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## CHAPTER 47

### ENRICO BERLINGUER COMES TO TURIN

**PREFACE:** In a move full of historical meanings, Enrico Berlinguer, the leader of Italy's Communist Party, came to Turin on 26 September for a whistle-stop tour of factory-gate meetings. Turin, the city of the 1920 factory occupations, the city of Antonio Gramsci, the founding core of Italy's Communist Party. The visit was calculated, and full of significance. He brought the Party's "political, moral and material" help and support for any further action that the FIAT workers might decide. And he restated the Party's intent to bring down the Government. The next day, the Government fell, and FIAT withdrew the redundancy notices. A moment – but only a moment – of jubilation.

#### Extracts from Berlinguer's speeches

In the weeks preceding his visit to Turin, Berlinguer had made a major speech to citizens of Bologna, phasing the fighting traditions of the Polish workers, and calling for their example to be followed – in obvious reference to the FIAT struggle:

[FIND QUOTE AND INSERT]

Then, in Turin, he challenged FIAT management:

"The entire Italian population will not accept FIAT's blackmail and bullying. And even if this government uses all possible means of pressure, the sackings will be rescinded, and democratic struggle will win a great result."

On the question of occupation of the factory, Berlinguer is clear. A shop steward asks: "What are the intentions of the Communist Party?"

"Certainly," answers Berlinguer, "if negotiations do not lead to a way out or if they are actually broken off, it will be necessary to think of much more committed and militant forms of struggle, including forms of occupation. But such initiatives will have to be discussed and decided democratically in workers' mass meetings. And if we have to go this far (and this would be the responsibility of FIAT and the government), the Communist Party will play its part. But since in this case the workers of FIAT will have to undergo even greater sacrifices in order to carry on the struggle, we must call on a great movement of solidarity not only at a political level, but at a concrete one; not only in Turin, but in all the various regions, in the whole country, with the unions, the local councils, the co-operatives, the youth movements, and the political parties – profiting from the lessons we have learnt in the past."

Later, at a factory-gate meeting on Gate 5 of FIAT-Mirafiori, attended by several hundred workers:

"FIAT wants the sackings, but not because they are essential for the recovery and development of the Company – things which we also want, and which the trade

unions want. We've already demonstrated this. We've put forward proposals. We've indicated what measures must be taken. FIAT is determined on the sackings because it wants a victory of principles over the working class, it wants to give a lead to other companies, going back to that old system of arbitrary command, wiping out the trade union gains of the last ten years. This foot on the neck of the working class, and on Italian democracy, cannot be accepted. It is too great a presumption, especially from a management group which has given us so much proof of its incompetence, particularly in terms of productive efficiency."



*Photo: Enrico Berlinguer, speaking at the gates of FIAT Mirafiori, in 1980.*

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