Milano," *L'informatore industriale*, 20 January 1983, 87–95.
22. Anonymous undated memo (but November/December 1928) "Sul finanziamento della autostrada Torino Milano," in Acs, Pcm, 1928–30, 7/1-2/2616, *Autostrada Torino–Trieste*. The memo reports a table of necessary contributions from banks and insurance companies, as follows:
 

Opera Pia di S. Paolo di Torino L.	500,000
Assicurazioni Generali Venezia L.	500,000
Assicurazione Adriatica L.	250,000
Banca Commerciale Italiana L.	1,500,000
Credito Italiano L.	1,500,000
Banca Nazionale di Credito L.	750,000
Banca Popolare di Novara L.	500,000
Cassa di Risparmio di Torino L.	1,000,000
Cassa di Risparmio di Milano L.	1,000,000
Opera Pia di S. Paolo di Torino L.	500,000
Assicurazioni Generali Venezia L.	500,000
Assicurazione Adriatica L.	250,000
23. Saastm board of directors' meeting minutes from 15 April 1929.
24. See the letter from the "Colonia Biellese di Torino" to the Turin *podestà*, in Asct, fondo *Serv. pubbl. e ind.*, cart. 142, f. 2 and the letter from the prefect of Biella to the same *podestà*, in Asct, fondo *Serv. pubbl. e ind.*, cart. 156, f. 2.
25. Letter from Giovanni Agnelli to the Pcm dated 14 November 1928, in Asf, fasc. 271, busta 8.
26. *Ibidem*.
27. Saastm board of directors' meeting minutes from 18 September 1929.
28. Letter from Giovanni Agnelli to the Pcm dated 4 July 1929, in Asf, fasc. 271, busta 8.
29. Telegram from Giovanni Agnelli to the Pcm dated 6 July 1929, in Acs, Pcm 1931–33, 7/1-2/4549, *Autostrada Torino–Milano*.
30. Telegram from the Pcm to the Turin prefect dated 13 July 1929, in Acs, Pcm 1931–33, 7/1-2/4549, *Autostrada Torino–Milano*.
31. See Decree 264 of 26 February 1930 (G.U. of 7 April 1930), converted into Law 95 of 6 January 1931. The conversion of the decree happened without any modification to the original text and was voted on in secret, without discussion, by the Chamber of Deputies on 4 December 1930 and by the Senate on 17 December 1930. In the Senate, of the 150 voters, 135 were in favor and 15 were against. In the Chamber, only one vote was against.
32. "Promemoria riservato" (confidential communication) sent by Engineer Cartesegna to the Turin *podestà* dated 8 August 1929, in Asct, fondo *Serv. pubbl. e ind.*, cart. 156, f. 2.
33. See minutes of the Saastm board of directors' meeting of 18 September 1929.
34. The members of the board of directors were Giovanni Agnelli, Edoardo Agnelli, Eugenio Asinari di Bernezzo, Giuseppe Broglia, Francesco Cartesegna, Carlo

- Cesareni, Silvio Ferracini, Tommaso Folia, Camillo Ghiglione, Giuseppe Gorla, Giovanni Malvezzi, Piero Puricelli, Oreste Rivetti, Curzio Suckert Malaparte, and Giovanni Vianino. Cesareni and Gorla (Milan vice-*podestà*) refused their nominations "due to previous engagements."
35. Even the catholic Oropa sanctuary, in Biella, was involved, with a subscription of fifty shares dated 30 September 1930.
  36. See minutes of the Saastm board of directors' meeting of 10 March 1930.
  37. The master plan was approved on 27 January 1930 for the first seven lots and on 27 January 1931 for the remaining six lots; see minutes of the Saastm general assembly of 31 March 1931.
  38. See "Il regime per la classe operaia. Una visita del Prefetto ai lavori dell'autostrada," *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 18 January 1930.
  39. See "Diagramma della manodopera impiegata nei lavori della Autostrada Torino-Milano," in *Asf*, fascicolo 271, busta 8.
  40. See Alberto Aquarone, *L'organizzazione dello Stato totalitario* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995; 1<sup>o</sup> ed. 1965), 542. See also Massimo Moraglio, "Disoccupazione e manifestazioni di piazza: opere pubbliche e politiche sociali nella Torino degli anni Trenta," *Mezzosecolo* 13 (2003), 163-180.
  41. This refers to the decrease by law in salaries and wages of November/December 1930.
  42. Minutes of the general assembly of members of Saastm of 31 March 1931.
  43. Da Rios and Rinelli, "Autostrada Torino-Milano," 109.
  44. Valerio Castronovo, *Giovanni Agnelli* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977), 384.
  45. Letter from the Minister of Public Works to the Pcm dated 5 May 1931 in *Acs*, Psm, 1931-33, 7/1-2/4549, *Autostrada Torino-Milano*.
  46. *Ibid.*, 110.
  47. The inscription said: "Regnando Vittorio Emanuele III, il Duce della Nuova Italia Benito Mussolini / Questa autostrada per il decennale del Regime volle, indicò ed inaugurò / 25 ottobre 1932-X." [In the reign of Vittorio Emanuele III, the Duce of the New Italy Benito Mussolini / This motorway commissioned, approved and inaugurated for the tenth anniversary of the Regime, / 25 October 1932-X.]
  48. IRI stands for Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (Institute for Industrial Reconstruction), which was an Italian company established in 1933 by the Fascist regime to rescue, restructure, and finance banks and private companies that went bankrupt during the Great Depression.
  49. Minutes of the general assembly of members of Saastm of 31 March 1933.
  50. See the balance on 31 December 1938, attached to the minutes of the general assembly of members of Saastm of 31 March 1939.
  51. See the minutes of the general assembly of members of Saastm of 20 July 1935.
  52. See the minutes of the general assembly of members of Saastm of 31 March 1943 and 31 March 1944.