**James Gow** & **Cathie Carmichael** *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State in the New Europe*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000. xi + 234 pp., $39.95 (cloth). ISBN: 0253336635.

This is an excellent book. It is relatively brief, yet thorough in outlining the political and economic life of the Slovenes after the mid-nineteenth century and their cultural heritage after the mid-1500s. The overall coverage is essentially chronological, with more recent times receiving more extensive coverage. The book's seven chapters, which take up specific aspects of development such as "Culture," "Economy and Society," "Politics," or "Security," explore individual topics factually. Within each chapter, however, the authors pursue provocative themes and sometimes offer bold interpretations. The reader is held rapt by the book's lively and refreshing approach.

An overall theme that meanders through the entire book is that Slovene political life is of one piece. Slovenia's independence is not considered a break with the past; rather, independent Slovenia is seen as having been built upon a century of useful experiences. According to Gow and Carmichael both Yugoslavias, royal and communist, contributed to the shaping of today's Slovene political life. In 1918, opting for independence (from Austria-Hungary) for the first time ever, Slovenes formed a national council and even governed themselves for several months. The experience was brief, but the Slovenes—who thereafter united with the Serbs and Croats in a Yugoslav kingdom—held onto the goal of self-rule: if not independence, at least autonomy. Anton Korošec, head of the Slovene People's Party, kept alive that idea, particularly when not serving as a member of the royal government. Meanwhile during the twenties and thirties Slovenes founded national cultural institutions—a university, a museum, a gallery, a theater, and an academy of sciences and arts.

After 1945, living in a federal Communist Yugoslavia, Slovenes established vital political bases for self-rule. The Yugoslav constitution, by which Slovenes acquired their own republic, provided for Slovene sovereignty and self-determination and, significantly, for the legal right to separate from a united Yugoslavia—a right that Belgrade would dispute in the late eighties. As Yugoslavia's many constitutions were amended or replaced by new ones, the Slovene republic evolved toward an independent state. Each constitutional change allowed for greater

decentralization of the federal state and more autonomy and decision-making powers for its republics. For the authors, Yugoslavia by 1974 had already become a quasi-confederation because of the constitution introduced in that year. After that, independence for Slovenia was only one—albeit giant—step away.

This book's most fascinating chapter deals with economy and society. In the mid-1800s Slovene society was overwhelmingly rural and its economy was agricultural. Some economic changes were implemented during the Habsburg period. A network of railroads was begun, and capital accumulation and expansion of banking promoted business. At first capital came from abroad, but soon Slovene mutual societies were organized and with that a Slovene entrepreneurial class was born. World War I interrupted these developments. Royal Yugoslavia in the inter-war years did little to encourage economic expansion and, even if Belgrade had favored industrial growth, the pressures of world-wide depression in the thirties would have prevented it.

It was only after World War II that Slovenia's economy really took off, perhaps not yet in the war-recovery period of the fifties, but certainly in the sixties. The authors acknowledge that the self-management system that directed economic development under communism had serious problems. Yet, for Slovenia, which by the nineties had the strongest economy in the former communist world, the positive results were indisputable. In 1857, 83% of Slovenes lived off the land; in 1910, 67%; in 1931, 59%; in 1948, 49%. By 1971, however, only 20% of Slovenes were primarily employed in agriculture, and by 1991, the year Slovenia declared independence, the figure was 8%. Yet, in the 1980s Slovenes had come to feel they could do better still. The economy had begun to slow, and the federal government taxed Slovenia heavily to support Yugoslavia's less developed areas, where, Slovenes felt, the money was being misused or squandered outright. By the early nineties, according to Gow and Carmichael, "... the Yugoslav context which had fostered growth and development in the Slovene economy for 70 years had become the greatest impediment to its further improvement" (112). Throughout the eighties, the Slovene leadership, both inside the party and outside it, struggled with the dilemma. They came to focus on Slovenia's need for economic well-being, which led them to see the need for political pluralism and the clarification of their constitutional right to national self-determination. When Belgrade refused even to discuss these issues, Slovene leaders made the inevitable moves toward

independence, which included the self-dissolution of the League of Communists of Slovenia, and the holding of multi-party elections and a referendum on independence—all in 1990.

Since independence, Slovene economic well-being has been in the hands of Slovenes. There have been bumps in the road—some of them related to the loss of markets in the former Yugoslavia—but, realizing that the success of a small country is dependent on exports and openness, Slovenia found new buyers abroad. Slovenia now largely trades with European Union countries and the states of the Central European Free Trade Association. Her economy has come to focus on service industries: 57% of Slovenes are employed in services. Only 5% are engaged in agriculture and 5% in the construction industry. Slovene society has changed in many ways since World War I. Slovenes have not only become richer, they have become educated, changed occupations, acquired new outlooks, and now live in private housing. In 1997, an astonishing 87% of Slovenes owned their own dwellings. In the words of the authors, by the end of the twentieth century "... Slovenes had become a modern, post-industrial, highly educated, industrious and older population" (133).

