



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA

KABINET PREDSEDNIKA VLADE

**Formal Address by
Janez Janša
the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia**

**at the
State Celebration
on the occasion of**

THE RETURN OF PRIMORSKA TO THE HOMELAND

**Viharju kljubujem, ostanem!
(Simon Gregorčič)**

Cerje, 15 September 2006

Dear people of Primorska, Excellencies, dear fellow countrymen!

Primorska is attractive in all seasons of the year and especially in the days announcing vintage. Primorska is always attractive as its climate restores health and good humour – the basic conditions for a successful and complete life. Primorska is the more attractive when one wants to reflect upon himself not only as an individual but especially as a person, as a citizen and a Slovene.

Our ancestors populated it in the way that our western borders were not shifted until the occurrence of the totalitarian Fascism. They did not build a high wall, they did not organize any borderland or military frontier. They, however, formed their national awareness on such an elevated level that no foreign powers were able to break it through centuries. Slovene national awareness in Primorska was invincible, unbreakable.

The Slovene Primorska regions: Istra, Trst and Goriška were not distinctive in the Slovene history only by the exceptional awareness of the inhabitants. They represented for the rest of Slovene regions also a strategic link with the Mediterranean and its culture. They were a window on the economic and spiritual world of the Mediterranean, the cradle of the European civilization. Throughout the history not only its material but spiritual culture as well were coming from it. With the famous southern railway Dunaj – Trst (Vienna-Triest) in the middle of the 19th century not only modern transport but also a new order – capitalism reached our country. Capitalism had on the one hand harmful consequences for old crafts and on the other it actuated the necessary modernization of our territory. Primorska was, in spite of its miserly and demanding soil, a unique blessing for the Slovenes from the economic as well as from the spiritual point of view.

Many people are convinced that the Slovenes preserved themselves as a nation due to their introvertiveness. This is not true! The Slovene territory has always been one of the most transient, and nevertheless we managed to survive. Not because of our introvertiveness but because of our openness, and at the same time because of the exceptional ability of our ancestors to adjust themselves to demanding circumstances and to actively participate in them, to act and encroach on them. Exceptional merits go to Primorska for its achievement for the Slovenes to be able, in the economic as well as in the spiritual sense, to not only remain in touch with the more developed and demanding European environment but also to integrate successfully in it.

An exceptionally sad chapter of the Slovene history is connected with Trieste. Namely, it is via Trieste that after 1880 numerous Slovenes left for abroad, especially for the USA and later for Australia. In the beginning they thought of their emigration as a temporary state, however, it unfortunately became permanent for the majority of them. A great majority of our countrymen were successful in integrating themselves into the new environment but never forgot their birthplaces or those of their parents. They were generous in helping materially and financially their relatives during the First World War and after it, they helped greatly after the Second World War as well. We should not forget their political help in the crucial moments of the Slovene history, in the years of gaining independence, when they helped in a decisive and courageous way to make known the truth about Slovenia and the Slovenes, our rights, demands and aspirations.

The Slovene national awareness in Primorska, similarly as in Koroška, has developed very early. It is due to it that the two regions have in a specific way poured into the Slovene conscience as existential Slovene regions. Primorska the Slovene lungs and Koroška the heart. The national awareness here has always been exceptionally fighting, exceptionally striking which is seen also from the spoken and sung Slovene language. There were many who demonstrated the national awareness. Here I have to mention Simon Gregorčič. Our ancestors were fond of him not only because he wrote from the heart for the heart, as Josip Stritar described him, but because he, among all the Slovene poets, knew in the best way to pour into poetry the condemnations of the evil, of the injustices and misfortunes, that the people of Primorska, as individuals and as Slovenes, were feeling daily. It is for this reason that he became, beside Prešeren, the most famous and read poet among all the strata of our people. And more. Simon Gregorčič was not only the poet who foretold the stern test of the First World War for Primorska but became one of the ideal starting points of the Primorska anti-Fascist movement, a constant and indispensable companion of our national life. There has been no political, social or cultural event in the latest history in Primorska where Simon Gregorčič would not be mentioned in one way or another.

