

Chers collègues, messieurs-dames, citoyens, et chers camarades,

On this ninth anniversary of the creation of Sandus as a micronation, one might rightfully look back and reflect upon the history of a small but grand polity such as ours. Our history, our culture, and our politics—as eclectic as they might be—are grounded in a perspective and world view which looks at reality—the reality around us, in our lives, and in the world as a whole. We are a micronation which has seen its share of typical micronational eccentricity—that is, such as our use and insistence on proper titles, our lofty appellations and decorous garb, and our grand cultural and political aspirations or expressions (such as this dinner). But, for us, this eccentricity has been tempered through the years by an insistence on a philosophy, on political theories, and on a politic and culture which is immensely personal both to me and to our fellow citizens.

For those who are what could be called “career micronationalists,” they will at once understand the significance of this anniversary. They could recall the micronations which were flourishing at the time of their birth and foray into the micronational world—I too could recall micronations like Vikesland or St.Charlie, or intermicronational organisations like the Organisation of Active Micronations in which inactive and defunct micronations like A1 or Yabloko once found their mastery. These “career micronationalists” would know that their micronations, which once promised some fun and enjoyment as an eclectic hobby, eventually became a burdensome project with “duties” and “responsibilities,” with work to do, and with actually having to think deeply and extensively about the complexities of legislation and rights, about public policy and social need, or about international relations and diplomacy. Many slink away from this duty, while others (and here I might immoderately be thinking of us) excel and rise to the challenge, even at a young age.

And we have excelled. Our current constitution is the historical product of two years of national soul-searching even on a small scale. It is two years of pondering about political regimes, culture, and social responsibility. It is seven years of working under our current constitution, evolving slowly from a monarchy to our current republic—countless hours of thinking and debating—complete with all the branches of government that Polybius or Walter Bagehot might advise.

But on a personal and ideological level, our micronation demonstrates a national philosophy which, I believe, is really everyone’s philosophy. We believe that every person in this world, that we, suffer in life; that this suffering is the result of desire, anger, ignorance, pride, and envy; but that we can stop this suffering by living a life in accordance with a moral livelihood, such as the one we cultivate here in our tiny country. Though we are few and far apart, we individually strive to live up to the social element in our philosophy, believing that we are our neighbour’s keeper, that we can and do have the means of resistance against suffering, and that compassion—above all else—is the key to alleviating suffering for ourselves and for others. These two categories are what we call, in Sandus, the Sandum Ideal: that we should cultivate an upright and moral way of life, that we should educate ourselves with a correct but critical world view, and that we should foster right intention for ourselves and for others as we face the world. We try to do this respectfully and without error, though—being human—we do sometimes err.

But lastly, we strive and hope for a free and fair society. We believe that the world around us should be open to diversity, that it should be pluralistic and equitable, and that it should be welcoming and free of judgement. We believe in the universal rights of people to dignity, to freedom from violence, and to the right to housing, food, healthcare, education, and a job. We believe in and exercise our political, social, and cultural rights to such things as free expression, privacy, and the inviolability of the home. Finally, but by no means an end of the list (for I could go on), we believe in popular sovereignty and—this will not be surprising to you all—we believe in self-determination for ourselves and for other nations.

In our country, we try to live up to this philosophy through a pragmatic and realistic spirit. We observe ourselves and our surroundings, seeing what basic things we can do to improve our lot in life. But we also seek and staunchly observe our independence and sovereignty as well as any micronation can. Like any nation, our self-help regime tempers a fiery, laconic spirit—a Spartan ethos that seeks to keep us free of warring sides and ardently independent, and we even replicate this political stance in our private lives. That is the extent to which our micronation is so engrained in our individual ways and in our own psyches. But, at the same time, we are open to commerce with others and we enterprise to form peaceful bonds with each other and with others across distinctions and differences of every sort.

Of course we are small and do not have a large impact, but this micronation has deeply shaped personal aspects of my life—and I know it has done the same to others in their own way. In a pluralistic and even multilingual community like ours, Sandus has changed me to take nothing for granted, to question everything, to permit everything.

Et, maintenant en français, si la raison pour que je me suis devenu francophone et pour que j'étudie l'histoire et la sociologie et la science politique et pour que je poursuis mon doctorat en histoire ancienne, si elle est appropriée pour une micronation, pour la nôtre, **il faut continuer**. Quand j'irai en France, à Paris, ce juillet, je vais représenter un pays qui n'a été pas né francophone, mais j'en vais représenter un qui est devenu francophone en suivant son accord. Et voilà, en fin, dans le soir d'une journée en mai victorieux (comment on connaît ce mois en Sandus), c'est la force sande, la force d'autodétermination, la force d'un pays où chacun sait ce qu'il veut et ce qu'il fait. La force, elle est prochaine de celle d'un dieu ou de la mère terre.

Nunc in lingua Latina. Plaudamus igitur civitatem nostram, cui laboramus. Vexillo patriae nostrae, ubi quisque quid velit atque faciat noscit, credimus passionem nostram finiendam esse. Potentia civilis et dignitas nobilis et fides Sande nos cives amplificent atque civitatem nostram. In novem anno genii publici, ego, Gaius Soergel Publicola, Sôgmô Sande, haec verba similia quae Cato in libro *De Agri Cultura* scripsit, quibus hoc festum « suovetaurilia » cognoscimus, dicam:

Minerva mater, te precor et quaero uti sis volens propitius mihi et familiaribus et comitibus civibus, cuius re ergo civitatem nostram et fundum meum suovetaurilia circumagi iussi; uti tu morbos visos invisosque, viduertatem vastitudinemque, calamitates intemperiasque prohibeas defendas averruncesque; harumce rerum ergo, domo mei atque civitati Sande, sicut dixi, o Minerva mater, macte hisce suovetaurilibus immolatis esto.

Let us eat. Bon appétit.