

The CRCE Newsletter

Spring 2016 No. 56

57 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3QL

Email: crce@trident-net.co.uk Website: www.crce.org.uk

A Nonviolent Hero against Communism



Dr Ljubo Sirc CBE

A lecture in Ljubo Sirc's honour was given by Dr Joze Dezman in the House of Lords on 2nd March. Dr Dezman was director of the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia 2005-2010 and of the official Archive 2012-2013. Since 2005 he has led the Slovene Government's Commission on Concealed Mass Graves. He is a Board member of the Gorenjski Museum in Kranj, where he curated an exhibition on Dr Sirc's life and work.

Keith Miles OBE was in the Chair and guests included the Slovene Ambassador, Alois Peterle MEP (first Prime Minister of Post-Communist Slovenia), David Lloyd, former British Ambassador to Slovenia, Count Nikolai Tolstoy, Eamonn Butler, the Adam Smith Institute, and Prof and Mrs Philip Hanson.

The CRCE is most grateful to Dr Dezman for so meticulously preparing and delivering a most interesting lecture and also to those who generously sponsored the event. The lecture is now being prepared for publication.

A Brief History

Sixty-six years ago Ljubo Sirc faced a sentence of death in his native Yugoslavia, indicated of spying for the British and conspiracy against the state in a Stalinist trial.

He was reprieved, but spent seven years in prison, the victim of brutal interrogation and intimidation.

When the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, Ljubo Sirc and his family fled to Italian-occupied Ljubljana. Strongly opposed to totalitarianism, deeply committed to the newly created Yugoslavia, Sirc joined a left-wing nationalist group which participated in the communist-led Liberation Front. When Sirc's group protested against the Front's declaration that no one outside the Front would be allowed to fight the Nazi invaders, it was expelled.

Sirc escaped to Switzerland, where he stayed until Tito's agreement with the exiled Yugoslav government, promising free elections and democracy after the war, persuaded him to return to join Tito's army. But he was horrified to find that communist oppression was still rife.

After the war, with others, he tried to organise a democratic opposition, was arrested and imprisoned. During solitary confinement he learnt of Stalin's break with Tito in 1948. Despite a half-hearted return to the rule of law and intensive campaigns for his release, Ljubo Sirc was not freed until 1954. In London, thirty years later, he founded the CRCE. In 2001, he received the CBE from the Queen for services to democracy in Russia & Eastern Europe.



Ljubo Sirc and family before his investiture at Buckingham Palace in 2001

Roger Clarke

After 27 years Roger Clarke has retired,
Professor Philip Hanson writes:

“I'd like on behalf of CRCE to thank you for your long and distinguished service as editor of what is now *Post-Communist Economies*. I have greatly admired the calm and thoughtful way you handled both the heady days of profound policy controversy and the more mainstream period that followed. You kept the journal honest, and you helped ensure it would continue to be well looked after. All the best for a very well-deserved retirement”.

Richard Connolly

We extend a warm welcome to Roger's successor, and a good friend to all at CRCE. Richard has edited the first issue of 2016, now available. www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Farewell to Good Friends

Richard Ware, former president of the Earhart foundation. His, and that of his successors, support of and belief in Ljubo Sirc guaranteed the CRCE's work for many years. His local newspaper and the Philadelphia Society both carry excellent obituaries.

<http://www.conwaydailysun.com/newsx/local-news/123160-community-lion-richard-ware-of-kearsarge-dies-at-95> <http://phillysoc.org/3490-2/>

&

Leonid Finkelstein, a great supporter and popular member of the CRCE audience at London meetings. Helen Szamuely writes about his courageous and fascinating life: <http://yourfreedomandours.blogspot.co.uk/2016/01/a-sad-ending-to-year.htm>

Visitors

Our friends and colleagues Irina Evseyeva visited from Milan and Lena Zhuravskaya from Moscow were welcome visitors this winter. Lena returned specially for the Ljubo Sirc Lecture. A few days before Easter Samuel Gregg of the Acton Institute kindly gave Lisl Biggs-Davison lunch and, soon after, former intern Annie Beadle visited the CRCE office. Annie is working at the OECD in Paris on projects in the Ukraine.

Hoodwinking Churchill

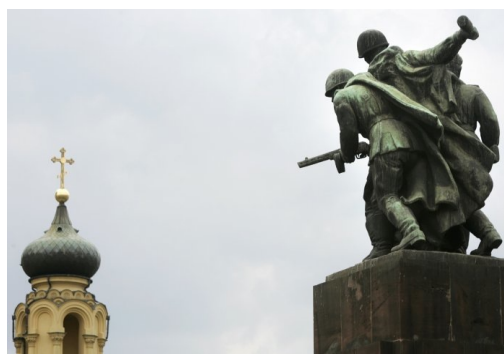
A translation of Peter Batty's superb book was published in Slovenia in December.

...a real eye-opener, a real contribution to our understanding of WWII in the Balkans, and a really good read as well. I must congratulate you on an impressive scholarly achievement' - Sir Antony Jay

Did Tito and his partisans deserve all our support, to the exclusion of other resistance fighters? Churchill, misled by viciously biased leftist advisers, concluded he did, and gave it in full. This minutely researched and closely argued tour-de-force of revisionist history clearly demonstrates how wrong Churchill was.' - Sir Jeremy Isaacs.

The author gave a talk at the CRCE in 2014 and a Briefing Paper is available. <http://www.crce.org.uk/briefings/brief18.shtml>

Remove Soviet Monuments!



A monument to Red Army soldiers next to a Greek Catholic church in Warsaw, May 7, 2007

Poland's Institute for National Remembrance (INR) has urged regional authorities to take down 500 Soviet monuments. <http://a.msn.com/r/2/BBrck9q?ocid=News>

The CRCE Newsletter is published by
Centre for Research into Post-communist Economies
57 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3QL
© 2016 CRCE