

Ivo Sanader

### **Is Janez Janša an Idiot?**

In normal circumstances—that is, if one knew Janez Janša's impulsive character and his propensity to call his lawyers and sue people for slander even in cases of much smaller proportions—one could not easily decide whether or not to ask the question in the title. The editors of *Dnevnik* would consult their legal services and the text would probably end up in the wastebin before they even got to the point where I say: yes, Janez Janša is the biggest idiot in the universe. However let's not limit ourselves to simply calling Janša an idiot without giving any reasons; so I will add that his concept of borders, which he has been preaching all around Europe, is an exemplary piece of idiocy.

So what has changed that one can freely write in newspapers these days that Janez Janša is an idiot?

Somebody might say that there has been a sensational discovery, but as it turns out, Janez Janša is actually a Croat, born in Rijeka. And since one of the benefits of our independence is the fact that it has become socially acceptable, in Croatia, to call Slovenians cretins, and in Slovenia, to refer to Croats as idiots—and if you know my innate reflex to denigrate everything Croatian—the fact that Janez Janša is actually a Croat has enabled me to say everything I think about this idiot in a Slovenian newspaper.

But Janez Janša being a Croat is only a half of this story; for he is also something much worse—he is an artist.

I am of course talking about Emil Hrvatin, my peer and fellow compatriot, born in Rijeka, who nowadays enjoys the reputation of an established and well-known Slovenian conceptual artist, director, and editor of the performing arts journal *Maska*. Hrvatin officially changed his name to Janez Janša a few days ago. Under his new name, he appeared at the Berlin festival *Tanz im August*, where he interrogated the relationship between liberal capitalism and the concepts of border and border-crossing through a series of experimental actions and performances.

Since we are dealing with a conceptual – albeit administratively-valid – artistic act, I am more than willing to participate in this splendid performance in the way in which I, myself, understand it; that is, to take it as an opportunity to respond to the artist's call, to publicly cross the imagined borders in a newspaper, and to write that Janez Janša is a common fool. This can be done because it is perfectly legitimate to call artists—but not politicians—idiots

and to call their work idiocy. Artists are harmless beings who do not have powerful lawyers. Unlike politicians, they do everything publicly and they offer their work to be judged by the public, despite the fact that their mandate is strictly personal and their responsibility is only to themselves. Politicians, on the other hand, have our mandate and they are accountable to us; and yet, no politician has ever publicly presented their work. There are no annual festivals or exhibitions in which politicians would display their achievements of the past year.

This is the paradox that Janez Janša symbolically destroyed when he offered the public an insight into everything that Janša does. For the gist of art is precisely to ask questions that are never asked and to cross boundaries that are never crossed in everyday life. In everyday life, borders and boundaries are not a challenge—rather, they are an administrative fact. Just like, for instance, the name Janez Janša is an administrative fact.

This is why, you see, Janez Janša is an idiot.

If for no other reason than because we have no way of knowing who we are dealing with when the name is mentioned, even if everyone reading this text knew exactly which Janša is an idiot for me and which one is not. On top of this, Janez Janša, just like Janez Janša, has also changed his name. He was born as Ivan. And this is not all: Janez Janša and Janez Janša are not the only Janezes Janšas. Another couple of Janša's friends and collaborators, alternative artists Žiga Križ and Davide Grassi, have also changed their names to Janez Janša. The confusion is now perfect. And what if I wrote that three Janezes Janšas are pure geniuses and only one of the lot is an idiot? But if we recall the incident from a few months ago with the dog on YouTube whose name was also Janez Janša, there is no way of telling who is an idiot and who is a scoundrel.

Janša's artistic act has a practical side as well. Just like in the joke about Mujo and his four kids, (Croatian president) Ivo Sanader is going to call Janez Janša and say, "Janša, give us a beer!". And suddenly, there are going to be four beers on his table. This is definitely less dangerous than, if Hrvatini, Žiga and Davide had changed their names and surnames a couple of years earlier, and Sanader ordering, instead of a beer, a smaller border incident.

I have, thus been inspired to use a pen name for this issue of *Dnevnik*. No, not Janez Janša. As we can see, everybody is called Janez Janša these days. I could be called, say, Ivo Sanader. Yes—Ivo Sanader. As Ivo Sanader, for instance, I could come to a few agreements with Janez Janša about a few border issues, without involving the International Court of Justice in The Hague. For starters, we could deal with those borders and boundaries that exist only in human minds and which can be crossed without documents issued to Janez Janša or

Ivo Sanader. We could deal with borders and boundaries that do not separate but rather bring together and whose sole purpose is to be crossed.

The boundaries of decency? Indeed, where is the line separating an acceptable way of saying “Janša is an idiot” from an unacceptable one? In the middle of the Gulf of Piran? Somewhere along the Mura? For there is, indeed, a line, a limit—in human minds, in limited human minds.

Of course, if you disagree with me, you can always say: what a cardinal idiot this Ivo Sanader is!

Originally published as “Ali je Janez Janša kreten?” in *Dnevnikov Objektiv*, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007

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