

Marko Zajc\*

# The Hour of European Truth for Slovenian Intellectuals\*\*

## IZVLEČEK

### URA EVROPSKE RESNICE ZA SLOVENSKE INTELEKTUALCE

*V prispevku avtor predstavi in analizira politično aktivnost slovenskih opozicijskih intelektualcev med približevanjem Slovenije Evropski uniji (obdobje 1995–97). Del intelektualcev iz kroga Nove revije je poleti 1997 objavil javno pismo »Ura evropske resnice za Slovenijo«, v katerem so kritizirali družbene in politične razmere in slabo vladno politiko približevanja EU in Natu. Podpisniki javnega pisma so tedanjo vladavino liberalnodemokratske stranke (LDS), ki je bila naslednica uradne mladinske organizacije v socializmu, razumeli kot nedemokratsko vladavino nekdanjih komunistov, ki imajo v rokah vse niti oblasti. Pri približevanju EU so nasprotovali sporazumu z Italijo glede kupovanja slovenskih nepremičnin (t. i. španski kompromis). Čeprav so bili načeloma za članstvo v EU, so v svojem aktivizmu sodelovali tudi s skupino odkritih evroskeptikov. V prvem delu prispevka avtor predstavi slovensko politiko v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja, v drugem delu na kratko opiše proces pridruževanja Slovenije EU in Natu. V tretjem delu pojasni predzgodovino in delovanje obravnavane skupine intelektualcev, v četrtem pa analizira javno pismo in odzive v javnosti. V zaključku avtor postavi vprašanje, ali so bili omenjeni akterji evroskeptiki. Po njegovem mnenju koncept evroskepticizma ne pomaga razumeti kompleksnih in ambivalentnih odnosov političnih akterjev do Evrope in EU. Avtor na koncu prispevka poudari trajektorijo slovenske protikomunistične politične misli do sodobnosti.*

*Ključne besede: intelektualci, evroskepticizem, približevanje EU, slovenska politika*

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\*\* The research was carried out in the framework of the research programme P6-0281 *Politična zgodovina* [Political History], which is co-financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) from the state budget.

## ABSTRACT

*In this paper, the author presents and analyses the political activity of Slovenian opposition intellectuals during the period of Slovenia's EU accession (1995-97). In the summer of 1997, a group of intellectuals from the Nova revija circle published a letter to the public titled "The Hour of European Truth for Slovenia", in which they criticised the social and political situation and the government's poor policy on EU and NATO accession. The signatories of the letter perceived the then rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDS), the successor of the official youth organisation under socialism, as undemocratic rule by former communists who held all the strings of power. They opposed the agreement with Italy on the purchase of Slovenian real estate (the so-called Spanish Compromise). Although in principle they were in favour of EU membership, they also collaborated in their activism with a group of outspoken Eurosceptics. In the first part of the paper, the author presents Slovenian politics in the 1990s, while in the second part he briefly describes the process of Slovenia's accession to the EU and NATO. In the third part, the author describes the background and activities of the group of intellectuals in question. The fourth part analyses the public letter and public reactions to this. In the conclusion, the author poses the question whether the authors of The Hour of European Truth were Eurosceptics. In his opinion, the concept of Euroscepticism does not help us understand the complex and ambivalent attitudes of political actors towards Europe and the EU. In conclusion, the author highlights the trajectory of Slovenian anti-communist political thought up to the present day.*

*Key words: intellectuals, Euroscepticism, EU accession, Slovenian politics*

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## Slovenian Politics after 1990

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When the domination of the League of Communists ended in 1990, the Slovenian critical intellectuals of the late Yugoslav socialist period, known in Slovenian historiography under the label of the *Nova revija* circle and labelled by the authorities at the time as the "bourgeois right",<sup>1</sup> who had already had their time under the spotlights. The winner of the first multi-party elections in 1990 was the anti-communist Demos coalition, supported intellectually by the abovementioned group of thinkers, many of whom went on to assume political functions. The most prominent intellectuals of this circle (France Bučar, Spomenka Hribar, Dimitrij Rupel) were active in the Slovenian Democratic Union within the Demos coalition.<sup>2</sup> However, this period of general social acceptance did not last long.

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1 Božo Repe, *Viri o demokratizaciji in osamosvojitvi Slovenije. 1. del: Opozicija in oblast* (Ljubljana: Arhivsko društvo Slovenije, 2002), 98. Igor Omerza, *Veliki in dolgi pohod Nove revije* (Celovec: Mohorjeva, 2015), 112–98.

2 Rosvita Pesek, *Osamosvojitve Slovenije* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2007), 113. Zdenko Čepič, »Demos prevzame oblast,« in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina. Od programa zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije, 1848-1992*, eds. Jasna Fischer et al. (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga and Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2005), 1290.

Already in the immediate aftermath of the Slovenian War of Independence and the three-month moratorium on Slovenian emancipation, the Demos coalition started to fall apart. At the third congress of the Slovenian Democratic Union in October 1991, the party split into the nationalist National Democrats (who were in the majority and took over the succession) and the “intellectualist” and “moderate” Democratic Party. Towards the end of 1991, the Demos coalition disintegrated, and the government led by the Christian Democrat Lojze Peterle struggled on until 15 May 1992, when the Assembly confirmed the first government of the Liberal Democrat Janez Drnovšek.<sup>3</sup> The government consisted of the Liberal Democrats (the successors of the socialist youth organisation), the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Democrats (formerly members of the Demos coalition), and the Socialists (the successors to the former Socialist Alliance of Working People). The Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) won the elections for the new ninety-member National Assembly on 6 December 1992 with a substantial lead amounting to 23 % of votes, while the Slovenian Christian Democrats (SKD) came second with 15 % and the United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD) third with 14 %. Janez Drnovšek, who built his own grand coalition after a long negotiation with all parties in the Parliament, retained the position of President of the Government. While his coalition did not include all parliamentary parties, it did bring together the parties originating from the former regime (LDS and ZLSD) and the parties of the former Demos coalition (the Slovenian Social Democratic Party or the SDSS, the SKD, and the Greens). The government was sworn in on 25 January 1993.<sup>4</sup>

The broad coalition was based on the conviction that during the consolidation of the young Slovenian state, the government needed as much support as possible, especially to ensure accession to the European Union and NATO. As Tjaša Konovšek points out in her contribution on the LDS party, the relationship between the parties that emerged during the first mandate was complex and inconsistent, but Drnovšek's leadership of the economic recovery enjoyed relatively extensive public support.<sup>5</sup> In March 1994, Drnovšek managed to consolidate the liberal-democratic political option by merging the Liberal Democratic Party and other smaller parties into the so-called Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (with the same acronym, LDS). However, the grand coalition started to disintegrate during this same period. A few days after the Liberals merged into “the first normal party of post-socialism”<sup>6</sup> – as Slavoj Žižek, the unofficial LDS ideologue, commented on the merger of the centre parties – the Slovenian public was shocked by the so-called Depala vas affair. On 21 March 1994, members of the military Special Forces radically exceeded their powers and violently arrested a police

3 Zdenko Čepič, “Razpad Demosa in padec njegove vlade,” in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina*, 1364.

