



BLUE LECTURE

APPARTEMENTS DU SÔGMÔ
ANN ARBOUR, QUERCUS CANDIDA
9 DECEMBER 2022

“We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world. Speak or act with an impure mind and trouble will follow you, as the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart. ... Speak or act with a pure mind and happiness will follow you, as your shadow, unshakeable.

“‘Look at how he abused me and beat me, how he threw me down and robbed me.’ Live with such thoughts and you live in hate. ... Abandon such thoughts, and live in love.

“In this world hate never yet dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate. This is the law, ancient and inexhaustible.”

— DHP. 1:1-5
(trans. T. Byrom)

I meditate on these verses often, not only because I believe they liberate us by calling us to discern the causes and conditions of our suffering (that is, what arises with our thoughts) but also since these holy words speak to compassion and forgiveness. In some sense, these verses in particular are something of a national motto: I have frequently turned to them in the past to draw inspiration and to justify the constructivist vision of our micronation, but I believe all my fellow citizens will understand that they do much more than that. These verses remind me that we are not just made accustomed to acting a certain way—but that we also have agency to change our habits and become better people.

It is once more a time of the year where we all, in our own ways, are recalled to our religious principles, and in the last year I have certainly been recalled to mine. The Winter Solstice marks a

time when we are all grounded, in one sense or another, by our friends and family and reminded of the things that matter. I had many opportunities this past year to be reminded of the things that matter, both in my personal family and in our broader civic family. My husband, the Sanóba Coniunx, and I were glad to be present for the wedding of Their Majesties Adam and Laurel of Überstadt, our Comrade Party Secretary and his wife, this past summer. We were reminded of our own vows as we took part in our cousin's sacrament, but I especially was reminded of both the strong social and personal bonds that we have made between our two countries. Sandus and Überstadt spent much of the last year working together, solidified our mutual working processes, and together developed the coöperatives in the Common Economy.

Much of the year was spent on organising and constituting such economic organs, both held in common and those that are our exclusive state enterprises. Much came of that fruitful work, especially the many basic laws that we have drafted and ratified, but more work remains for us to do. The Commission for the Common Economy, the CCE, and members of Erganê Artisanal Coöperative, for example, ought to return once again to ratify the draft of the basic law that they began earlier this year. The CCE in the new year will also have to prepare elections in Tellus Horticultural Coöperative, if not in other coöperatives and enterprises as well, and will need to meet on a more regular basis to both ensure the proper and regular running of every economic organ and to prepare additional treaties to regulate the Common Economy.

Busy, too, in the last year was the Citizens' Party of Sandus, the branch of our republic tasked with defending the Sandum proletariat and socialism, as well as with giving its political expertise in our country as a sort of senate. I congratulate Comrade Party Secretary Adam Camillus von Friedeck and all my fellow Party members on the most significant achievement of the Party this

year, and in the last several years: that is, the drafting and ratification of our new constitution, the second replacing one ratified in 2016. This new constitution regularises the work and function of the Central Committee as an independent entity within the Party, not just as a body appointed by the Party Secretary. I am glad to have a seat now on the new Central Committee, and this marks my return to Party leadership for the first time since 2014. I am thankful to my fellow members of the Central Committee, the Party Secretary and the newly-elected Commissioner, Wren Wood. The Commissioner's new job is one that is novel for the Party, since their job will be to ensure both members' discipline to Party decisions and authority as well as to provide for members' (and citizens') proper political education. Party education will need to be a concern for all of us as we enter a new era in the life of the Party, and our republic. At the same time, the Party's new platform, next year's focus, will emphasise not only the Party's constitutional and political role in Sandus (as the existing platform does) but also formulate the Party's interests and policies beyond the State of Sandus in particular. This new platform will focus on our collective vision and mission in Sandus and in the wider world—from our communities and macronations to the international world. It must respond to the creep of fascism and authoritarianism in our daily lives.

Our royal household has also been busy in the last year, and has been developing as its own independent entity in our republic. In order to better fulfill our constitutional as well as social roles, we in the royal household have started an accounting of our executive expenses, particularly our state and charitable expenses. At the moment, this accounting primarily takes into account the cost to our government to put on events and holiday parties, but also charitable contributions and other social events that are given for the benefit of others—and ourselves. Already, in the less than two months since we started this accounting, the royal household has spent over \$1,250 USD for Sandum

cultural events and other social events that reflect our charitable and noble mission of hospitality. The purpose of this accounting is not to “show-off” our charity nor our wealth (we have none of that after all), but rather to better regulate and keep track of our government’s expenses and the royal family’s expenses as we plan for our future, especially for future monetary and fiscal policies.

In the next year, my government will continue many of the same developments described previously. With regard to the Common Economy, we will continue along the path of developing our coöperative economics. This will require the development of the coöperatives, which my government will take as its most important mission, and we will work together with our partners in Überstadt to accomplish this aim. One citizen recently expressed his unawareness on how to even join a coöperative. To date, we on the CCE have asked workers to “identify” with particular coöperatives, but this has often meant going to citizens as a whole or individually to add them to our own centralised lists. In the new year, this power should be uniquely in the hands of coöperative and enterprise management so that they can make and change their own data, and to update our data as well. Relatedly, who is responsible for particular economic organs ought to be publicly-available information and listed somewhere, such as on our website, so that citizens will know who to go to in order to join a coöperative or state enterprise. This will require completing the renovations to our Sandus.org website to streamline information and also asking state institutions to start their own websites. Most importantly, my government will work to prepare a plan for how to continue our development of coöperative economics in Sandus to furnish our citizens with a clearer sense of our economic objectives and interests. Since we aim for self-reliance, coöperative economics ought to encourage autarky (self-sufficiency) wherever and whenever possible.

