

**Roy N. Pedersen. *One Europe — 100 Nations*.** Clevedon, England: Channel View Books, 1992. Hardcover. 144 pages. ISBN 1-85359-123-8.

In this book, writes the well-known British broadcaster Magnus Magnusson, Roy Pedersen “explores the process and outlines the evolution of a new, unified, democratic commonwealth of 100 free and equal nations” (6). The blurb inside the cover promises that the “lively text is supported by a wealth of maps, tables, historical data, information on all Europe’s indigenous languages and minorities, together with full colour illustrations of the flags and arms of the new Europe’s ‘hundred’ nations.” And all of this is more or less true (although “all .. indigenous ... minorities” is *very* far from the truth). Why, then, will bookstore browsers who come across this book be of two kinds? Why will some rush to buy it, and others thrust it quickly back on the shelf? Alas, whether they will be delighted or annoyed with the book will depend on the page at which they happen to open it; for it is by turn delightful and aggravating. With some reservations, I recommend it, for its delights outnumber its numerous aggravations. To explain my ambivalence, I will describe Pedersen’s book in general, and consider how he treats Slovenia; I will only occasionally discuss his treatment of each of the other 99 “nations” included here; and, apart from some words in passing, will not discuss any of those “nations” that he has excluded.

How, to begin with, does Pedersen arrive at the attractively round number of one hundred? The reader who turns to the map on page 18 (there is neither detailed table of contents nor index, and to determine which “nations” make the list one must either read through the whole book or use this map) will soon conclude that the answer to this question will prove elusive; for Pedersen bestows separate nationhood on some areas and/or ethnic groups which have small claim to this honour, and at the same time omits a large number of what many will believe to be more deserving candidates.

The former — the more questionable choices — include a number of small islands, at least some of which, in my opinion, could only belong to “nations” when allied with their neighbors:

thus, both Jersey and Guernsey (but not the other two Channel Islands; why not?); Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands are likewise accorded independent "nation" status; and not only the Faroes (in the North Sea), but also the Åland Islands (in the Baltic). Of the other European islands smaller than Iceland, Corsica and Sardinia, only Malta is elevated to independence; and Cyprus's uncertain status receives special discussion at the end of the book (134). Majorca, Sicily, Crete, Helgoland, Rügen, Gotland, Rhodos, Corfu, Cres, and so on are all overlooked.

Also accorded "nation" status are the contemporary heirs of no fewer than twenty erstwhile German principalities. One must sympathize with Pedersen; having decided to count, for example, Bavaria and Pomerania as "nations," he must have found it difficult to draw the line; and he includes not only several city-states (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg) but some very minor localities: thus, especially oddly, Schaumberg-Lippe, a place (a "nation"?) which very few non-Germans can ever have heard of. The criterion in this case appears to be that Schaumberg-Lippe was admitted as a sovereign principality to the Confederation of the Rhine in 1807 (75) — Pedersen should surely have preferred the criterion (the main German dialect areas, corresponding to tenth-century duchies) which bring him to an "alternative" list of six German "nations" at the end of the book (135-36).

At the same time, potential autonomists and/or separatists in vast tracts of Italy, for example, and in the whole of Poland, and in all of Russia-in-Europe, are denied any claim to nationhood; Sicilians, Kashubians and Chechens,<sup>1</sup> to name just three, have surely cause for complaint. The Basques are allotted their territory (Euskadi) in Spain and France, and the Friulians theirs in Italy, but the Sami (although mentioned as a minority in Sweden, and given especial mention at the back of the book, under "Nomadic Peoples" (134)) are left nationless. Worse still, among the twenty "nations" of Germany no place is found — not even a word of minority status! — for the Sorbs. In general, one can laud Pedersen for the way he has carved up Far-Western Europe (thus, Catalonia, Lorraine, and Friesland gain "nationhood," and this is commendable); but, with the exception of overly-dismembered

---

<sup>1</sup> These lines were written two months before the Russian invasion of Chechnya.

