John K. Cox. *Slovenia: Evolving Loyalties.* Postcommunist States and Nations. New York: Routledge, 2005. 240 pp., $113.00 (cloth). ISBN: 0415274311.

Slovenia: Evolving Loyalties is the eighteenthth book in the series "Postcommunist States and Nations," so far covering nine former Soviet republics and Siberia, five Central European states, and three former Yugoslav republics. This ambitious series, begun in 1999, is aimed not at academics but at a general audience. Each volume has a similar structure (history, politics, economics, and foreign affairs), intended to aid in comparative analysis.

This volume on Slovenia begins with early Slovene history, but focuses primarily on developments within pre- and post-WW II Yugoslavia, the period beginning in the late 1980s (i.e., Slovenia's transition to democracy, a market economy, and political independence), and independent Slovenia.

Author John K. Cox sets out his mission in the preface: "this book is meant as a cultural and political study of the growth of Slovene national consciousness and its gradual evolution into a force that produced Slovene statehood" (x). Chapter 1 traces this development from the origins of the Slavic peoples through to the end of World War I and the founding of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. Chapter 2 focuses on the economic and political development of Slovenia within pre- and post-WWII Yugoslavia. Here, Cox is in familiar territory: he has written numerous articles on Yugoslavia and a 2002 monograph on Serbia.[1]

Chapter 3, "Slovenia and the Breakup of Yugoslavia," begins with an overview of events from the 1980s to the Ten Day War, and then concentrates on reactions to Slovenia's (and Croatia's) declaration of independence in June 1991. Though many believe that the West contributed to the fall of Yugoslavia particularly through Germany's early recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states, Cox concludes that in fact the West moved too slowly to do much at all in the situation—good or bad. "[A] much stronger case can be made that the West hesitated a very long time before recognizing Slovenia and the other breakaway republics, and Western support for them was not decisive until 1995. The Yugoslav drama of destruction unfolded largely according to.

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[1] John K. Cox. *The History of Serbia* (Westport: Greenwood, 2002).

the nature of its own construction," that is, without much Western interference at all. "But, just as the West could neither have caused nor prevented the breakup itself, it still could have made it much less bloody by a unified and decisive intervention after the Slovene and Croatian declarations of independence in June of 1991" (83).

Next comes two in-depth presentations of the opinions of Peter Handke and Alain Finkielkraut. Handke, half-Slovene, is an avant-garde writer from Carinthia whose work shows a deep connection to Slovenia and his own Slovene heritage. He saw Slovene and Croatian independence as "frivolous and destructive acts" (88) and railed against the Western media for demonizing Serbs. Cox does not view him favorably: "Despite their beautiful style, his writings have been considered by many to be too flip and cavalier, or at least hopelessly naive, and thus inappropriate to the very grave subject matter of the wars of Yugoslav succession" (89). Cox sees Alain Finkielkraut, a French essayist and philosopher, as being more sympathetic a figure. "In the 1990s, Finkielkraut quickly emerged as an impassioned and erudite supporter of the right to national self-determination in the Balkans, a harsh critic of Serbian aggression under Milošević, and a relentless gadfly interrogating the European Union (EU) on its hypocrisy and lack of resolve" (91).

The chapter ends with a long hard look at Edvard Kardelj and his legacy, and general discussions of France Bučar and Edvard Kocbek. The section on Kardelj is particularly interesting, because Kardelj is such an important figure in Yugoslav history, but details in general works such as this one are normally quite rare.

Cox uses this third chapter to extend his thesis: "...Slovene identity, based at first on very fundamental factors like common origin and language, has been a historical force for centuries, but nationalism itself is a modern phenomenon that takes a long time to spread throughout the whole society and then produce a movement for an independent state" (69). Cox points out that the national movement in this period was marked by the incremental disintegration of Yugoslavia, and general political and social changes in which the desire for sovereignty was embedded. He sees the ultimate demands for independence as being the culmination of the pluralization of Slovene society in the 1980s, the "Slovene Spring" and the reform of the Communist Party in the late 1980s, and the defense of the Slovene

language intensifying throughout the decade, particularly during the Trial of the Four and Serbian repression in Kosovo.

Chapters 4 and 5—"Independent Slovenia: Politics, Culture and Society" and "Independent Slovenia: Economics and Foreign Policy," respectively—delve into the creation, development, and current state of the independent Republic of Slovenia. Chapter 4 includes overviews of government and administration, society, and culture, while chapter 5 focuses on economics (particularly the transition to a market economy) and foreign policy (especially the path to NATO and EU membership, as well as relations with Slovenia's neighbors and Slovene minorities in neighboring states).