Let me mention in this sense in connection with Simon Gregorčič the phenomenon that should be followed in today's situation. The wealthiest Slovene in those times the noble Josip Gorup Slavinski edited the second and the third book of »Poezije« and at the same time paid the author a considerable royalty, enabling him to repay the debts and to buy an estate at Gradišče. Slavinski did not do that for the sake of tax relief but was driven by his inner conviction, leaning on the one hand on his national awareness and on the other on his personal attitude towards the Slovene culture and art. It is this very attitude that we miss today in many Slovene great entrepreneurs. We have to be aware of the fact that by mere tax collection we can never gather so much money that culture would need. Especially not that much that the best works of culture would really deserve. I strongly believe that the Slovene

entrepreneurs will, in ever more settled and favourable economic conditions, decide more easily for the donations to the Slovene culture.

The loss of Primorska after the Second World War was for all the Slovenes a horrible and multilayered loss. We were not only deprived of a great part of the homeland territory, we did not lose the window on the world, the Slovene economy was strongly affected, it lost its basic modernization motive powers. Before the First World War there were a lot of worldly intelligentsia in Primorska as well as a lot of internationally recognized entrepreneurs. A great number of them had to emigrate immediately after the First World War because of the aggressive Italian nationalism. It, besides burning down »Slovenski narodni dom« in Trieste, also destroyed Slovene banks and other monetary and economic institutions.

The Primorska people were the first among the Slovenes to engage in the fight with the totalitarianism in the form of Fascism. It was violating their basic national rights and consequently human rights. It wanted to deprive them of everything, especially of the language, the basis of almost all the culture. The sacrifices they had to lay on the altar of the Slovenehood were great. Let us remind us of Lojze Bratuž, who had to go to the grave because of singing Christmas carols in Slovene. Due to the totalitarian character of the Fascist state a democratic fight was not possible and the Slovenes of Primorska, the first anti-Fascists had to take up arms. This act was no terrorism as many endeavour to prove. The Slovene fighting anti-Fascism, gathered predominantly around the TIGR organization, originated from democracy that was beside the demand for the fundamental rights of a man and citizen and beside the demand for an unimpeded economic and cultural life of the Slovenes, its most elevated goal.

The anti-Fascists of Primorska did not attack their own people, which is characteristic of terrorists, but only that what was in one way or another connected with Fascism and the later occupation. Anti-Fascism of Primorska, especially the fight for the Slovene language and its culture, was the one that mobilized the people of Primorska as prisoners at the Western allies into Slovene Oversea fighters, Slovene members in the Anglo-American special squads and services.

The Primorska anti-Fascism, especially the fight for the Slovene language and its culture, was the one that drove the people of Primorska to join Partisans. They laid their heroism, courage and devotion to the Slovenehood on the altar of the national liberation struggle, understood by the people of Primorska as such and not as a revolution.

Regarding the initiative for the reconciliation among Slovenia, Croatia and Italy it is to be said that the history does not only divide us but links us as well. The reconciliation initiatives are positive and welcome. In spite of this the guilt is not equal nor is it shared.

Primorska has witnessed two great tragedies also in the economic point of view in the last hundred years. The first one was caused by the annexation to Italy after the First World War. Thus Trieste was cut from its economic background, represented by a great part of the Central Europe. Italy had a lot of bigger and better ports and did not need it as such. The time after the Second World War made the dying of Trieste even more severe and the Slovenes, greatly because of Belgrade authorities, lost Gorica as well. The consequences of such two severe economic stresses are very difficult to be done away with as it was not only the question of new state borders but the issue of interrupted economic links that had existed for centuries. The attempts to

solve the Primorska economic issue, very often in severe confrontation with Belgrade, were carried out predominantly by means of Slovene funds. Considerably large amounts of money and intellectual efforts were invested, however, unfortunately no lasting results, except for the railway, the port and some successful investments, were achieved.

