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By Umberto Agnelli

THE GROWTH of the Italian motor industry over the past two decades is a shining example of successful expansion for other industries in a country with poor natural resources, dense population and mixed economy.

Earlier in the 'fifties, even the basic conditions of "take off" for a steady and self-sustaining growth were non-existent. As a matter of fact, the social, political and economic setting of Italy was badly hurt by wartime destruction, an autarkically structured economy, and uncertainty of the political situation created by the tensions of the cold war.

The Italian leaders had to make a decision as to the most suitable path for the revival and development of Italy's industrial activity. Their decision was to allow ample room for business initiative in a climate of fair and positive collaboration of all active forces at home and cooperation and peaceful coexistence abroad.

The resulting achievements have been spoken of as "the Italian Miracle", but this rather simplistic nomenclature understates a situation actually involving colossal sacrifices, gradual timing of resources and commitments, and keenness to appropriate new technological processes and advanced managerial tools and adapt them to specific situations.

Place of Motor Industry in Italian Economy

PLACE OF MOTOR INDUSTRY IN ITALIAN ECONOMY

In the fast, harmonious growth of the Italian economy, the motor industry played a leading role both as a catalyst of domestic initiatives and a promoter of Italian economic interests in the international markets.

Efficiency and competition were (and are) the main principles governing the development policy of the Italian automotive industry. In a world situation characterised by the presence of American giants, firmly established both at home and in Europe, and by the recovery of the most reputed European manufacturers, supported by buoyant domestic markets, the Italian automotive industry could not visualise expansion programmes abroad without first acquiring a proper production structure.



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