The conclusion in chapter 6 is a tour de force. It includes an in depth analysis of nationalism within Slovene society and why it has been more mild and has had less dire consequences than the nationalisms of certain other republics within Yugoslavia. Cox concludes that Slovenia's lack of a tradition of statehood is due to the fact that it has no "golden age" around which to rally nationalist sentiment, it has seen no (modernday) struggle among competing religions because it has traditionally been overwhelmingly Catholic, its political leaders prior to 1941 were clericalists that actually saw nationalism as distasteful, and, finally, the Slovenes were satisfied by whatever gains they could secure from Vienna and did not push a nationalist agenda with any significant force.

Cox also finally reveals the significance of his subtitle "Evolving Loyalties." He states that, "one may assert that Slovenia's basic cultural and social loyalties, based on the country's Central European identity, did not change over the twentieth century. But loyalties in the sense of political sovereignty certainly did change from 1900 to 2000: from being a collection of Habsburg crown lands, the Slovene-inhabited parts of Europe evolved—through two state formations bearing the name Yugoslavia and through the crucibles of two bloody and exhausting world wars—into a small, independent country." He continues, "[t]he plural form 'loyalties' is also intended as a reminder that individuals are more than just members of a nation; since Slovenes'—like everyone's, more or less—individual identities are multifaceted and multilayered, involving religious, linguistic, sexual, intellectual, and other considerations, it follows that their actions in society and the world at large do not follow a strictly nationalist hierarchy" (186).

Finally, Cox discusses the concept of Central European identity based on an essay by Czesław Miłosz.[2] In it, Miłosz identifies several characteristics common to Central Europe and its peoples: religious and ethnic diversity, industrialization and urbanization that came later than in Western Europe and was based on Marxism-Leninism, committed and respected intelligentsias, a deep sense of history that impacts the nations' futures, similarities in culture and cultural works, a sense of a common Central European future, and a long denial of national sovereignty by foreign empires. Cox also considers the writings of the Hungarian George Konrád[3] and Czech/French Milan Kundera[4] on the subject.

Moving on to how the Central European idea applies to the Slovenes, Cox delves into the writings of Edvard Kocbek[5] and Drago Jančar.[6] Kocbek's essay "Srednja Evropa" places Slovenia within the context of a Central Europe that he sees as an "...interconnected region that is a microcosm or laboratory of values, change, and conflicts to which Western Europeans should pay careful attention" (193). Jančar, on the other hand, is less enthused by the Central European idea. While he agrees that Central Europe is interconnected, he sees another sort of interconnection in the old conflicts and oppression that continue to affect the present. Cox sees in Jančar's writings "a justification for exiting Yugoslavia and a Euroskeptic's caution about how far to plunge into new continental or regional political alliances" (194).

While the work is a strong general overview of Slovene history and current events, and is generally well researched and well informed,

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2 Czesław Miłosz, "Central European Attitudes," ed. Ladislav Matejka. *Cross Currents 5: A Yearbook of Central European Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1986) 101–09.

3 George Konrád, "Central Europe Redivivus," *The Melancholy of Rebirth: Essays from Post-Communist Central Europe, 1989–1994* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1995) 156–63.

4 Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," *The New York Review of Books*, April 26, 1984, 33–38.

5 Edvard Kocbek, "Srednja Evropa," *Dejanje: Revija za kulturo, gospodarstvo in politiko* 3 (1940): 89–92.

6 Drago Jančar, "Mitteleuropa zwischen Meteorologie und Utopie," *Erinnerungen an Jugoslawien: Essays*, trans. Peter Wieser (Klagénfurt/Celovec: Hermagoras/Mohorjeva, 1991) 57; and "Die Welt als Gegensatz begreifen. Mitteleuropa—eine Idee von gestern?" *Brioni und andere Essays*, transl. Klaus Detlef Olof et al., (Vienna: Folio, 2002) 24–33.

there are some serious flaws. There are numerous typographical errors, beginning with page 6, where the Goriško region is referred to by the name of its central city, Gorica. The listing of Slovenia's traditional regions is inconsistent: Prekmurje and Bela Krajina are standard, but then comes "Koroško (or Koroška)" followed by Primorska, Notranjska, Dolenjska and Gorenjska, and ... Štajersko (112–13). The *-a* forms are generally preferred, although some insist the hypothetical *-o* forms are more correct; regardless, usage should consistent. Furthermore, Murska Sobota is (correctly) presented here as the center of Prekmurje, but later, on page 167, Lendava is accorded that honor.