4 Jure Gašparič, *Slovenski parlament: Politično-zgodovinski pregled od začetka prvega do konca šestega mandata 1992–2014* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2014), <http://www.sistory.si/SISTORY:ID:26950>, Prvo mandatno obdobje – v znamenju tranzicije.

5 Tjaša Konovšek, “Formiranje Liberalne demokracije Slovenije in njene politike 1992–1996,” in *Narod – politika – država: idejnopolični značaj strank na Slovenskem od konca 19. do začetka 21. stoletja*, eds. Jurij Perovšek and Mojca Šorn (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2020), 276.

6 Dejan Pušenjak, “Zdržena LDS stavi tudi na to, da Slovenci niso prav neumni,” *Delo*, 14 March 1994, 2.

associate.<sup>7</sup> In the Parliament, the President of the Government proposed the dismissal of Defence Minister Janez Janša, who was objectively responsible for the incident. The affair occurred due to the issue of control over the Slovenian security forces, symbolised by the dispute between the President of Slovenia Milan Kučan and Defence Minister Janez Janša, and the delimitation of competencies between the civilian and military spheres. The debate in Parliament propelled Janša – an anti-communist social democrat (previously a member of the League of Communists), publicly renowned as an “emancipator” (*osamosvojitelj*) – to the position of the most prominent political figure of the Slovenian political right. As stated by Jure Gašparič, the debate was extremely charged with political issues, with speakers raising questions regarding the political past, conspiracies taking place in the background, the political relations between the left and right wing and reflecting on the very essence of Slovenian democracy. Loud protests in support of Janša were organised in front of the Parliament and members of the special police were present in the building.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, the opposition voted against his dismissal and SDSS left the government coalition. The government held on until the end of its mandate, albeit in tumultuous circumstances. The right-wing coalition partner SKD would often support the opposition in parliamentary debates, for example regarding the attitude towards World War II. Due to the dismissal of the Minister of Economy from the ranks of the government’s left-wing partner ZLSD, the latter was also dissatisfied with Drnovšek’s coalition.<sup>9</sup>

At the 10 November 1996 elections, LDS once again received the largest share of the votes, but the Parliament still found itself in a stalemate. Forty-five seats went to the right-wing parties (SDS,<sup>10</sup> the Slovenian People’s Party or SLS, and SKD), while the remainder, including the two ethnic minority MPs that supported Drnovšek, also received forty-five seats. The President of Slovenia reappointed Janez Drnovšek as the formateur, and months of dramatic political upheaval followed. At the beginning of January 1997, a member of the SKD switched sides to join Drnovšek, who was then elected as President of the Government with a single-vote advantage. However, he failed to ensure enough votes during the vote on the government and the crisis continued. The political drama ended with the approximation between the Liberal Democrats and the centre-right Slovenian People’s Party according to the principle of “building bridges between the left and the right”. In addition to LDS and SLS, the smaller Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS) also joined the government, which was sworn in on 24 February 1997. The coalition was very diverse. It was an alliance of two ideologically and socially completely different parties, barely able to govern together effectively. The situation in the National Assembly was confusing, as it often seemed that SLS belonged to the opposition rather than the coalition.<sup>11</sup>

7 Miha D. Štamcar and Jani Sever, “Ustavite Paravomo!,” *Mladina*, 22 March 1994, 1.

8 Marko Jakopec, “Janez Janša ni več obrambni minister,” *Delo*, 29. March 1994, 1.

9 Gašparič, *Slovenski parlament*, Prvo mandatno obdobje – v znamenju tranzicije.

10 In March 1996, the SDSS changed its name to Social Democrats of Slovenia - SDS. At that time, they also left the Socialist International.

11 Tjaša Konovšek, “Prekletstvo številke 45: konstituiranje slovenskega državnega zbora in vlade v letih 1996–1997,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 60, No. 2 (2020), 168–89.

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## Slovenia's Accession to the EU and NATO

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Most political actors in Slovenia understood Slovenian emancipation and democratisation in the context of its approach to the European Community, which was simultaneously undergoing processes of accelerated integration. The otherwise fragmented Slovenian political elite saw the processes of separation from Yugoslavia (emancipation), the establishment of multi-party parliamentarism and the introduction of the capitalist economy as compatible with the prospect of the country's accession to the EU. The EU member states recognised Slovenia on 15 January 1992. On 29 January 1992, Slovenia applied for full membership of the Council of Europe and was admitted on 14 May 1993. Soon after independence, Slovenia established strong connections with Brussels by signing the EU-Slovenia Cooperation Agreement on 5 April 1993.<sup>12</sup> Slovenia's greatest obstacle to EU accession were its bilateral relations with Italy, burdened by a traumatic history of nationalist struggles, Italian expansionism, fascism, World War II, Slovenian and Croatian wartime resistance, post-war violence, minority issues and border changes after World War II.<sup>13</sup> The open border and other issues between Yugoslavia and Italy were not resolved until as late as 1975 with the so-called Treaty of Osimo and 1983 with the so-called Rome Agreement, which among other things, provided for compensation for nationalised or confiscated property of those inhabitants of Istria who moved to Italy (the so-called *optants* or *ezuli*) from Zone B of the Free Trieste Territory.<sup>14</sup>

At the beginning of 1992, Italy was shaken by corruption scandals involving the Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiano*). Nevertheless, on 28 June 1992, the Italian Socialists managed to form a government under Giuliano Amato, which lasted ten months. During the change of the neighbouring country's government on 31 July 1992, the young Slovenian diplomacy managed to reach an agreement on the succession of the 49 agreements concluded between Yugoslavia and Italy.<sup>15</sup> Two years later, another change in the Italian policy towards Slovenia was once again influenced by internal political changes. Because of the corruption that came to light, the once glorious Socialist Party with a century-old tradition fell apart, and the new populist right took advantage of this. At the beginning of May 1994, Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of the populist *Forza Italia* party, formed a government together with the post-fascist AN (*Alleanza Nazionale*, led by Gianfranco Fini) and the regionalist and right-wing LN (*Lega Nord*, led by Umberto Bossi). The new government immediately adopted an unfriendly stance towards Slovenia. While Slovenia kept paying its share of compensation for the seized property within the agreed deadlines, Italy would not

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12 "Slovenija v EU, Predstavninstvo Evropske komisije v Sloveniji," *Časovnica Slovenije v EU*, [https://slovenia.representation.ec.europa.eu/o-nas/casovnica-slovenije-v-eu\\_sl](https://slovenia.representation.ec.europa.eu/o-nas/casovnica-slovenije-v-eu_sl), accessed 1 September 2023.

