

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8048>



Livio Maitan centenary

Livio Maitan's centenary conference "Looking to the future" was a success

- Features -

Publication date: Thursday 6 April 2023

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If it had been a film, it could have been said that the conference dedicated to Livio Maitan, on the centenary of the birth of the Venetian revolutionary Marxist intellectual and leader who died in Rome in 2004, was a success with both the public and critics.

"Looking to the future" was the title of the meeting, which brought at least 200 people to the hall of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome on 1 April after a long period of preparation by the [Library](#) that bears Maitan's name and looks after his legacy of books, journals and documents. Over the years, the library has been able to join the national library system, thus making available to scholars and militants an important piece of the history of the workers' movement. It still has much to say to those who are wondering today, in the 'whirlpool' of political and social work, how to reconstruct a practice and theory equal to the situation, to bring the working class and the revolutionary left out of its subordination and marginality after the succession of historical defeats.

The conference was introduced by Mauro Buccheri, a Sicilian researcher and author of *Livio Maitan e il trotskismo italiano* (Livio Maitan and Italian Trotskyism), just published by Red Star Press. There followed an intense succession of speeches by scholars and militants whose respective political paths had crossed with Maitan both in Italy and in the bureau of the Fourth International, of which he was a protagonist from the late 1940s. Incidentally, on the very first of April 1950, the first issue of *Bandiera Rossa* (Red Flag) was published, the organ of the Italian section, the GCR, Revolutionary Communist Groups. A publication reflecting a DNA absolutely allergic to the sectarianism of revolutionary Marxism that would follow the development of that organisation and its intervention in the class struggle:

- from the 'sui generis' entrisms in the PCI in the 1950s,
- to some unsuccessful attempts at reassembling anti-Stalinist critics before and after the 20th Congress of the Soviet CP
- to the LCR, a party born after the crisis of the late 1970s and which would merge into Democrazia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy) and with DP into Rifondazione Comunista (Communist Refoundation), the party that then linked up with the Anti-Globalisation movement
- then at the end of 2007 after a very harsh polemic against the pro-institution, governmental drift of Rifondazione Comunista our revolutionary current left - giving birth to Sinistra Critica .

Diego Giachetti retraced the years of Maitan's political formation and his anti-Stalinist choice of camp. Sergio Dalmasso recalled his participation in the debate on "workers' control" at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, fundamental for the birth of what would be defined as the new Left. The latter was in open polemic with the bureaucratic leaderships of the traditional Left crushed by the PCI's (Italian Communist Party) Stalinism and the PSI's (Italian Socialist party) propensity for class collaboration.

These were themes that Maitan himself addressed in his writings over sixty years on what were defined as the three sectors of the world revolution (imperialist countries, dependent countries and degenerated workers' states). Entryism, 1968 and the independent construction of the Italian section of the Fourth were discussed by Silverio Corvisieri and Franco Russo. The *autunno caldo* (Hot Autumn 1969) and the factory councils were raised by Gigi Malabarba and Roberto Firenze. Fabrizio Barrantini took up the debate on the PCI and Salvatore Cannovo talked on involvement in the No Global movement. Lidia Cirillo outlined the complex interaction between the traditional revolutionary left, including Livio, and feminism.

More recent events were addressed by Fausto Bertinotti, Maurizio Acerbo, Giorgio Cremaschi and Eliana Como,

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spokesperson for the anti-bureaucratic opposition in the CGIL. Luciana Castellina recalled how she visited Moscow with Maitan after the collapse of the USSR, on a mission on behalf of the leadership of Rifondazione. The class struggle in Italy and around the world was also outlined by Penelope Duggan (Bureau of the Fourth International), Manuel Gari Ramos (Anticapitalistas, Spanish state) and Dave Kellaway (Anticapitalist Resistance). Livio, this Venetian revolutionary intellectual regularly visited various epicentres of the world revolution on behalf of the Fourth International leadership to the point of earning the nickname of "travelling salesman of the revolution".

3 April 2023

Translated by Dave Kellaway from [Sinistra Anticapitalista](#).

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