The independent State of Slovenia is starting a lasting solution of the Primorska economic situation by the construction of modern road and railway connections in the spirit of its centenary tradition. We consider the connections with the wider space of the Pannonian plane extending to the Ukraine in the framework of the 5th european corridor to be of special importance. A special development issue remains Posočje, the world of Simon Gregorčič, the world that we all admire and love but the inhabitants cannot live on that. They are often faced with natural disasters. The sanitation of the consequences they entail is very time-consuming, expensive and very often also professionally disputable. In spite of all said we all know that there will be no stable development of the region of Posočje unless it is more and better connected by new road connections. This is one of the greatest mid-term tasks of the Slovene State in this region.

By the establishment of two new University centres in Koper and Nova Gorica we are not seeking for the scientific and cultural balance with the territory on the other side of the state borders but we want to create such circumstances for the young people to see the perspective in their own environment and with new knowledge and young impetus make their contribution to the correction of the decades lasting delays and the mistakes in the economic and social development. The global strategy is clear. It will have long-term effects. Slovenia cannot be succesful if Primorska is not succesful as no organism can grow without good respiratory organs and sound respiratory ways.

Considering the well known abilities of the Primorska people to adjust to new situations I am convinced that in the framework of european integrations you will be able to take advantage of actual conditions and acquire cohesive funds that are at the disposal. Slovenia itself, in spite of the anticipated results of the reform measures, in spite of favourable economic growth which will be around 5% this year, will not for quite some time have enough of its own capital for all the challenges that are before us. In the past we have been postponing for too long the economic modernization and this is why its realization is now so much more difficult and expensive. With joint and sincere endeavours we will be able to make up for the delays and some missed moves.

The goal is a stable and harmonized development, preservation and enrichment of the regional capital, creation of business climate and development of economy that will bring along high added value. It is necessary to improve the road infrastructure and to take advantage of the business and natural conditions of Primorska. This aim must also be the aim of the Primorska wine-growing business. If it was once satisfactory for Vienna and Prague, why should it not regain that position? The Port of Koper is the best proof that it is possible to achieve success in spite of severe and unscrupulous competition. We can count considerably on tourism that has in the nearby Northern Italy a rich and too little exploited background.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

In the beginning of the address we mentioned that the main element of the fight of the Slovene here was the national awareness of Primorska. The tower that makes us see the edges of our centenary ethnic border is not there because of the others but is put here because of us.

It illustrates the historic truth that the Slovene nation has never been an assaulter and that it has always only defended its land and its existence. The tower is on the Karst soil that is soaked with the blood of its defenders. It is a symbol of strength, resistance, persistence and endurance of the national existence. It is also the memory of the enduring persistence of the Karst people, who fought with stone, struggled with the strong wind and sweat on the miserly soil to suck out of it the juice for mere survival, to remain a solid boundary stone here, where the threat to the nation was always the biggest. It is here, on this Karst soil that runs the landmark between two big worlds, the Slav and the Roman. It is due to the enduring power of resisting that for a thousand and many hundreds of years the national border has not been shifted. Although they were obvious efforts in certain periods to erase us as a nation on this territory.

With this memorial at Cerje the Slovenes gain the memorial to all the defenders of our land. Our homeland was sown with crosses, unknown graves of fighters, heroes and of the murdered. We have a lot of small monuments and unknown graves in which known and unknown defenders of the Slovene land and the Slovenehood rest. To all these from all the times who fought and were active in a spiritual way to preserve us as a nation, a glorious monument is rising from the Primorska soil towards the free sky.

May this national symbol be an incentive to the national unity, to the strengthening of national awareness and power and to make, once and for all, the national interests prevail over political, ideological and personal ones when this is necessary. Our present and our future depend on ourselves, on our unity and our national commitment. The united Europe assures us security from the outside. It is our task to assure security and stability in our own homeland and to create the conditions for our material and spiritual existence. All this with the aim to leave to our descendants the material and spiritual culture that we gained from our ancestors and even more.

Thank you very much.