Germany, most Central and Eastern European countries are left virtually untouched, even though the recent “changes” do receive mention. Many other contenders for nationhood spring to mind: in Southeastern Europe alone, for example, the Rusyns, the Arumanians, the Roma (but see below), and the Lipovani in the Danube Delta. On the other hand, two “nations” which are included will raise more than a few eyebrows: in ex-Yugoslavia, Dalmatia; and in the ex-U.S.S.R., East Prussia.

The aggravation engendered in the reader by these decisions is exacerbated by Pedersen’s allotting *one page to each nation*. Guernsey receives as much space as Slovenia; Andorra, as much as Ukraine; Liechtenstein and Russia have a single page each. On this single page the history of that “nation” is summarized in the confines of about 25 square inches. As can be expected, many uninteresting details of the history of, for example, the Åland Islands and of Schaumberg-Lippe are included, while much that is essential in the history of (for instance) France, England, Italy, and Poland is left out. This spatial parsimony allows each “nation” to have its flag and its coat-of-arms displayed attractively and in full color: visual attractiveness wins out over the need for information.

To make matters worse, the 100 “nations” are further grouped into ten larger units — another neatly round number! — on partly historical and partly geographical grounds: “Old Gaul: The French Lands ” and “The Fatherland: Germany” [sic] on the one hand, “Europes’ Backbone: Alpine Lands” on the other. These groupings make it easier to find one’s way round the book, but entail many arbitrary decisions.

This is not to deny that Pedersen provides criteria for “nationhood.” Indeed, his criteria are explicitly listed (16, 19): “existing statehood or history of former statehood; a distinct culture or religion; a distinct language or dialect; the existence of a popular movement for autonomy or independence; geographical distinctiveness.” But the resulting mishmash of nations, nationlets, ex-nations, proto-nations and pseudo-nations shows that the criteria were not applied with any kind of consistency. All Pedersen provides, by way of algorithm, is the bland “Each [‘nation’] has some, if not all, of [these] characteristics” (16). Why, then, not the Sorbs, and the other contenders mentioned above?

Let us now pause for a moment to see how, in this heterogeneous company, Slovenia fares, on its one page (113). Very well, in fact. The potted history gives virtually all the important data, from the first sentence ("This southern Slav nation has occupied its region ... since about the 6th century") through a total of about 250 words to the last ("In 1990, in the first multiparty elections since 1938, the Slovenes elected a non-Communist government which, despite armed Serbian opposition, achieved independence in 1991"). Some of the formulations are superficial, but in 250 words one cannot ask for depth. It is easy to object to some of the decisions involved in arriving at such a short summary (why, for instance, exclude Trubar and Prešeren, but include Pohlin?) but, all in all, the average reader who is trying to find out about the composition of the Europe of the future will, as far as Slovenia is concerned, learn what is important and will not be misled. — But, alas, the flag is the earlier tricolor (white, blue, red) *without* the inscribed coat-of-arms with Triglav and the three stars; the coat-of-arms chosen is that of Carniola, which, alas, is said to "coincide approximately with Slovenia" (!); and, alas *and* alack, Slovenia is paginated between Serbia and Croatia, in the same group as Turkey, Greece, Albania, Dalmatia [sic!], Bosnia-Hercegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania and even Hungary, — the group named "The Byzantine Inheritance: South-East Europe." True, the hated word *Balkans* does not appear, but this lumping-together is surely the next-worst thing. So near did Pedersen come to not offending Slovenia, only with one ill-fated decision to have managed to do so.

From my remarks so far, *One Europe — 100 Nations* must appear to aggravate much more than it pleases. Why, then, review this unacademic, inconsistent, and in so many respects ill-informed book? Because of its manifest delights, and because it raises such interesting questions, some of which must concern everyone interested in the future of Slovenia. Also, I would add, because Pedersen is not afraid to speak his mind: see his remarks on Turkey's "appalling record" with respect to the Kurdish minority (109).

