

Simply put, Skrbis's most fundamental finding is that Australian-Slovenes are *less* influenced by "ethno-national discourses" (183) than are Australian-Croatians. This means, in turn, that these diaspora Slovenes are less attached to negative stereotypes of their former fellow Yugoslavs, that they more modestly assess the historical importance of their newly independent homeland, and that they do not transmit their nationalist attitudes as effectively to subsequent generations. In other words, the Slovenes seem less nationalistic than the Croats.

Put into a broader perspective, one nevertheless sees from both of these groups that long-distance nationalism is real. Anyone who traveled through Austria, Italy, or ex-Yugoslavia during the early 1990s likely met young men and women from South America, North America, or Australia who were going to Slovenia, Croatia, or Serbia (sometimes for the first time) to help or to fight for their "people"; on the basis of such experiences, it is easy to intuit that Skrbis and Anderson are on to something important here. The findings of the author's interviews will themselves not surprise many people. The associations are familiar, from Croats' "justifying" their Ustaša state to the Slovenes' taking refuge in their diligence and frugality (and sometimes noting about the Croats that "[t]he noise that they produce is in their blood" (127). But the most exciting conclusion would seem to be not so much "what" the diaspora groups believe as it is "that" they believe these things at all from a prosperous, democratic, anglophone society thousands of miles away. Skrbis thereby offers substantial support to the thesis on the persistence of nationalism in the era of globalization.

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Brian J. Požun. *Shedding the Balkan Skin: Slovenia's Quiet Emergence in the New Europe.* Central Europe Review, 2000. 100 pp, \$8.00 (e-book). Available at: www.ce-review.org

There are two books before me, one made of paper,²² the other electronic, merely visiting in my computer. The paper one, no bestseller, cost me two weeks' waiting—it is called express delivery—and 80 bucks.

²² James Gow and Cathie Carmichael. *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State and the New Europe.* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000).

The e-book came in fifteen minutes for 8. Is the paper one ten times better than the e-? To a beginner I would recommend the \$8 version of Slovenia. You can buy a lot of *teran* for \$72 and thus learn something else about Slovenia.

Požun, of Slovenian-Ruthenian origin, reports on Slovenia (and the Balkans!) for *Central Europe Review* at www.ce-review.org Have a look for instance at his excellent article on Trieste in the February 12, 2001 issue. What a fan of Slovenia Požun is! Enthusiastically, he buys all the Slovenian propaganda—pardon me, mythology. I have no idea why Carmichael and Gow say that Felicjan's thesis about the influence of the Carantanian ducal enthronement ceremony on Jefferson is “infamous” (12)—I have no idea because they never tell the frustrated reader why they thus brand it. I do however know that Požun's version, twice sung, is a little dramatic, for it sounds as if Jefferson had been thinking of the ur-Slovenians at the very moment he was writing the Declaration of Independence. Požun is an enthusiast of other ultra-Slovenian theories, for example the one about the Slovenians really being the Veneti. I have nothing against all this. After all, an intro into Slovenianness must give both the deeply-rooted tenets of belief and the latest craze. Why shouldn't Slovenians be colorful!

At any rate, the reader of e-books is a priori a skeptic. You read the book book and you say to yourself, that must be the way it is, because it says so right here, black on white. But you read an e-book, which has just flown in and, while you are reading it, has hardly landed and is dancing there somewhere in the ether, and you say to yourself, she sure is seductive—watch it, boy. And, anyway, because of his enthusiasm much is forgiven Požun. For the Pope, Slomšek is but blessed; for Požun, he is a full-fledged saint.

And how beautifully stubbornly he calls Trieste *Trst*. How nice that in an English-language publication *Trst* should be *Trst*! And a spade a spade. Požun is one of us. The history of the Slovenians under Italy, 1918–1940, he gives in three to-the-point paragraphs, no mincing words. Why shouldn't strangers get a version in which the Slovenians are the good guys and the Italians the villains? And it only seems that he devotes only three paragraphs to the subject—for the e-book, because it is an e-book, is larger than it first seems. Let me explain how this little engine works.

Let us take as illustration footnote seventeen regarding Trieste. In the book book, this would lead you to a bibliography where would squat the name of the article, which article you could then read if you took the time to plow to a library through a snowstorm in a snowy Montreal, say, a library that with some luck would have your article. A lovely excursion of which I would not deprive you. In the e-book the footnote also leads you to a bibliography—although we will have to find a different term: an *edressbook*?—and there you find not only the title of the article but its address, where it lives. And this address is live, is clickable, and hocus pocus, suddenly you are inside the article by Bernard Meares about Slovenians in Italy. And if you thought Požun was our man, just you read Meares—is this the Meares, *en passant*, who is the translator of Mandelstaem? Meares is so exercised about the fate of the Slovenians under the Italians that he reminds us of AJP Taylor in the 1945 pamphlet. But remember, it is Požun we have to thank for Meares. He, the guide, brought us here. Needless to say, if you print the e-book the clickable magic is lost.