In addition to the economy, the Central People's Government under the Office of the Sôgmô will work with its coëqual branches to develop the Party and the Council. As a Party member, a constitutional member of the Party Central Committee, and a citizen with democratic rights, I believe that it is in our collective interest to see a robust Council and Party working in our government. This includes the increased involvement of the Party in our affairs since there is now a cohesive body—the Central Committee—that may advise the government and plan for future developments in Sandus as a whole. My government will make consistent use not only of its cabinet but also of our comrades in the Party, who are charged with helping the state plan for its future.

The Party Secretary and I have also agreed that the Council will be our collective focus in the new year. Our republic requires a robust democratic branch staffed by a speaker who will protect democratic rights, interests, and powers. This is work neither I as Sôgmô nor Adam Camillus von Friedeck as Party Secretary can do: this is work that can only be done by the Speaker of the Council. It includes ensuring that worker's democracy exists and that our coöperatives and enterprises practice it, but also that citizens have the ability to make their voices heard on the running of our government and the nature of our laws. We the Three State Officers will formulate, before the Spring Equinox election when the Council elects its speaker, clear expectations for the position. These expectations are not requirements but are our suggestions for a robust democratic office. They include the aspiration that each speaker ought to have at least one landmark legislative project completed in their term that further clarifies or builds onto our ever-growing state, but they also include the expectation that democratic platforms exist in Sandus and that people use them.

These suggested platforms can be places where the Sandum People can express their democratic, sovereign decisions. In the new year, after several months of inactivity, my government

will relinquish the Klatsch program. This is naturally a program that ought be led by the speaker, and we believe it is in the best interests of the Sandum People that the speaker should undertake this program. Whether as monthly or quarterly Klatsches—or as even annual or semiannual plenary meetings of the Council—this program would better afford citizens the space and means to raise their opinions on matters of legislation and policy. Through these and other similar changes, future candidates and officeholders of the position of speaker may be better informed about their important constitutional role in our republic.

In the new year, my government will continue to facilitate the growth of economic organs' management and their powers. I was recently asked by the director of an entity within a state enterprise what I and my government will do to help their organisation in the future. While I am the patron of this organ, I believe this goes beyond the scope of my patronage and also the proper constitutional limits on my power in a complex republican system such as ours. This ought to be the responsibility and question of every coöperative, enterprise, and work-group's management. My government will not intervene directly in the policy and by-laws of a coöperative and we will refrain from doing so in state enterprises. If ever these economic organs are to exist independently of the state and Central People's Government and act on their own, their management will have to begin to exercise this power on their own without the intervention or instigation of the monarch or state. In the new year, we will work with the management of our economic organs to ensure that they have the tools to run their coöperatives, enterprises, and work-groups.

Relatedly, in the new year, my government will formulate a new constitutional principle in our republic, one that recognises that labour done on behalf of the State of Sandus is always necessarily *additional* to our labour as citizens of various polities and civic groups, as proletarian

workers, and as private citizens. This will mean pairing down the imagined scope of our government from an ever-present state to a more honest polity that recognises the limitations of its own activity. In the new year, we will meet with our cabinet and prepare a cabinet shuffle, if needed, to ensure consistent activity. This constitutional principle will be derived from our tradition of flexibility and from the legal status and precedence that policy decisions and planning visions have in our law. This acknowledgement of our own governmental and personal limitations recognises that we have limited “activation energy” (to use the Realist term) and that our constitution is based on our flexibility to respond to present circumstances.

At the same time, our government and our citizens as participants in our republic, polity, and micronation ought to know what is appropriate labour for them to do in Sandus. In the new year, my government will pilot a new program to help both officials of the State of Sandus, its enterprises, and its institutions and (with the consent of the Central Committee) for Party members to set their own labour expectations. As with the Speaker of the Council, we envision that every official and active citizen ought to set their own expectations for something to get involved in or to set their own clear, self-determined goals and expectations. As the leader of our government, I will ask every official, manager, and Party member what their goals are in the new year. From time to time, I will publish information about these goals, make these goals available to citizens as a reminder, and will periodically ask citizens about the status, progress, or completion of their goals. I will even approach private citizens to see if they may be interested in setting a goal concerning their involvement in Sandus. As the monarch of our micronation and state, I believe it is a job and responsibility that ought to fall to me to encourage citizens and our government officials to do work for the benefit of the State of Sandus.

Speaking of constitutional principles, my government in the new year will begin the process of amending the Founding Law of the State of Sandus for the first time. In the law's dozen years of existence, never has it been amended. But this year I shall work to draft an amended Founding Law that edits unclear language, adds additional rights (such as the right of association), and enshrines important constitutional principles into the Founding Law—including the principles of flexibility, *stare decisis*, and the legal validity of state plans. These amendments will be made available in time for the Winter Solstice election that will happen in a year from today.

These goals that we have set for ourselves to complete in the upcoming year spell out the agenda of our government. As always, they have with them the wisdom of our national philosophy and political theories, which allow us to craft a government built on skillful discernment and means. The agenda of the Central People's Government, to conclude, will be to use the skills and knowledge that we have developed in our soon-to-be fourteen years of experience to advance our micronation in ways that benefit us and those around us. With our mind-led, mind-governed, mind-made micronation, constitution, laws, plans, and decrees, our government will continue our arduous and perpetual work to alleviate the suffering of all whom we can help.

Comrade citizens, I wish you a happy holiday season, a joyful solstice, a fortunate New Year, and an easy election. It remains my joyful duty to be your Sôgmô, and I pray that I shall continue to be your Sôgmô according to your suffrage.

In the truth and teachings of the Three Jewels and the benedictions of All the Gods,



THE HONOURABLE SÔGMÔ GAIUS SOERTEL PUBLICOLA
SÔGMÔ OF THE STATE OF SANDUS