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CHAPTER 33

WOMEN WORKERS MARCH AT FIAT- MIRAFIORI

This morning the women who work in the Mirafiori Body Plant (assembly of FIAT models 127, 131 and 132) met in their changing rooms at the start of the shift and decided to take strike action over the problem of showers, changing lockers and hygiene services. These are utterly inadequate, given the large numbers of women workers who have been taken on as new starters recently.

More than a thousand of them marched through the factory, heading for the main Administration block – to the surprise and amazement of the male workers. The initiative was taken in advance of a similar protest that was to have been organised by the Works Committee for next Wednesday, and it was completely spontaneous.

At 10.00am another element was added to the picture: the management laid off the whole of the Assembly area for the 127, 131 and 132, following a strike of a small section of workers in Final Trim. They had stopped in protest against FIAT's demands for overtime working.

At least 3,000 workers immediately set off in a march towards the Administrative block in Corso Agnelli. Since it proved impossible to break down the steel gates there, they set up a road block across Corso Agnelli and Corso Marconi.

After a while about a hundred workers managed to get in, but they did not reach the management. Then, at around 12.00am, about 500 workers tried to get in, by going through the canteen. Faced with the umpteenth steel gate in their way, they decided to concentrate on eating, at FIAT's expense. Food was taken from the canteen and distributed among the workers so that they could spend the period of lay-off enjoying a picnic on the grass.

A FLM trade union official observed, timidly, that this form of struggle was "a bit unorthodox", but his words went unheeded.

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Translated by Ed Emery

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