

## Domenico Savio (1940-2020)

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### Obituary – Domenico Savio (1940-2020)

Domenico was the founder and Secretary General of the **Marxist–Leninist Italian Communist Party** (*Partito Comunista Italiano Marxista-Leninista, PCIM-L*). This party is based in the Naples area. As a paper entitled: “A Sketch of Anti-Revisionism in Italy Part Two: 1970s

Fading Blooms” puts it:

“The splintering of the old revisionist Left in the new century has seen the emergence of pro-Soviet Union supporters emerge in their own organisations. The PCI – Marxist-Leninist Italian Communist Party was founded on 3rd December of 1999 by Domenico Savio together with the comrades Alfredo A. La Piccirella of San Severo (Foggia), and Gennaro Savio (Domenico Savio’s son). It was formed on the initiative of the Centre of Marxist Culture and Initiative (Centro di Cultura e Iniziativa Marxista) established May 1979 by Domenico Savio (b.1940-), after 18 years (1958-1976) of membership of the PCI having been involved in the internal resistance to the “revisionist, reformist, opportunist, electoral, little-bourgeois and capitalistic drift of the Party”. Its politics is old fashion Stalinist.”<sup>1</sup>

As with many of the Western capitalist countries, the state of the Marxist-Left in Italy was and remains, very fragmented and separate. This can be seen from the diagram at Marxist Internet Archive (‘Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism on-line’).<sup>2</sup>

Domenico Savio, stood for elections for the Deputy Chamber in October 2004, and won 2,244 votes (6.9%), in the college of Napoli 1 – Ischia. In a general election in 2006, the PCIM-L got 26,029 votes (0.856% of the vote in that region). In 2013 Savio was elected as municipal councilor, but lost his seat in 2018.

As his obituary in the Naples paper '*l Mattino*', an Italian daily newspaper published in Naples (13 Marzo 2020) points out,<sup>3</sup> he was an important defender of workers rights on the small Island of Ischia off Naples. He fought:

“In local and regional, campaigns on the crucial issues of the exploitation of workers in the tourism sector and for public health and the maritime links; for the environmental issues and the recognition of housing as an inalienable right.”

Those who assembled to form the journal International Struggle Marxist-Leninist (ISML), on the island of Ischia will recall his hospitality. The call of ISML, formulated in the announcement of 1996, was for a principled unity and debate between adherents of Mao and those of Hoxha:

“The task of the journal is to analyse, debate and clarify, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism’s exact principles and within the Communist movement, the major theoretical, political, economic and social questions thrown up that face the world’s proletarians, toilers and the conscientious working people. The fundamental aim of the journal is to defend and spread Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory; to assist the birth of new revolutionary historical eras; to fight against any revisionist and opportunist deviations within the working peoples and communist movements; finally, it aims to work for the unity of the Marxist-Leninist movement into order to move to the establishment of a new Communist Marxist-Leninist International. The journal aims to form a common revolutionary, political platform for the Marxist-Leninist groups, organisations and parties in the world, who will take part in this editorial initiative, for theoretical discussion and to exchange their experience of revolutionary struggle.”<sup>4</sup>

Domenico Savio for a period joined with that struggle. He however left ISML, finding it too small a formation. He then worked at an international level with the **North Star Compass** (NSC) grouping in Toronto. That organisation was formed as a response to the final disintegration of the USSR under the blows of Gorbachev and Yeltsin. For a short period there was a shake-out of some who could be turned to Marxism-Leninism, from the erstwhile revisionist pro-USS communist parties of the world. But the leadership of NSC was unwilling to come to terms with its own prior history of support for the corrupt Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev regimes in the USSR and its satellites.

This is not the place for a full appraisal of the failure of ISML to consolidate such a discussion. ISML had two further international conferences, but was unable to hold together. There were both subjective and objective reasons for the failure of ISML. These will be addressed in due course. But the path it had chosen was a challenging one, eschewing larger formations that had chosen a narrower path, a ‘purer’ position. Ultimately that approach has also been seen to fail to this point. Our collective failure to build ML parties of significance in many countries, leaves us unable to satisfactorily combat the current crisis of capitalism vividly laid bare by the COVID 19 health care crisis. The working classes and toilers of the world are simply without meaningful ML-ist participation in the leadership currently.

Domenico was a man of his times. He grasped the need for a principled unity, but ultimately he could not face the prospect of the long struggle required for this to be realized. So far history provides no short cuts. There is no doubt that his heart was with the people and with Marxism-Leninism. In his speech commemorating Stalin, he talked of the battle against fascist forces (extreme right '*Forza Nuova*', or '*New Force*') in Italy.<sup>5</sup> That fight will now be so much the harder against opponents such as *Matteo Salvini*. In the current situation Marxist forces, let alone Marxist-Leninists, remain disunited.

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1. [Encyclopedia of Revisionism Online](#).
2. [A Sketch of Anti-Revisionism in Italy Part Two: 1970s Fading Blooms](#).
3. [“Morto Domenico Savio, l’ultimo comunista di Ischia: aveva da poco festeggiato 80 anni”](#)
4. [“Announcement of International Struggle ML”](#)
5. [Domenico Savio, “Socialism and the Current Crisis of Capitalism”; Talk given on the 56th Anniversary of the death of Stalin: 1953-2009](#)