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Obituary

Livio Maitan 1923-2004

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Description:

Italian revolutionary socialist and long time leading member of the Fourth International, Livio Maitan has died.

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"My autobiographical balance sheet cannot be separated from the balance sheet of the political and cultural, national and international current which I joined in 1947 and in which I have been an active participant ever since."



Ciao Livio

Livio Maitan had been a leading member of Italian Communist Refoundation since it came into existence in the early 1990s, and a long-time leader of the revolutionary marxist current Bandiera Rossa.

Livio was born in Venice in April 1923. He graduated in Classics (lettere classiche) from the University of Padua.

He became politically active during the years of the Nazi occupation of Italy, and was subsequently a leading member of the Italian Socialist Youth. In 1947 he joined the Italian Trotskyist movement of which he remained a leading member all his life. In 1948 he was a member of the leadership of the Fronte Democrazia Popolare.

He was one of a small group of comrades who led the Fourth International during the difficult years of the 1950s and early 1960s. First elected in 1951, he remained a member of the International leadership, reelected at each congress, until his death. Opponents of the Fourth International talked about the "Mandel-Frank-Maitan" leadership of the FI, following the departure of Pablo.

His generation were the cadres who carried the programme of revolutionary marxism through the difficult post-war years, and who were gradually able to link up with a broader layer of new young activists in the mid-late 1960s.

Livio was actively involved in the huge worker-student upsurge in Italy between 1969 and 1976, and universally seen as someone who had played a key role in training numerous leaders of the Italian revolutionary left, whether inside the Fourth International or outside.

In the 1970s he also lectured on the economy of underdevelopment in the School of Sociology at the University of Rome. He translated and introduced almost all the Italian editions of Trotsky's writings.

In 1989 the Italian Fourth Internationalists organised around the journal Bandiera Rossa joined Democrazia Proletaria, and with DP participated in 1991 in the foundation of the Partito dell Rifondazione Comunista (Party of Communist Refoundation, PRC). He was elected to the leadership of Rifondazione at each successive congress from 1991 until 2002.



La Strada Percosa

Until recently, despite age and illness, he maintained his participation in all the leadership bodies of the FI. A football fanatic, he played weekly until into his 70s.

In a recent publication *La Strada Percosa - The Road Taken* Maitan argues strongly against the view that the defeats of socialism in the 20th Century were 'inevitable', and equally strongly for the view that the possibility of socialism remains open.

There is a long list of his publications in Italian. Translated works include his 1976 book on the Chinese Cultural Revolution and a long text on the history of the Italian Communist Party, published by the IIRE in English and French. He wrote also for the journals of the Italian Fourth Internationalists (*Bandiera Rossa* and subsequently *ERRE*), of *Rifondazione (Liberazione)* and of the Fourth International, *Inprecor* and *International Viewpoint*.

Livio Maitan died on the 16th September 2004 in Rome.

For a longer appreciation see "[Livio Maitan - a man of different times](#)".

International Viewpoint articles by Livio Maitan on this site:

[Remarks on Bertinotti](#) - December 2000

[China: Odyssey 2001](#) - February 2001

[The return of Berlusconi?](#) - April 2001

[A new political framework](#) - June 2001

[PRC: the debate begins](#) - June 2001

[WSF - A triple triumph](#) - April 2002

[Refounding Rifondazione](#) - May 2002

[From the Resistance to the new movements](#) - Fausto Bertinotti & Livio Maitan - March 2003

[World Congress Opening Speech](#) - May 2003

[Defeat of the referendum](#) - September 2003