

Dear Ljubo's wife and daughter - Mrs Susan Sirc and Mrs Nadia Sirc,

Ljubo's relatives, friends and colleagues,

Distinguished guests,

Today we escort to his final rest a man whose highest value was freedom, a great Slovenian patriot and democrat, a political dissident, a top scientist, lawyer and economist, a high-level laureate of the British Queen, an honorary citizen of the municipality of Kranj, a beloved husband, father and a good friend - Dr Ljubo Sirc.

Life was not easy on him, since he lived in a time and space, which did not allow freedom of thought and act, and was merciless towards everyone who did not defer to the pressures, directed against human dignity. An upright and courageous man remained faithful to the truth, fought for it and defended it. With that he risked losing the most precious - his life. And yet this was exactly what the totalitarian communist machinery intended, since he was condemned to death at the so called "Nagode trial", a post-war political show trial.

But Ljubo, who was born in 1920 in Kranj, was destined for a different path: just like Dr Jože Pučnik, he walked a perilous journey as one of the most famous Slovenian political dissidents in the following decades, and left a strong and indelible footprint in the Slovenian recent history. The fate of Ljubo Sirc and Jože Pučnik is linked in many ways: both were free thinkers, critical of the situation established by the communist regime, both resisted it and both were willing to engage in fighting the remnants of the totalitarian regime at the end of 80s and beginning of the 90s of the last century.

Ljubo was active already as a student of the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, where he chaired the Kranj's Academic Student Association and joined a group of left intellectuals. Through them, he made contact with Črtomir Nagode and connected with the group Stara Pravda.

Ljubo's father Franjo Sirc was the owner of a textile factory in Kranj, which was seized by the Germans after the occupation, and turned into a factory of aircraft parts. The factory was burnt down in 1945. The Sirc family who then remained without any property fled from persecution to Ljubljana, which was within the Italian occupation zone.

The Stara Pravda group, whose member Ljubo was, joined the Liberation Front (Osvobodilna Fronta, OF). When Stara Pravda protested against the order of the Liberation Front (OF) to organise the resistance without them, they were expelled from the OF. Before the Italian capitulation in 1943, Ljubo managed to flee to Switzerland from where he wanted to report on the events in Slovenia and real intentions of the communists, but did not receive any echo.

Given the Churchill's green light for cooperation of Yugoslav Partisans and the Government in London, Ljubo joined the 'Fifth Overseas Brigade', with which he returned to Yugoslavia. In 1945 he graduated in Ljubljana from international law. After the war he worked as a translator and interpreter at the press office of the Republican Government, but soon he fell out of favour with the then communist authorities, since he contemplated organizing a non-communist opposition together with Črtomir Nagode and other like-minded followers. The reason for the arrest was his contacts with the former members of London's Government, the British, Americans, French and Czechs. In August 1947 at the so called Nagode trial he was

condemned to death together with Črtomir Nagode and Boris Furlan for being an alleged British spy. Later the penalty was reduced to 20 years of forced labour. He spent seven years and a half in prison, including two years in solitary confinement. Among 15 convicts at the Nagode trial there was also his father Franjo Sirc who got 10 years in prison. After four years he fell seriously ill and died. A victim of political show trials was also Ljubo's uncle Metod Sirc, who was convicted to 20 years in prison and was released after 6 years.

In 1954 Ljubo was released from prison; however in Yugoslavia there was no work or a future for him. At the same time, UDBA, Secret political police service (as Mitja Ribičič-Ciril), forced him to cooperate. In 1955 he fled via Italy to the UK.

There, he started a new life.

He moved to London, where he worked for the BBC. In 1960 he obtained his PhD in Economics at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. He started a family in the UK. He lectured economics at a University in Eastern Pakistan and from 1962 he lectured at the University of St. Andrews. From 1965 until his retirement in 1983, he lectured at a University in Glasgow. He also lectured in Italy, France, Germany and at Stanford University in the USA. He was the author of several books on international economy. One of his most important contributions is his critique of communism. Thanks to his knowledge of economics, Ljubo, as one of the few worldwide intellectuals, predicted the collapse of the communist system. To him it was crystal clear that economic calculations of communism do not add up. For the functioning of the system foreign loans are needed and if these are no longer possible collapse of the system is the next step.

In 1983 Ljubo founded, and for several years led, the Centre for Research into Post-communist Economies in London. The British Queen personally awarded him with the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2001 for spreading democratic ideas in Eastern Europe. He was a member of the Liberal International from the 1950s on and a Member of Mont Pelerin Society.

Dr Ljubo Sirc was judicially rehabilitated in independent Slovenia. The so called Nagode process remains the historical memory as one of the biggest failures of the post-war justice system. The story is not over yet... Ljubo unsuccessfully endeavoured to achieve the return of his family property that was confiscated during the German occupation in Kranj in 1941. As a humble servant he sought justice in the Slovenian courts for years. Even the European Court of Human Rights was insensitive to violations of human rights due to the length of the process, and equality before the law, etc. Ljubo continued to experience the humiliations of the successors of the people who sentenced him to death and destroyed his family.

Nevertheless, Ljubo stayed a convinced optimist, a great intellectual, who visited his homeland Slovenia each year after the independence where he broke new ground after the war destroyed Slovenian economic liberalism.

Sirc's annual seminars with superior international participation were a balm for freethinkers, analytical reflection and springs of fresh ideas.

Despite the disappointment over the quasi-liberals, who exploited him in the presidential race in 1992, Ljubo interest in the Slovenian political scene continued and his values coincided with the values of Slovenian Democratic Party, which he joined in 2010.

It is a great honour for me that my colleagues from the Study centre for national reconciliation and I enjoyed Ljubo's heartfelt support and sympathy during his visits, at mutual events as well as his deep reflections on different occasions.

His unwavering stance will continue to drive our work, for which we are sincerely grateful.

Let Ljubo rest in peace in his Slovenian soil.