

workplace. In the case of the chief of Fiat, the ambassador was already preaching to the converted. From the outset, Valletta's vision of a hierarchically organized factory in which each worker carried out productive functions dictated by management clashed with that of the left-wing unionists who envisioned a system, in which they regulated the workforce and participated in decisions on its utilization. Beginning in 1948, the deteriorating political and work climate in the plants and Valletta's increasing determination to restore tighter managerial control over wages and factory discipline and to accelerate the pace of production spelled the end of the era of cooperation between capital and labor. When news of the attempted assassination of the Communist leader, Palmiro Togliatti, reached Turin in the summer of that year, workers occupied the Fiat factories for two days and took sixteen company managers, including Valletta himself, hostage. In the aftermath of the occupation, Catholic unionists broke ranks with the Cgil, ending the post-war experiment in labor solidarity at the local level. A tougher new stance on the part of management became apparent in 1949 when Fiat responded to work stoppages by refusing to negotiate under duress and by attempting to curtail the role of the Management Councils in its plants.

The early 1950s saw the confrontation between capital and labor escalate into a full-scale offensive by Valletta and Fiat against the Communist dominated unions of the Cgil and Fiom. Management now refused to consult or work with the internal commissions controlled by the Cgil and increasingly restricted the prerogatives enjoyed by all elected members of the commissions on the factory floor. Company-appointed foremen began to assume most of their functions. As the campaign intensified, Fiat fired militant communist workers and other "turbulent elements", gathered information on the political opinions and activities of all employees, and favored more cooperative unions to divide the workforce and break strikes. Finally, Valletta imposed new work rules in Fiat's factories, rules that rewarded discipline, productivity, individual merit, and company loyalty, especially during strikes.

The employer offensive took its toll on the militant metalworkers' union, which lacked the full support of the national Cgil and faced mounting competition from the revival unions. Catholic unionists, in particular, showed less interest in defending the internal commissions than in taking advantage of management's promise of higher wages for increased productivity. More importantly, support for the Fiom began to erode among its own rank and file as a result of its frequent use of strikes as political protests and its failure to win increases in base pay, while it steadfastly opposed the introduction of individual monetary in-