On page 13, there is the confusing statement: "...the author Franc Miklošič (1813–189); also frequently spelled Miklošič)" Presumably the intention was for the second form of the name to read "Miklosich," following German practice. Similarly, a passage on page 126 reads: "Today there are only a few thousand Slovenes located in a few villages in Hungary, but of course the minorities in Austria and Hungary are much larger." Presumably "Austria and Italy" was intended. Another typo-by-omission comes on page 181, where we read "In the nineteenth century, Trieste had the largest Slovene population in the world..." but of course this should read "...largest *urban* Slovene population." More troubling is the usage of the Serbo-Croatian *opčine* on pages 113 and 142, rather than the Slovene *občine*. Finally, on page 164: "In June 1991, the anniversary of the first decade of Croatian and Slovene independence was celebrated..." Clearly the date should have been 2001.

Somewhat more distracting are the instances where insufficient information is offered. Page 2 mentions the *Brižinski Spomeniki* but omits the date of their writing, and page 10 mentions the "Alphabet Wars" but gives no details other than the term itself. Cox's presentation of the Slovene media on page 134 includes only two of the three failed attempts at founding a daily newspaper in the 1990s: *Slovenec* and *Republika* are there, but *Jutranjik* is nowhere to be found. Cox's description of the Roma in Slovenia omits not only the 2002 Constitutional Court ruling mandating Roma representation to twenty municipal councils, but also the striking differences between Slovenia's two main Roma communities in Dolenjska and Prekmurje.

Cox makes a good point on page 135 when he says that "[s]o far, autobiographies by several leading Slovene political and cultural figures

from the 1980s and 1990s ... have been published, and several exist in German translation, though not in English." Certainly more should be translated, but it is not true to say that none have been: an English translation of Janez Janša's memoirs appeared in 1994.[7]

The fact that Slovenia sat on the United Nations Security Council is presented on page 152, but not the important detail that the country held the presidency of that body as well. The discussion of the run-up to the referendum on EU and NATO membership on pages 152–54 does not mention the loud and widespread public opposition to NATO membership. The discussion of the nuclear plant at Krško on page 160 fails to mention the significant detail that Croatia is a co-owner of the plant. Four pages later, Cox reiterates Austria's lumping together of Krško and the Czech nuclear plant Temelín, but neglects to point out that the Krško plant is qualitatively superior: it was built by the US firm Westinghouse and meets all international standards.

The biggest problem, however, are the blatant factual errors. First, Cox presents the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as a federation (31–32). However, this state was never a federation nor was it ever meant to be. As Carole Rogel (p.c.) points out:

> It [the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Serbs] was run in a highly centralized way by the Serbs. It was their kingdom (recognized already in the 19th century by the European powers), and they regarded the new lands added after WWI as a well-deserved expansion of their existing state. Everything about that state was "Serbian," the dynasty, the army, the (St. Vitus Day) Constitution of 1921 (an adaptation of the pre-war Serbian one). Neither the Croats nor the Slovenes, who wanted federalism, were happy with this....

Less serious errors include the statement that the controversy over building a mosque in Slovenia "developed in 2003" (128), although this has been going on for decades; calling Slovene pre-Lenten carnival traditions *Kurentovanje* (129) when the more exact term is *pustovanje* (*Kurentovanje* is specifically connected to the traditions of the Ptuj area); the statement that "[a] new film festival is now held every spring in

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[7] Janez Janša. *The Making of the Slovenian State, 1988–1992: The Collapse of Yugoslavia* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1994).

Portorož" (135)—the festival began in Celje more than 30 years ago, moved to Portorož for seven years, returned to Celje for one year, and ended up last year in Ljubljana; and the statement "|t|he national government has now organized the townships into twelve 'statistical regions,' but it is unclear what powers these will have" (142)—the statistical regions have existed for some time and are used exclusively for statistical purposes (hence the term); they have neither administrative structure nor authority.

Cox also says that "|d|ebate also continues about whether to found a third university in Slovenia." However, the University of Primorska opened in January of 2003. Finally, he indicates that Slovenia, together with Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, joined NATO in 1999 (145) but then goes on to describe all of the particulars of Slovenia's joining NATO in 2003 on pages 155–60.

These last two points are indicative of a larger problem with the entire text: some sections are updated through the end of 2004, but others end in 2002 or 2003. The most striking example is the statement that ends "...and the government in Vienna can drag its feet on endorsing Slovenia's accession to the EU if Ljubljana stubbornly keeps the plant open..." (163–64). Pages 177–80, however, detail Slovenia's joining the EU. The statement on page 171 that Slovenia has free-trade agreements with each of the other Yugoslav successor states similarly omits the fact that these agreements were declared null and void upon Slovenia's accession to the EU.

This volume would have benefited tremendously from better editing, and more time should have been taken to ensure that all of the chapters were updated evenly. Even if it can be confusing at times, *Slovenia: Evolving Loyalties* is nevertheless a good introduction to the uninitiated. However, its shortcomings may frustrate more informed readers.

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