The delights include the following — and it is here that the interesting questions arise. First and foremost, I must praise the whole philosophy and purpose of this book, expressed in Pedersen's credo, which he sets out in his Preface (7): "Europe's thir-

ty-five old nation-states have had their day. Yesterday's suppressed and undervalued peoples are stirring to create a new united European commonwealth... [T]oday's stateless nations, on both sides of the former 'Iron Curtain', are set fair to find cultural expression, linguistic freedom and political self-determination as part of the development of democracy itself. In other words to find themselves as equals alongside their former oppressors."<sup>3</sup> Few Slovenes and few Slovenophiles will not feel that the Slovenes have been "suppressed and undervalued;" few will not sympathize with the book's purpose. Muddled and uncertain though Pedersen's approach may be, those who agree with the value of heterogeneity in today's ever more uniform world will overlook most of the aggravations.

Pedersen's thoughts are developed further in his "Introduction" (10-21). Against the background of the gradual fall of the European empires in the last 100 years (culminating with that of "the last of the empires, the Soviet Union;" if only it were!) and the internationalization of economies, of technology, of the media, and of such problems as pollution (he could have mentioned others: crime, for example, or refugees), he chronicles the re-emergence of minorities and "small" nations, and predicts the same for many more. He, necessarily and successfully, tackles the apparent paradox of a united Europe with so many diverse minority components; this he sees as a strength, not a liability.<sup>2</sup> His views thus tend to coincide with — for example — those of Colin Williams, who recently argued for "greater flexibility and response within which the global/local forces could be mediated, for as is all too painfully obvious, the nation-state is far too small for tackling some problems and far too big to command the lo-

---

<sup>3</sup> In other words: not only did the 1990s not herald "the end of history" (Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York NY: Avon Books, 1992)), they may be signal the beginning of an especially interesting chapter.

<sup>2</sup> These ideas are not new: see Leopold Kohr, *The Breakdown of Nations* (London: Routledge, 1957), and especially Kohr's map of the 'genuine component parts of Europe' (233), and Yann Fouéré, *Towards a Federal Europe. Nations or States?* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1968). Fouéré's book was first published as *L'Europe aux cents drapeaux* (Paris: Presses d'Europe, 1968): note the 'round' number. Pedersen acknowledges these sources in his bibliography (144). — For a complementary perspective, see Marjetica Potrč's comments on identity in her article in the present volume.

yalty of all its constituent citizens on a daily basis;”<sup>4</sup> of Dimitrij Rupel, “The new European community/ federation ... would consist of extremely varied ingredients. ... [T]he future European community will need to find appropriate instruments for solving the problems which were the concern of Yugoslavia and the cause of its disintegration,”<sup>5</sup> and of Hans Dietrich Genscher, who in a speech in 1991 stated: “We advocate the concept of a federal Europe of subsidiarity, a Europe of regions and a variety of national and regional traditions. We would like to explore the creativity provided by this European variety, since it has been the prerequisite of European vitality.”<sup>6</sup> Pedersen is more down-to-earth: he quotes “a Basque patriot” and G.K. Chesterton to good effect: the former, “The more Basque I become, the more European I become” (10); the latter, “All good men are international. Nearly all bad men are cosmopolitan. If we are to be international we must be national.” (7) He points out that there are 40 million Europeans whose mother tongue is a “lesser-used language.” He cites the diversity of methods that the struggles for autonomy are witnessing, but emphasizes the mutual support and encouragement that the “small peoples” are giving each other — something, I would add, that is paralleled, on another level, by the co-operation between the Slovenes in Austrian Carinthia and the South Tyrolese.

This sub-section alone, headed “Unity and Diversity,” is valuable reading. It is followed by several more, most with assertions and arguments of value, even though some involve assumptions that have to be questioned. — (Under “The European Spirit,” for example, how useful is it, in the light of some of Pedersen’s more unusual bestowals of “nation” status described above, to say that “[e]ach nation and ethnic group has its own identity, culture and collective beliefs, its own unique spirit” (11)?

---

<sup>4</sup> 124 in “Development, dependency and the democratic deficit,” *Fifth International Conference on Minority Languages, July 1993, Cardiff, Wales* [= *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*] 15 (1994)101-127.