13 Milica Kacin Wohinz and Nevenka Troha (eds.), *Slovene-Italian Relations 1880-1956: Report of the Slovene-Italian Historical and Cultural Commission* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2001), <https://hdl.handle.net/11686/file25868>.

14 Viljenka Škorjanec, *Osimska pogajanja* (Koper: Annales, 2007), 243–63.

15 Marko Kosin, "Slovenska manjšina v slovensko-italijanskih odnosih, (kronološki pregled za obdobje od osamosvojitve 1991 do konca 1995)," *Razprave in gradivo* 33 (1998): 65.

withdraw the relevant money from the account. Nevertheless, it demanded the return of real estate in kind and therefore opposed Slovenia's accession to the EU or the conclusion of the Association Agreement. Before signing the Europe Agreement on EU Association, Slovenia thus faced an Italian blockade. Moreover, Article 68 of the Slovenian Constitution prohibited foreigners from owning real estate in Slovenia. On 10 October 1994, after lengthy negotiations with the Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Martino, the Slovenian Foreign Minister in Drnovšek's government, the Christian Democrat Lojze Peterle, initialled the so-called "Aquilaia Declaration" in Aquileia, but the Slovenian government later withdrew from it. The controversy stemmed from the fourth point of the initialled Declaration, which stipulated that the Slovenian side had to establish the extent of the publicly-owned real estate formerly owned by Italian citizens and freeze its sale until Slovenian legislation allowed for foreign ownership.<sup>16</sup> The critics of the Declaration accused Peterle of naivety: allegedly, the Slovenian side had foolishly agreed to preferential rights for the so-called *optants* with extensive consequences without receiving in return an equally principled right to property that had previously belonged to Slovenians and had then been expropriated during fascism.<sup>17</sup> Peterle, who had already announced his resignation as Foreign Minister before Aquileia, had to defend himself in Parliament, claiming that he had not been negotiating the sale of Slovenian territory. The opposition party SDSS, which profiled itself as the loudest right-wing party, declared the Declaration a sell-out of Slovenian land and accused the government of lacking dignity and being subservient to Italy. President of the Government Drnovšek dismissed Peterle from his post as Foreign Minister and temporarily took over as Minister of Foreign Affairs himself.<sup>18</sup>

At the beginning of 1995, the Italian government changed yet again. The new technical government of Alberto Dini was not preoccupied with securing support for the next elections, and talks resumed. Seeking help in the dispute, Slovenia turned to Javier Solana, the Foreign Minister of Spain, which held the EU presidency in the second half of 1995. Romano Prodi's centre-left government showed more understanding towards lifting the blockade. The solution proposed by Solana was named the Spanish or the Solana Compromise. Among other things, the Compromise stipulated that subject to reciprocity, EU citizens who had resided in Slovenia without interruption for at least three years had the right to purchase real estate from the date the Agreement came into force. Slovenia also committed to guaranteeing the right to buy property for all EU citizens within four years of the Agreement's entry into force (subject to reciprocity) – i.e., at the time of its associate membership and before full membership of the EU. Before ratifying the Association Agreement (1997), Slovenia had to amend Article 68 of its Constitution accordingly.<sup>19</sup> In April 1996, the Slovenian

16 Irena Krapež, *Diplomacija kot instrument zunanje politike: odnosi med Slovenijo in Italijo* (diplomsko delo, Filozofska fakulteta, 2009), [http://dk.fdv.uni-lj.si/magistrska/pdfs/mag\\_krapez-irena.pdf](http://dk.fdv.uni-lj.si/magistrska/pdfs/mag_krapez-irena.pdf), 110.

17 Mojca Drčar Murko, "Kazen za naivnost," *Delo*, 22 October 1994, 6.

18 Ana Galjot and Vilma Brodnik, "Iz zgodovine vključevanja Slovenije v Evropsko unijo," *Zgodovina v šoli* 12, No. 3-4 (2004), 36-40, 37.

19 Božo Cerar, "Španski kompromis," in *Osamosvojitve, Prispevki za enciklopedijo slovenske osamosvojitve, državnosti in ustavnosti*, ed. Dimitrij Rupel (Ljubljana: Nova univerza, 2021), 299.

Parliament adopted the Spanish compromise proposal. In addition to the LDS and SKD coalition, the proposal was also supported by ZLSD and the far-right Slovenian National Right (SND), while SLS, the nationalist Slovenian National Party (SNS) and the Democratic Party of Slovenia (DS) were against it. Interestingly, Janša's Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) did not explicitly oppose the proposal.<sup>20</sup> On 14 July 1997, the Parliament adopted an amendment to the controversial Article 68 of the Constitution, and the following day, it ratified the Association Agreement with the EU. Slovenia became an associate member of the EU.

According to Slovenian public opinion, accession to the EU enjoyed overwhelming support among the Slovenian public. During the 1996 Slovenian public opinion survey, respondents were asked whether Slovenia would benefit from becoming a full member of the EU. 57 % answered in the affirmative, and 15.2 % in the negative, whilst 27.8 % did not respond.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between the public and NATO was more complicated. In the 1991 Slovenian public opinion survey, respondents were asked what they believed would be the best foreign policy for Slovenia in the future. Most respondents – 44.1% – chose Western Europe, 39.1 % supported neutrality, while only 4.4 % opted for NATO and the United States. Similar results regarding the same question were established in 1992, while 8.5 % chose NATO and the USA in 1993 and 9.4 % in 1994. In 1994, the public opinion survey also asked people about the country's security policy. When asked whether they supported NATO membership, the majority of respondents – 44.2 – answered yes, 32.7 % neither opposed nor supported the idea, only 8.6 respondents opposed NATO membership, while 14.6 % could not decide. However, in 1996, as many as 55.4 % of respondents were in favour of NATO membership.

