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An appeal to support the creation of the Livio Maitan research centre

Tuesday 5 September 2006, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 5 September 2006).

Livio Maitan died on 16th September 2004. Born in Venice in 1923, he participated in the resistance movement during the Nazi occupation. Obligated to seek refuge in Switzerland, he was interned at the end of the War. In 1947, he joined the Fourth International, and was a leading member of the latter from 1951 until his death. From the creation of Rifondazione Comunista onwards, he held without interruption a national leadership role in the party to which he devoted most of his energy during his later years. From 2001 he followed with interest the activities of the anti-globalisation movement and often participated in it.

Maitan's indefatigable activism was always accompanied by reflection and political and economic analysis, which bore fruit in an innumerable series of articles and many books. Amongst the latter, over and above the translation and editing of a large part of Trotsky's writings, his works treated subjects as wide and varied as the nature of social classes in Italy, world economic crises, the history of the PCI from its origins to the present, the theoretical heritage of Gramsci, as well as the historical trajectory of China, especially the Cultural Revolution. At the end of his life, Maitan even found time to write his memoirs and a history of the Fourth International, which will be published shortly.

His activity as a political leader as well as his theoretical reflection were characterised by great rigour, ethical and intellectual, without ever becoming dogmatic. On the contrary, what remained constant throughout his nearly sixty years of political engagement was his attention to the concrete dynamics of the relationship of forces between the classes and the historical and political dialectic, combined with a real openness to debate and confrontation with different positions.

To create a research centre in his name and dedicated to his memory means, first of all, to take up his inheritance. However, to take this up means to make it live in the present. The research centre will thus have the following concrete objectives:

1. To create a library which can give the general public access to the many works on politics, economics, history of the workers' movement, revolutionary Marxism and so forth which Livio Maitan had collected over many years and which he left for all to be able to use.
2. To pursue Livio Maitan's historical, political and economic thought via the promotion of research in the domains of the history of the workers' movement and of an open and critical Marxism, via the organisation of conferences and discussion sessions at a national and international level, and via the publication of new research and the encouragement of young students and researchers engaged in work in this field.

The Livio Maitan research centre thus sees itself as a contribution to the renewal of Marxist debate at an international level, by stimulating the encounter of currents of critical thought which have different traditions and cultural references, as well as between activist and academic currents and between older and younger generations which have grown up in different intellectual and political

contexts.

For all these reasons, we support the creation of the 'Livio Maitan' Research Centre, with which we hope to collaborate over the next few years.

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