Preserving the Slovene language and Slovene culture were also a major concern in the eighties. In 1978, the linguist Jože Toporišič had declared Slovene an endangered language; in 1987, Dimitrij Rupel, the sociologist, showed that Slovene had become a "second class language" even in Slovenia.[1] Accordingly, Slovene leaders urged steps to safeguard the nation's language and its culture. What was the nation, after all, without its own means of expression?

Slovene had survived for centuries as a peasant tongue, but it had also become a written language by the mid-1500s. A chapter on "Culture" highlights language and cultural advances such as the publications of the sixteenth century Reformation leaders: Primož Trubar (catechism and primer, 1550), Jurij Dalmatin (Bible translation, 1584) and Adam Bohorič (grammar, 1584). And it covers nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary developments, including the assertion of "Slovene" over a common South Slav language in the 1830s, the emergence of a modern Slovene poetry (Prešeren 1847), and the

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[1] Dimitrij Rupel, "Odgovor na slovensko narodno vprašanje," *Nova revija 57*, 1987: 57–73.

subsequent writings of Slovenes whose works became a part of the literary expression of modern Europe. Preserving Slovene in pre-modern society required little effort. Peasants living in isolated regions spoke their mothers tongue, which was passed on orally from generation to generation. However, when monarchies began to expand, centralize, and modernize, ancient languages and cultures came under threat. Mobilizing armies, promoting commerce, and requiring elementary education all demanded a common language of communication. So it was that Slovene in the late eighteenth century came under increasing Germanizing pressures from Vienna, particularly in the towns and cities. After 1918, as a part of Yugoslavia, Slovene was increasingly pressed to yield to Serbo-Croatian.

With Slovenes living in an independent state since 1991, one would expect threats to language and culture to have disappeared. However, life in the post-modern world is complicated. The Slovenes' opting for world recognition was dependent upon their embracing internationalism, while finding some way to maintain tradition. Groundwork in this direction was laid in the late sixties and particularly in the eighties, according to the authors. In the late sixties Slovene intellectuals had embraced and contributed to the thinking of Paris's Post-Structuralist philosophers, while in the eighties they became receptive to the ideas of civil society. Publications such as *Tribuna*, *Katedra*, and *Mladina*, the new art (Neue Slowenische Kunst, or NSK), the music group Laibach, Radio Student, and also the Slovene Punk movement—all made their unique marks. They rejuvenated Slovene culture in the eighties, while gaining recognition for it abroad. Some, like NSK and Laibach became quite well-known across Europe. For Gow and Carmichael, these developments in the eighties would show Slovenes the way to a new cultural maturity, a way for Slovenes to assert their own identity in the global age.

The chapters dealing with "Politics" and with "Security" are well done and cover the kind of material one might expect—political parties and their programs, governmental organizations and how they operate, and international organizations to which Slovenia belongs or aspires to join. The conservatives versus liberals theme is used to help explain larger trends in Slovene political life, which has been intensely ideological for much of the twentieth century. The theme is linked to rural-urban and agriculture-business cleavages in society. The authors note, however, that from time to time Slovenes have put aside

differences in order to achieve common goals. One example is the "homogenization" of Slovene politics in the late eighties, which ended with the separation of Slovenia from the Yugoslav federation. The discussion of the Slovene resistance during World War II—also an example of traditional political lines being blurred—is clear and to the point. It should interest the reader looking for a re-interpretation of the early forties. The nitty-gritty of politics, not ideology but personal skirmishes for power, is also featured in these chapters. Gow and Carmichael elaborate especially on one occasion in the nineties when political in-fighting, in their opinion, was responsible for NATO's by-passing Slovenia in its first round of expansion in 1997.

Once Slovenia became independent, it needed to think about national defense and foreign policy. James Gow, a military expert, is likely responsible for the book's excellent coverage and assessment of security developments. Here one can read about the Ten Day War in which the Slovene territorial forces acquitted themselves well against the Yugoslav army; how, in the late nineties, Slovenia began to transform its defense forces to conform with NATO requirements; and how Slovenia has become an actor in international organizations, such as the United Nations, where it held a elected seat on the Security Council from May 1997 to May 1999. The book concludes on a positive note about Slovene developments in the nineties and prospects for the country's future in the new Europe.

James Gow, who has a Ph.D. from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, is currently a Reader in War Studies at King's College London and has published a number of works, including *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis*[2] and *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*.[3] Cathie Carmichael is a Lecturer in Contemporary European History at Middlesex University, London and has published *Slovenia*,[4] an extensive bibliography on Slovenes and Slovenia. Both authors have studied in Slovenia; Carmichael received a Diploma in Slovene Language from the University of Ljubljana. The book they have co-

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[2] James Gow, *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis* (New York: St Martin's, 1992).

[3] James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997).

[4] Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia* (Oxford: Clio, 1996).

authored here is an example of a highly successful collaboration. It has some minor drawbacks. There is no bibliography, although sources can be gleaned from footnotes, and there are quite a few typographical errors, generally of Slovene proper names. On the whole, however, the authors are to be congratulated for their exceptional effort.

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