And so on. At the near-Slovenian Jefferson, the reader is not only directed to but transported into a letter by Andrej Lenarčič to the American embassy in Slovenia: the letter quotes our Senator Frank Lausche, in the Senate, quoting our Fr. Felicjan regarding our Jefferson. And when Požun speaks of Laibach (the rock group, not the city) he invites us to visit Mute Liberation technologies. The stuff you learn there about the Slovenian rock scene! True, once in a while Požun does send us into a blind alley. He wants us to go to the Christian Democrats for their version of the political situation in 1996 and you knock on the door and the computer tells you “the page cannot be found.” You notice then that he has written “sdk” instead of “skd” and you fix that—but, no, that does not help. Because that party no longer exists; sic transit gloria mundi—that version of history is no longer available. You tailor the address a little then and find the new party. But such contretemps are not disappointments, they are part of the adventure. True, sometimes he could serve us better. When there is talk of Plečnik, when the reader most needs illustration, when there are sites and sites available, Požun offers us none, nothing clickable at any rate. And by now the reader is spoiled and lazy. Hey, Brian, why did I on my own have to find the article by Blaž Zgaga in the *Observer*? Apparently the genre is so new that writers in it have not quite mastered it.

There are more serious problems with the book. Let us say you know nothing about Slovenia, and you read, in the fast review of history in the final chapter, that “especially after the flight and exile of the German population immediately after World War II, the demography [of Slovenia] shifted to a predominantly Slovene ethnic composition.” Požun is here way off base, but how will the beginner know? It seems that Požun knows Slovenia and the Slovenes exceptionally well, but that he is still a student and can goof. I say that everything of the kind is forgivable, especially in an electronic book that can be changed in a trice.

Reading this e-book I have the same joy I had as a child reading pop-up books, from whose pages forests and castles and fauna sprang—which then played possum till you opened them again. I have enjoyed this one so much that even problems with the book can illustrate its charm. Look, Požun ends the book with a discussion of Slovenian xenophobia. I have nothing against the topic. Do Slovenians have xenophobic tendencies? Is the Pope a Catholic? Are bluebirds blue? The problem is that the first proof of Slovenian xenophobia Požun cites is the opposition to Bajuk as prime minister. Which, for all I know, may be right. True enough, I, the son of a *Domobranec*, thought it passing strange that Slovenia imported itself a prime minister. Imagine a Canadian with the same relation to Canada as Bajuk had to Slovenia running for dog-catcher here! Still! Nor is the problem that Požun cites Jančar as a defender of Bajuk. I cannot think of a better representative of that ilk. The problem is that Požun uses Jančar as the only source of facts about the opposition to Bajuk. Would it not have been more fair to quote these people directly rather than allow a partisan Jančar to present his version of them?

But it is precisely on the occasion of this problem that we see again the charm of such a book. Not that Požun himself helps much at this moment, for, acting as if this were but a book book, he merely lists in the bibliography the decidedly unclickable name of Jančar’s article in *Delo*. But, hey, is the reader sitting in front of a computer reading this, or is he not? And the reader has been spoiled and instructed by Požun and demands more. This reader types into *Google*, luckily by mistake in English, the words “May 13 Delo xenophobes” and—abracadabra—finds himself in the middle of an English translation of Jančar’s article. The translation is excellent—that is to say, it must be excellent for it is so hopelessly turgid and dark. But never mind the translation. The source is what matters! The source of the article translated is the address

www.prah.net. You have a look yourself at this merry band of Venetologues and Similarologues. Remembering as ever that it was thanks to Požun you found yourself there.

In short I am enthusiastic and charmed. This is not a book; it is a library. This is not a path; it is a labyrinth. I read it happy as a child. How incandescent, interesting and indescribably screwed up Slovenians are in this version. And if there are difficulties—in the spelling and grammar, for instance, says the English prof—what then? In the paper kind of book, things cannot be fixed easily, but in an e-book, everything can be fixed just like that. If he needs help, he can always turn to me, though I give out only my hood address: *lozhar@hotmail.com*. If you feel like fixing his facts, write him—though you should really buy the book yourself first for those few bucks.

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