According to opinion polls, the support for NATO membership gradually increased, but it never reached the same level of support as full EU membership. During this period, most parliamentary parties supported NATO accession (with the exception of the nationalist SNS). The political will to bring Slovenia closer to NATO was first clearly stated in the amendments to the Resolution on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia, adopted by the National Assembly in January 1994. Based on the relevant decision of the Slovenian Parliament, on 30 March 1994, Slovenia was among the first to join the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and became an Associate Partner of the North Atlantic Assembly (NAA) in the same year. At the end of January 1996, Slovenia became a full member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The political decision in favour of NATO membership was unequivocally expressed in the Decision of the National Assembly, adopted on 11 April 1996, which states that "the Republic of Slovenia wishes to guarantee its fundamental security interests within the framework of the collective defence system made possible by NATO membership".<sup>22</sup> Although in June 1997, all political parties supported

20 Saša Vidmajer, "Parlament odprl pot pridruženju k EU," *Delo*, 12 April 1996, 1.

21 *Vrednote v prehodu II, Slovensko javno mnenje 1990-1998*, ed. Niko Toš (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2021), <https://www.cjm.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/VREDNOTE-2-WEB.pdf>.

22 "Slovenija v Natu," *gov.si*, <https://www.gov.si/teme/slovenija-v-natu/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

accession to the North Atlantic Alliance with the Parliamentary Declaration on NATO Accession, the administration of US President Bill Clinton decided not to support Slovenia's immediate entry into NATO. Thus, only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary joined NATO in July 1997.

A consultative referendum on Slovenia's accession to the EU and NATO was held on 23 March 2003. 60.44 % of eligible voters participated in the EU referendum. 89.64 % of these were in favour of the EU, while only 10.36 % voted against it.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, 60.43 % of eligible voters took part in the referendum on NATO accession, but only two thirds (66.08 %) supported it, while one third (33.92 %) were against it.<sup>24</sup> Slovenia became a full member of NATO on 24 February 2004, when the Parliament ratified the North Atlantic Treaty. Slovenia became a full EU member on 1 May 2004, when as many as ten countries joined the European Union during its most extensive enlargement in history.

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## Pro-European Eurosceptics?

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The *Nova revija* magazine was founded in 1982 by the middle-generation opposition intellectuals and culture professionals. The contemporaneous communist authorities in Slovenia allowed and financed the establishment of the magazine but simultaneously monitored its contributors. People joined the circle of the *Nova revija* magazine in various ways.<sup>25</sup> The core consisted of intellectuals also known as the critical generation, who had previously contributed to two cultural magazines in the 1950s and 1960s: *Revija 57* and *Perspektive*.<sup>26</sup> The authorities abolished both, the former in 1958 and the latter in 1964. As elsewhere in Central Eastern Europe, the "normalisation" of culture in relation to the West represented one of the crucial demands of the reformist intellectual circles. In addition to existentialism, the critical generation reflected on the phenomenological tradition, especially Heidegger's philosophy. Heidegger represented a major influence on Dušan Pirjevec (deceased 1977), a philosopher, comparatist and prominent intellectual of the Partisan generation who oscillated between the status of regime intellectual and the role of dissident.<sup>27</sup> After Pirjevec's death, his tradition was continued by the philosophers of the phenomenological orientation, Tine Hribar and Ivo Urbančič, as well as by Dimitrij Rupel, the

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23 "Poročilo o izidu glasovanja in izidu referendumu o pristopu Republike Slovenije k Evropski uniji, ki je bil 23. marca 2003," *Državna volilna komisija*, [https://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumenti/volitve/referendum\\_2003\\_1/porocilo-o-referendumu-EU.pdf](https://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenti/volitve/referendum_2003_1/porocilo-o-referendumu-EU.pdf).

24 "Poročilo o izidu glasovanja in izidu referendumu o pristopu Republike Slovenije k Organizaciji severnoatlantske pogodbe (NATO), ki je bil 23. marca 2003," *Državna volilna komisija*, [https://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumenti/volitve/referendum\\_2003\\_1/porocilo-o-referendumu-NATO.pdf](https://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenti/volitve/referendum_2003_1/porocilo-o-referendumu-NATO.pdf).

25 Omerza, *Veliki in dolgi pohod Nove revije*, 112.

26 Božo Repe, *Obračun s Perspektivami* (Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1990).

27 Balázs Trencsényi, Michal Kopeček, Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčič, Maria Falina, Monika Baár and Maciej Janowski, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Vol. 2, Negotiating Modernity in the Short Twentieth Century and Beyond. Pt. 1, 1918-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 401. Jure Ramšak, (*Samo*)*upravljanje intelekta, Družbena kritika v poznosocialistični Sloveniji* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2019), 89-92.



sociologist of culture and comparativist. In addition to the culture professionals and philosophers who based their critique of society on Pirjevec's theses, the legal and social theorists who formulated a critical outlook based on Luhmann and Habermas's theories of society also found their way into the circle of the *Nova revija* magazine. The most renowned representatives of this trend were France Bučar and Jože Pučnik who was imprisoned twice for his critical writing and later emigrated to Germany where he lectured on sociology.<sup>28</sup> Another prominent group consisted of established but non-conformist poets and writers, e.g., Drago Jančar, Niko Grafenauer, Dane Zajc and Boris A. Novak. Although most of the intellectuals involved were men, the magazine was also co-created by a few influential women. The most well-known woman intellectual of the *Nova revija* magazine circle being sociologist Spomenka Hribar, who developed social critique through her attitude towards the more traumatic episodes of contemporary history using the concept of national reconciliation.<sup>29</sup> In the second half of the 1980s, the *Nova revija* circle intensified their opposition activities. After the dispute with the Serbian cultural opposition in 1985 over the future of Yugoslavia, this group of opposition intellectuals entered the political arena by publishing the 57th issue of *Nova revija* (Contributions to the Slovenian National Programme), where they demanded greater independence for Slovenia, the abolition of the communist monopoly and a free economy.<sup>30</sup> Between 1989 and 1990, they were enthusiastically involved in the formation of opposition parties (notably the Slovenian Democratic Union, headed by Dimitrij Rupel) and the Demos coalition. After the first multi-party elections in the spring of 1990, many members of this circle assumed important political functions. France Bučar became the Speaker of Parliament, Dimitrij Rupel the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Spomenka Hribar a Member of Parliament.<sup>31</sup> During this period, the newspaper publishing company *Nova revija* was established, which carried out major publishing projects in addition to publishing the eponymous magazine in the 1990s. During the economic crisis of 2008–10, the company ran into financial difficulties. The final issue of the magazine was published in 2010 and the company filed for bankruptcy in 2014.<sup>32</sup>

Following Slovenian independence, the political and worldview differences between the former members of the *Nova revija* intellectual circle became apparent. Dimitrij Rupel established himself as an active member of the ruling LDS party and was elected Mayor of Ljubljana in 1994.<sup>33</sup> On 18 April 1992, Spomenka Hribar published an article titled *Ustavimo desnico* (Stop the Right), in which she cautioned against the excessive advance of the right wing, which – among other things – was detrimental to the process of national reconciliation.<sup>34</sup> Following this, Spomenka Hribar was labelled

28 Rosvita Pesek, "Jože Pučnik - dlje kot drugi," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 11, No. 2/3 (2011): 439-62.

