

Welcome, Slovenia!

by M.N.R.

At the time of writing, it looks very much as if those wonderful, truly heroic Slovenes are going to Make It. Against all odds, against the determined opposition of the United States, the Soviet Union, and all the other European states—all devoted to the common State interest of preserving whatever State *status quo* happens to exist—it looks as if Slovenia, after a thousand years of subjection, is going to be allowed to become free and independent. If so, this will be the first new nation in Europe since the aftermath of World War I, and unlike *those* besotted countries, Slovenia is indeed a genuine nation in every sense, with a common religion, language, and culture. Unlike post-Versailles nations, Slovenia does not contain one ethnic group lording it over another. Slovenia is almost totally ethnically Slovene, a marvelous productive group of two million in the extreme northwest of Yugoslavia, on the border between Austria and Italy.

The Slovenes, unlike the Croats, have never been independent. For centuries before World War I, the Slovenes existed under the comparatively mild rule of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg empire. When the Austro-Hungarian empire collapsed, why did the Slovenes join newly-created Yugoslavia? Unlike the Croat leadership, which was tragically sucked in by the honeyed and mendacious Serb rhetoric about a new "south Slav" people to be forged out of many different and clashing na-

tionalities, the Slovenes joined up for more practical and rational reason. As staunch defenders of Austria-Hungary against Italian aggression during World War I, the Slovenes were afraid, and for good reason, that Italy, puffed up by being on the winning side during the war, would take the occasion to punish the Slovenes and annex Slovenia to the wannabee Italian Empire. Hence, the Slovenes joined Yugoslavia in self-defense, and were rewarded by managing to keep their territory against the Italian threat.

The Slovenes, however, had even less in common with the Serbs than the latter's ancient enemies, their fellow westerners, the Croats. In Tito's Yugoslavia, Slovenia proved to be more Western, thriftier, more bourgeois and more progressive than even the Croats, let alone the rest of benighted Yugoslavia. Like the Croats, Catholic in a sea of Eastern Orthodoxy, the Slovenes have a separate language, and have the highest income in Yugoslavia, many times that of the rest of the country. The land is industrialized, the streets neat and clean in the Austrian and Swiss manner. Even more than the Croat "Communist" economists, the Slovene economists led the country as early as the 1960s, in calling for free markets and privatization. I well remember meeting, long ago, the cheery Slovene economist Alexander Bajt, I suppose nomi-

nally Communist, at the University of Virginia campus, who was even then writing on behalf of capitalism and free markets.

And so the Slovenes, like the Croats, wanted out of Yugoslavia, and particularly wanted out from under the domination of the imperialist, and still strongly Communist, Serbs. And the Slovenes, while much smaller in number than the Croats, did not have the embarrassment of a large Serb minority within their mountainous borders. And yet of course the Serbs were not about to let go. How, then, have the Slovenes come to achieve their independence, despite the

U.S. and other powers moaning about the "territorial integrity of Yugoslavia?"

Unfortunately, the agent of triumph was not devotion to abstract justice. What did it was the force of Slovenian arms. In the latter two weeks of June, the Yugoslav army, dominated by Serb officers and a devotion to Commu-

nist rule bolstered by being a highly paid elite within the country, determined to bring Slovenia to heel, and to capture its frontier posts. The federal Yugoslav army bent on taming the Slovenes was headed by two Serb fanatics: General Bogojc Adzic, the Chief of Staff, and tank commander General Zivota Avramovic, fresh from crushing the overwhelmingly Albanian Serb-run region of Kosovo. And yet the haughty Yugoslav

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army, one of the most powerful in Eastern Europe, and its mighty tank corps, was fought to a standstill by the heroic Slovene guerrillas, who beat back the Yugoslav army and inflicted unacceptable losses. Once again, as in all guerrilla victories, the key was ardent, virtual unanimous support by the Slovene people in defense of their freedom against a hated external force, as well as intimate knowledge of the terrain by the guerrillas. Moreover, the conscripted Yugoslav soldiers, generally not Serbs, deserted in droves, or surrendered under fire.

By early July, the more moderate Serb who is Defense Minister of Yugoslavia, Veljko Kadijevic, threw in the towel, and admitted that the operation against Slovenia had been a big mistake. Assessing the situation in mid-July, the Yugoslav military came to the conclusion that it faced only two choices: either occupying every inch of Slovenia and preparing to massacre the entire population, or withdrawing totally and allowing the Slovenes to decide their own fate. Almost unanimously, they decided that withdrawal was the only way; even the Serb fanatics concluded that letting the Slovenes go would allow them to concentrate more closely on the even more hated Croats. And the Slovenes, who before the battle had been willing to settle for sovereignty within a loose Yugoslav confederation, were now both embittered by the Serb aggression and emboldened by their heroic victory against far superior numbers and firepower. A free Slovenia had been baptized in blood, and the die appeared to be cast.

During the 1980s, and long be-

fore the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, I had the occasion to visit Slovenia, and fell in love with the land and its people. I was able to stay in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, in a Holiday Inn, unique in the then-Communist bloc. Holiday Inn enjoyed a strange co-ownership arrangement with an old "people's owned" Communist hotel, which literally surrounded the Holiday Inn. While eating dinner in a Ljubljana restaurant, I was surrounded by charming young people who saw that I was western, and peppered me with questions about life in the United States. (Needless to say, we spoke in English, since I knew no Slovenian.) I tried to tell them that they were better off than the Soviet-dominated countries, but they were hearing none of it. They all found life in Communist Yugoslavia "boring," and they longed to get out to the West.

Welcome, Slovenia, and bless you. You are now part of the West, and no thanks to George Bush *et al.* You won your freedom, like the American revolutionaries, both with ideology and with the sword. ●

PC Cinema: Psychobabble Gets Nasty

by Mr. First Nighter

I'm beginning to think it's all a long-range leftist plot. First, they tear down our love and admiration for our own culture, by preaching cultural relativism and the irrationality of ethics. "All cultures are equal," there *is no* trans-cultural morality, and therefore (and self-contradictorily) it is *immoral* to

count your own culture superior to others. That's Phase One. And then, after several decades of pushing this line and converting everyone to it, comes the Phase Two sockeroo: there *are*, after all, moral principles and trans-cultural norms, but what they teach us is that our own culture and values are evil: racist, sexist, heterosexist, *et al.*, and *ad nauseam*. Morality exists, after all, but what it teaches is that we have been immoral all along, and everyone else is superior: a transvaluation of values. Phase One is the necessary softening up process for Phase Two, a process we are now undergoing.

This summer's cinema is rife with PC, spearheaded by a new trend. Psychobabble, for decades marked by the sickening treacle of "I'm OK, You're OK, Everyone's OK," to get us off our ideas of moral norms, has now shifted gears into a new, far more directly vicious phase: "Middle-class, middle-aged, achieving, white males [MMAWM] are definitely *not* OK," as a matter of fact, they need the figurative or even literal equivalent of a shot in the head. A direct, brutal, and vicious assault on MMAWM has now begun.

Of course, it can't be solemn and preachy. Even the guilt-ridden MMAWMs in our debased culture are not quite ready for *that*. It has to be done, then, in the sugar-coated pill of "comedy," bitter and witless pills which apparently our downtrodden Atlases, the MMAWM, are ready to swallow without seeing the danger or the assault. In that way, the prosperous, unheeding, American bourgeoisie are happy to pour in the dollars to finance their own