<sup>5</sup> Dimitrij Rupel, “Slovenia in post-modern Europe,” *Voices from the Slovene Nation, 1990-1992* [= *Nationalities Papers* 21/1 (1993) 51-59], 52; see also Rupel, “Slovenia’s shift from the Balkans to Central Europe,” 183-200 in Jill Benderly & Evan Kraft, *Independent Slovenia. Origins, Movements, Prospects*. New York NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Rupel in “Slovenia in post-modern Europe,” 56.

And few, surely, will accept his next remark: — "there is undoubtedly a pan European spirit of great strength and antiquity which through history has bound this diversity together" [as, one is tempted to interject, during the Hundred Years' War?]. The next section, "Many Tongues," while surveying the linguistic mosaic of Europe quite creditably, includes such terribly naive statements as "Well over 100 different languages and dialects are currently in use throughout Europe." — On the other hand, his comments on multilingualism and on the need for linguistic and cultural protection of minorities are useful. There is not space here to discuss his historical survey of Europe, from the arrival of the Celts through 1992 (12-15), nor his paragraphs on heraldic emblems and on flags (19-20); in brief, he attempts what is almost impossible in the former, and is very lucid in the latter. Mention must also be made of the "cryptic formulae" (his term) which he puts at the foot of each page, beneath the flag: several numerals and letters which summarise the political status, future prospects and qualifications of each "nation."

Also of value are his concluding sections. Not only, in "Variations on a Theme" (133-36) does Pedersen correct some of the errors in the main body of the text (the Sami and the Roma receive due coverage, as do several — but far, far from all — other European minority groups), but in "Towards a New Europe" (137-139) he places his main philosophy — diversity as a guarantee of unity — in the contemporary context and the immediate future: he sees a "three-tier" Europe, with democratic institutions operating at (1) the pan-European, (2) the "mega-regional" and (3) the "national" level, and argues that only in this kind of framework can equitable participation by the smaller nations be secured. There are five useful (if somewhat too abbreviated) appendices: a linguistic map, a religious map, a table of European monarchs (past and present), a month-by-month chronology of 1989 ("The Year of Revolution)" and a list of which European states gained independence when.

To conclude: this is the kind of book which cries out for a review full of "if-onlies." If only Pedersen had not been wedded to the round numbers of 10 and 100; if only he had applied some more consistent criteria in judging "nationhood;" if only he had looked a little further (at the very least, to include the Sorbs!) and, in general, had had more advice from East Europeanists; if only

(as far as Slovenia is concerned) he had asked a Slovene expert for advice... Indeed, in his "Acknowledgements" (8), there is only one exception to the rule that only Western European bureaus and experts were consulted, and that exception is the Baltic Council. — Nevertheless, the generous and forgiving reader will find something of value in this book; and, if only Pedersen takes more care, all readers will find a very great deal of value in the next edition.

Tom Priestly, University of Alberta

----- ◇ -----

**Kocjančič, Cvetka.** *Upornik s čopičem. Življenjska pot slovenskega izseljenca ib slikarja Andreja Štritofa.* Ljubljana: Slovenska izseljenska matica, 1990. 125 pp., 12 pp. photographs and reproductions.

**Kocjancic, Cvetka.** *Unhappy Rebel. The Life and Art of Andy Stritof.* [= *Ethnocultural Voices*]. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario / University of Toronto Press, 1993. xiv + 154 pp., 10 pp. photographs and reproductions. [ISBN 0-919045-48-0].

The hero of this short book is Andrej Štritof, who was born in a small village near Cerknica in Slovenia and emigrated to Canada in 1925. Only twenty years old and a handsome man, Štritof wanted to make money and return home to redeem his father's mortgaged estate. As that of many other Slovenes, Štritof's life in exile was a hard, long struggle with a foreign country, and also with himself as a self-educated artist, who was especially sensitive to the injustices in a capitalist society. He did not have a family; his art was his entire life, and his paintings, which he did not sell, were his children. After sixty years of struggling, as an old man, whose art work — though recognized in Canada — was not appreciated and understood the way he wished, he returned to Slovenia to spend his last years there. He left all his art works and his books to Canadian Slovenes, to remind future generations of their roots and history. This is an abridged story of a Slovene immigrant, a painter who developed from a young peasant man to a mature intellectual artist who, at the age of seventy, was