29 Spomenka Hribar, "Krivda in greh," in *Kocbekov zbornik*, ed. Dimitrij Rupel (Maribor: Obzorja, 1987), 61.

30 Aleš Gabrič, "Zaostrenost mednacionanih odnosov," in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina*, 1171.

31 Zdenko Čepič, "Demos prevzame oblast," in *Slovenska novejša zgodovina*, 1290.

32 "Nova revija v stečajju: prodaja ustanoviteljske pravice Inštituta Nove revije," *Dnevnik*, 17 May 2014, <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042659861>, accessed 20 August 2023.

33 Jana Taškar, "Dr. Rupel je ljubljanski župan," *Delo*, 19 December 1994, 1.

34 Spomenka Hribar, "Ustavimo desnico," *Sobotna priloga*, 18 April 1992, 24, 25.

a leftist by the political right. In the period of Drnovšek's governments (1992–2000), the majority of the *Nova revija* circle moved closer to the contemporaneous political right. The opposition at the time was associated with the *Nova revija* circle due to its conviction that the former communist elite remained in power, obstructed the transition to true democracy and a "fair" economy, and controlled the media and cultural policy. Although they accepted the thesis of the "communist continuity" and sympathised with the right-wing opposition, the renowned members of the *Nova revija* circle considered themselves free-thinking and cosmopolitan intellectuals who respected diversity, human rights and liberal democracy (e.g., Drago Jančar, France Bučar).<sup>35</sup>

The European orientation was not an issue for the *Nova revija* intellectuals, although they had a negative opinion of the Slovenian approach to the EU. The European Union of the contemporary political and economic reality was not Europe according to the concepts of the former dissident intellectuals. The dissonance between the ideal and the political reality was particularly acute in the spring of 1996 during parliamentary debates on the "Spanish Compromise". In the Parliament, France Bučar, who was an opposition MP of the Democratic Party during this period, pointed out that the government's insistence on EU accession was paranoid, while in his opinion, the Spanish proposal actually represented a compromise with the Italians. "Our country's agreement to it will be a mutilation of Slovenian identity," Bučar declared dramatically in the National Assembly on 2 April 1996.<sup>36</sup> During the same period, an initiative called *Gibanje 23. december* (the 23 December Movement) emerged, warning MPs not to vote against the Constitution and threatening a constitutional dispute.<sup>37</sup> While the 23 December Movement, led by dentist Borut Korun, remained on the margins of the political arena (together with SNS), it was Slovenia's most visible Eurosceptic initiative. In the publication titled *Danes Slovenija in nikdar več?* (Slovenia Today and Never Again), published at the beginning of 1997, the Movement released a statement in which it strongly opposed the Republic of Slovenia's accession to the EU, as it would result in a land sell-out, economic disaster and the death of the nation. The 23 December Movement supported a politically independent and neutral Republic of Slovenia.<sup>38</sup> The Movement maintained good relations with the *Nova revija* circle, as the abovementioned publication also included contributions written by France Bučar and Tone Jerovšek, who might not have shared the Movement's entirely negative views on the EU but nevertheless strongly opposed the "Spanish Compromise". In his contribution, France Bučar underlined that Slovenia had agreed to give Italians a four-year preemptive right to buy real estate before other foreign nationals. While the Compromise stipulated that all EU citizens who had resided in Slovenia for at least three years would enjoy the same rights, according to Bučar, Italians almost exclusively met these criteria. According to him, to agree to the Compromise was to accept the opinion that Slovenia was in the Italian sphere of interest and a semi-colonial state. How to proceed? A sound

35 Drago Jančar, "Egiptovski lonci mesa," *Sobotna priloga*, 1. 10. 1994, 30.

36 Urša Izgoršek, "Španski predlog na prepihu razprave v Državnem zboru," *Delo*, 3 April 1996, 2.

37 N. R., "Opozorilo poslancem državnega zbora," *Delo*, 10 April 1996, 2.

38 "Izjava Gibanja 23. December," in *Danes Slovenija in nikdar več?*, ed. Borut Korun (Velenje: self-published, 1997), 194.

legal and political strategy for accession to the EU should be drawn up, and above all, not everyone who called for sober reflection should be branded a Eurosceptic.<sup>39</sup>

The cooperation between the *Nova revija* circle and the 23 December Movement culminated in April and May 1997, when Slovenian politics was preparing to amend the Constitution and ratify the Association Agreement. The 23 December Movement submitted an initiative for a preliminary legislative referendum on the ratification of the EU Association Agreement. France Bučar was among those who signed the referendum initiative. Fortunately for the government, the Parliament's legal advisors determined that the referendum initiative had not been submitted correctly, so the planned vote on the constitutional amendment was not jeopardised.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, a group of 38 intellectuals, mainly from the *Nova revija* circle, wrote a public letter stating that the Parliament could only ratify the Association Agreement between Slovenia and the EU without the annex containing the "Spanish Compromise", as the latter was supposedly contrary to the Constitution. They stated that they supported Slovenia's accession to the EU but that the imposed "Spanish Compromise" negated the very purpose of joining. The signatories were clear: they pointed out that joining under such conditions turned Slovenia into a protectorate and denied the purpose of its independence. In short: first a referendum, then a constitutional amendment and only then ratification of the Agreement.<sup>41</sup> The commentators of *Delo* newspaper, who supported the government policy, described the initiators of the referendum and the signatories of the above statement as Eurosceptics. The journalist Gorazd Bohte declared: "It is ironic and paradoxical that the very group that prides itself on the plebiscite is now striving to prevent what we decided in 1990."<sup>42</sup> Vladimir Vodušek commented that the initiators of the referendum and the circle of the *Nova revija* magazine had embarrassed the government party SLS, as well as the opposition (SDS and SKD). While this circle represented intellectual support for these parties, the leaders of the right-wing parliamentary parties, on the other hand, could not afford to speak out against the ratification and EU membership.<sup>43</sup>

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## The European Hour

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The early summer of 1997 was critical for Slovenian foreign policy. On 7 July 1997, Italian President Luigi Scalfaro visited Slovenia, confirming Italy's support for Slovenian entry into the EU.<sup>44</sup> On 8 July 1997, the first NATO summit since 1994 was held in Madrid. It was also attended by the President of the Government Drnovšek and

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39 France Bučar, "Kako naprej," in *Danes Slovenija in nikdar več?*, 194.

40 Mateja Babič, "Pobuda za referendum ni bila vložena pravilno," *Delo*, 9 May 1997, 1.

41 Marko Jakopec and Vladimir Vodušek, "DZ lahko ratificira sporazum o pridružitvi samo brez aneksa," *Delo*, 9 May 1997, 2.

42 Gorazd Bohte, "Evroskeptiki po slovensko," *Delo*, 9 May 1997, 2.

43 Vladimir Vodušek, "Španski jezdec in španski borci," *Delo*, 10 May 1997, 3.

44 Saša Vidmajer, "Prvi obisk italijanskega predsednika v Sloveniji," *Delo*, 8 July 1997, 1.

Foreign Minister Zoran Thaler. Slovenia was not invited to the first round of enlargement. Although there was unofficial talk of only three countries being invited, the other candidates remained hopeful, as the final decision was not adopted until after prolonged negotiations.<sup>45</sup> The foreign political cold shower coincided with a meeting of the Parliament's Constitutional Commission, which discussed amendment of Article 68 of the Constitution in view of the EU Association Agreement. Although the opposition agreed to amend the constitutional article, there were still differences with regard to its wording and the necessary quorum in Parliament.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the National Assembly adopted the constitutional amendment with a large majority on 14 July. However, the opposition's affirmative vote did not mean it supported the government's policy. The SDS leader Janez Janša explained the opposition's dilemma very clearly. According to him, Slovenia faced two bad choices: it had to decide whether to join the EU under discriminatory conditions or exclude itself from the first round of EU membership candidates by not adapting its legislation. The fault, of course, lay with the government, which lacked a suitable foreign policy strategy. Meanwhile, Lojze Peterle, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and leader of the opposition SKD party, regretted that "his" Aquileia Agreement, which had allegedly been more favourable for Slovenia, had not been adopted.<sup>47</sup> On the following day, the EU Association Agreement ratification was put to a vote. Of the 85 MPs present, 70 voted in favour of the Agreement. The opposition underlined the differences compared to the Agreements of other Associate Members. By doing so it attempted to highlight the government's inferior and submissive foreign policy while at the same time presenting support for the ratification as a constructive stance – or, moreover, as a solution to the misguided policies of Drnovšek's government.<sup>48</sup>

The political developments of July 1997 embarrassed both the government and the opposition. The government parties showed considerable originality in convincing the public that Slovenia's exclusion from the first round of NATO enlargement was not a foreign policy failure. On the other hand, the opposition had to come up with awkward explanations why it kept voting in favour of the constitutional changes it disagreed with. In such a political climate, 31 intellectuals<sup>49</sup> gathered around the *Nova revija* magazine addressed an open letter of more than 14 pages to the public, titled "The Hour of European Truth for Slovenia".

The signatories saw Slovenian reality most grimly: "We, the undersigned Slovenian intellectuals, artists and scientists – / ... / –with regret conclude that Slovenia, seven years after the first democratic elections, is increasingly lagging behind European

45 Stojan Žitko, "Vrh je v prvi širitveni krog Nata soglasno povabil samo tri države," *Delo*, 9 July 1997, 1.

46 Jana Taškar, "Ustavna komisija odločila, zdaj je na vrsti Državni zbor," *Delo*, 10 July 1997, 2.

47 Marko Jakopec, "Večina poslanskih skupin je podpirala spremembe ustave," *Delo*, 15 July 1997, 2.

48 Matjaž Albreht, "Še ena vroča izredna seja o pridružitvenem sporazumu," *Delo*, 16 July 1997, 2.

49 Signed by the following intellectuals: Drago Jančar, Angelos Baš, Aleš Berger, Janez Bernik, Viktor Blažič, Katarina Bogataj Gradišnik, France Bučar, Drago Demšar, Stane Gabrovec, Kajetan Gantar, Janez Gradišnik, Niko Grafenauer, Andrej Hieng, Andrej Inkret, Milček Komelj, Lojze Kovačič, Edvard Kovač, Lojze Lebič, Joža Mahnič, Saša Markovič, Janez Pogačnik, Jože Pučnik, Primož Simoniti, Jaroslav Skrušny, Jože Snoj, Rudi Šeligo, Alojz Šuštar, Drago Tršar, Ivan Urbančič, Dane Zajc, Aleksander Zorn.

cultural and democratic standards. The ever-clearer distancing of Slovenia from the circle of countries which are ready for acceptance into the European integration is primarily the result of the fact that the internal life of our state is becoming less and less dynamic, more and more channelled into old frameworks, and consequently development is blocked.” They pointed out “the painful process of the Slovenian accession to NATO” and “the uncertain prospects for full membership of the European Union.” Supposedly, this was a warning that Slovenians should no longer ignore.<sup>50</sup>

The authors of the open letter claimed that Slovenia was ruled by a “continuity” of the former communist regime. “Almost all the centres of power are occupied by people whose way of thinking and methods of governing have been shaped by the one-party system.” Privatisation had been poorly implemented, while denationalisation of assets once nationalised by the communist regime had been too slow. The former Party officials had become the new owners of companies and various speculators had seized new business opportunities. Furthermore, workers were not protected. The trade unions of the former regime were linked to the government and did not protect workers, while the authorities obstructed the new unions. The media were secretly controlled and manipulated by the government. Because of post-communist continuity, true pluralisation of media space was impossible. This problem was revealed in all its drastic post-communist dimensions during the NATO accession negotiations. After the USA had reacted negatively to Slovenia’s NATO membership bid, some magazines – following the President’s response – strived to portray the decision as irrational or as a result of the Russia-US conflicts, while some of the press even allegedly crossed all the lines of proper journalistic reporting and fundamental culture. Although Slovenian culture represented the essence of the Slovenian nation, it had not flourished since the attainment of independence but had instead been pushed to the periphery by the authorities. Culture had no influence on society. The attitude towards the communist past was also problematic: instead of condemning communist crimes, the deliberate falsification of history continued. This reinforced the ideological and political continuity of the former regime, which the Slovenian Parliament needed to condemn.

The public letter devoted much attention to the EU accession process. The negotiations on Slovenian accession were supposedly led by incompetent people. The government did not know how to apply the principles of European diplomacy (consistent negotiations defending Slovenia’s interests) and instead resorted to “Balkan double-dealing, amateurish improvisation and misleading assurances”. Slovenia was expected to meet conditions unlike any other EU Associate Member State. “These conditions are contained in what is now finally known as the ‘Spanish compromise’, which for a long time was hidden by the government from the public. Following this compromise, Slovenia has been relegated to an exceptionally subordinate position. / ... / The government – through its incompetence, vacillation, concealment and manipulation of

50 Drago Jančar, France Bučar, Niko Grafenauer, Jože Pučnik, Primož Simoniti, Jože Snoj, Rudi Šeligo and Ivan Urbančič, *Ura evropske resnice za Slovenijo / The Hour of European Truth for Slovenia* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1997), 33.

the media – has led us into a situation in which we must face the actual fact that none of the solutions will be good for Slovenia.”<sup>51</sup>

The document was presented to the public on 9 July, the day when NATO leaders rejected Slovenia’s request.<sup>52</sup> On 18 July, a public presentation was organised after the Constitution had been amended and the Association Agreement ratified. “There is no doubt whether we are entering Europe or not because we are already in Europe and have always been in Europe,” stated Niko Grafenauer, President of the *Nova revija* Club. According to a *Delo* journalist, the presentation was attended by many intellectuals and prominent politicians. Janez Janša, the leader of the opposition party SDS, was received with particular respect and a representative of the centre-right governmental SLS was also present. The journalist underlined the bombastic words of the speakers about the danger of Slovenia becoming a northern Sicily, while some people observed that the entire situation was reminiscent of Bolshevism and fascism. A barrage of harsh criticism was hurled at the press, especially *Delo* newspaper, supposedly just a humble servant of the ruling regime.<sup>53</sup>

Boris Jež, a commentator of the most influential newspaper *Delo*, described the public letter written by the *Nova revija* circle as an “eruption of reason”, which in his opinion, had certainly been provoked by the rejection of Slovenia on its path towards NATO. However, Jež ironically stated: “Of course, the cream of the nation’s intelligentsia will refuse to admit that it is descending into the trivialities of daily political commentary.” Jež firmly rejected the signatories’ dramatic thesis that everything in Slovenia was wrong. While he admitted that many things were indeed wrong, he also wondered what the signatories of the open letter – who were exceedingly influential in society and in some cases had also held important functions in recent years – had actually done to remedy the situation. Jež pointed out that the sculptor Drago Tršar was also among the signatories – the one and the same who had, under communism, erected a monument to the socialist revolution in front of the Parliament. Instead of educating Slovenians about their history, Tršar should give back the fees he had received for the monuments from the former regime, Jež stated rather harshly.<sup>54</sup>

Among the responses to The Hour of European Truth, the reactions of two former members of the *Nova revija* circle, Dimitrij Rupel and Veljko Rus, were the most interesting. Rupel was very critical of his colleagues. He noted that the initiators of the 23 December Movement, which opposed Slovenia’s full EU membership, were among the signatories. In his opinion, SDS and Janez Janša were usually behind these groups. These people were convinced that Slovenia and especially their group were European enough on their own and that Slovenia would finally be completely Europeanised once it recognised this group’s authority and power. Rupel argued that in listing the faults of Slovenian society, the authors of the open letter had deliberately neglected to mention the indecencies committed by the adherents of the right-wing parties. He found the

51 Ibidem, 53.

52 C. R., “Odperto pismo intelektualcev,” *Delo*, 10 July 1997, 1.

53 Mateja Babič, “Trenutek prigriznjenih idej,” *Delo*, 19 July 1997, 2.

54 Boris Jež, “Izbruh razuma,” *Delo*, 11 July 1997, 3.

denigration of the media – the fourth branch of power in democratic societies – unjustified and unusual, convinced that the main purpose of the open letter was to encourage resistance towards Europe. Rupel believed that the potential exclusion of Slovenia from Europe would not mean preserving traditional Slovenian values but rather mass emigration and assimilation.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, Veljko Rus defined the European Hour of Truth as an “anti-communist manifesto”. He found that the signatories believed that all problems stemmed from the assumption that the former Party members still pulled all the strings of social development. Only a single therapy fit this diagnosis: removing all the representatives of the continuity. However, who were these people, really? It was obvious that they were not only members of left-wing parties, as the former communist personnel were scattered throughout the political landscape. How could this removal be achieved? Certainly not democratically. According to Rus, a spontaneous rotation of the elites would supposedly solve these problems. In his opinion, the analysis “according to which Slovenia’s main problem consists of the ‘representatives of the continuity’ is more than irrational and completely unproductive.”<sup>56</sup>

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## Conclusion

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Were the signatories of The Hour of European Truth Eurosceptics? If we consider the basic literature on the phenomenon of Euroscepticism, we can at least conclude that the question is incorrect. The theorists and historians of Euroscepticism agree that this is a political concept that can only be understood in the proper social and historical context. The editors of *The Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism* (2018) identify three crucial problems regarding the notion of Euroscepticism: 1. the term was coined by non-academics using academic jargon; 2. Euroscepticism is ultimately a negative construction and in its simplest form, it means opposition to some aspects of European integration; 3. the term’s genesis draws attention to temporal and geographical particularities.<sup>57</sup> Euroscepticism varies considerably in whether it assumes soft or hard forms. It also differs in terms of its role in the Member States’ political history. The expression “Euroscepticism” may only pertain to the EU or represent an overall condemnation of the European ideal. Attempts to historicise and compare various facets of Euroscepticism are still rare.<sup>58</sup>

Given the ambivalent political position of the *Nova revija* circle regarding EU accession, a brief analysis of the use of the term Europe in the open letter in question is undoubtedly warranted. Where is Europe? The authors defined Europe as the very place where Slovenia must be included (the road to Europe). However, Europe has

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55 Dimitrij Rupel, “Urica domačih resnic,” *Sobotna priloga*, 19 July 1997, 38.

56 Veljko Rus, “Antikomunistični manifest,” *Sobotna priloga*, 26 July 1997, 30.

57 Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin, and Simon Usherwood, “Defining Euroscepticism, From a broad concept to a field of study,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism*, eds. Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin and Simon McDougall Usherwood (London: Routledge, 2018), 4.

58 Mark Gilbert and Daniele Pasquinucci, “Introduction,” in *Euroscepticisms: The Historical Roots of a Political Challenge*, eds. Mark Gilbert and Daniele Pasquinucci (Leiden and Boston Brill 2020), 1–9.

always been “here”. The authors were convinced of the ontological European nature of Slovenia. As they stated, Slovenia was supposed to be “in its originality European from the very beginning”. What is Europe? We can identify four “aggregate states” of Europe: a) the ideal society (“the highest European cultural, ethical, political, legal and economic standards in public life”); b) the protector of Slovenian identity, which will safeguard the Slovenian nation from the imperialism of superpowers; c) Europe as the “anti-Balkan”, the negation of all that is “Balkan”; d) Europe as seen as the opposite of communism, which is why Slovenia will not become European until it condemns the former communist regime.

Presently (2023), the ideology of the “communist continuity” is defended and developed by the SDS party, which has, under the leadership of Janez Janša (the party’s leader since 1993), evolved from a non-communist social democracy through a centre-right conservative party to a right-wing populist party, yet it remains within the framework of the European People’s Party.<sup>59</sup> A great deal has happened since 1997. Many of the signatories of the Declaration have distanced themselves from Janša and his policies, though some of them have remained silent sympathisers. The main difference between the views of today’s Slovenian populist right and the ideology of the anti-communist intellectuals in 1997 lies in their attitude towards the concept of Europe. The former idealisation of the European Union has been replaced by scepticism against “cultural Marxism”<sup>60</sup>, “Soros”<sup>61</sup> and “LGBTQ ideology”<sup>62</sup>. While the 1997 Hour of European Truth attempted to reconcile Slovenian nationalism with the cosmopolitan liberal-democratic paradigm, the contemporary populist right resorts to anti-migrant rhetoric and overt racism while disseminating conspiracy theories such as “The Great Replacement theory”<sup>63</sup> and even “Eurabia”,<sup>64</sup> the conspiracy theory embraced by the Norwegian terrorist Breivik, who massacred 77 people on the island of Utøya on 22 July 2011.<sup>65</sup>

In 1997, critical intellectuals who supported EU accession, albeit on their terms, cooperated politically with the greatest opponents of EU accession. While in 1997, SDS and its leader maintained a healthy distance towards any Euroscepticism, in 2023, the former leader of the 23 December Movement, Borut Korun, regularly

59 Jurij Hadalin, “Kaj bi rekel Henrik Tuma? Od Socialdemokratske stranke Slovenije do Slovenske demokratske stranke,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 61, No. 3 (2021), 237–61, <https://doi.org/10.51663/pnz.61.3.10>.

60 For example: Borut Korun, “Neomarksizem ali kulturni marksizem,” *demokracija.si*, 6 March 2022, <https://demokracija.si/fokus/neomarksizem-ali-kulturni-marksizem/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

61 For example: J. B., “George Soros, kralj propagande: Milijarder po svetu plačuje najmanj 253 organizacij, prek katerih vpliva na globalne medije,” *demokracija.si*, 9 December 2022, <https://demokracija.si/fokus/george-soros-kralj-propagande-milijarder-po-svetu-placuje-najmanj-253-organizacij-prek-katerih-vpliva-na-globalne-medije/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

62 For example: Peter Truden, “Starši, pozor! Golobova vlada namerava vpeljati LGBT ideologijo v šole,” *demokracija.si*, 15 May 2022, <https://demokracija.si/fokus/starši-pozor-golobova-vlada-namerava-vpeljati-lgbt-ideologijo-v-sole/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

63 For example: “Noro! Evropski parlament trdi, da je velika demografska zamenjava teorija zarote,” *demokracija.si*, 22 November 2022, <https://demokracija.si/tujina/noro-evropski-parlament-trdi-da-je-velika-demografska-zamenjava-teorija-zarote/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

64 “Šifra: Eurabija,” *demokracija.si*, 2 June 2018, <https://demokracija.si/tujina/sifra-eurabija/>, accessed 20 August 2023.

65 Eirikur Bergmann, “The Eurabia conspiracy theory,” in *Europe, Continent of Conspiracies: Conspiracy Theories in and about Europe*, eds. Andreas Önnersfors and André Krouwel (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 36–53.



publishes his comments in the SDS party magazine. He has not changed his attitude towards the European Union. In an interview for *Demokracija* magazine in May 2023, Korun proudly identified himself as a Eurosceptic and highlighted his role in the 23 December Movement, which had advocated for Slovenia to remain a neutral, independent oasis.<sup>66</sup> Korun is obviously now more acceptable for SDS than in 1997, which is not surprising, as, according to the words of the SDS leader at the Economic Forum in Karpacz, Poland, on 6 September 2022, “the future of the European Union is not in a European federation, but rather in a European Union of nations.”<sup>67</sup> The concept of Euroscepticism does not help us understand the trajectories of the critical attitudes towards Europe and the EU in Slovenia. Achieving this goal calls for a detailed political-historical study with strong emphasis on the history of political thought, the history of discourse and the micro-history of the actors involved.

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## Marko Zajc

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### URA EVROPSKE RESNICE ZA SLOVENSKE INTELEKTUALCE

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#### POVZETEK

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V prispevku avtor predstavi in analizira politično aktivnost slovenskih opozicijskih intelektualcev med približevanjem Slovenije EU (obdobje 1995–97). Del intelektualcev iz kroga Nove revije je poleti 1997 objavil javno pismo »Ura evropske resnice za Slovenijo«, kritiko družbenih in političnih razmer ter slabe vladne politike približevanja EU in Natu. Podpisniki javnega pisma so tedanjo vladavino liberalnodemokratske stranke (LDS), ki je bila naslednica uradne mladinske organizacije v socializmu, razumeli kot nedemokratsko vladavino nekdanjih komunistov, ki imajo v rokah vse niti oblasti. Pri približevanju EU so nasprotovali sporazumu z Italijo glede kupovanja slovenskih nepremičnin (t. i. španski kompromis), ki so ga imeli za odpoved slovenski suverenosti. Čeprav so se načeloma strinjali s članstvom v EU, so v svojem aktivizmu sodelovali tudi s skupino odkritih evroskeptikov. V prvem delu prispevka avtor predstavi slovensko politiko v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja, v drugem na kratko opiše proces pridruževanja Slovenije EU in Natu. V tretjem delu pojasni predzgodovino in delovanje obravnavane skupine intelektualcev, v četrtem pa analizira javno pismo in odzive v javnosti. V zaključku avtor postavi vprašanje, ali so bili omenjeni akterji evroskeptiki. Po njegovem mnenju koncept evroskeptičizma ne pomaga razumeti kompleksnih in ambivalentnih odnosov političnih akterjev do Evrope in EU. Poudari trajektorijo slovenske protikomunistične politične misli do sodobnosti. Glavna razlika med pogledi današnje slovenske populistične desnice in ideologijo protikomunističnih intelektualcev iz leta 1997 je v njihovem odnosu do koncepta Evrope. Nekdanjo idealizacijo EU je zamenjala skepsa do »Bruslja«, »kulturnega marksizma«, »Sorosa« in »ideologije LGBTQ«. Medtem ko je »ura evropske resnice« iz leta 1997 poskušala uskladiti slovenski nacionalizem s kozmopolitsko liberalnodemokratsko paradigmo, se sodobna populistična desnica zateka k protimigrantski retoriki, hkrati pa sprejema in širi »alt-right« teorije zarote, kot je »teorija velike zamenjave«.