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*God save the screen and the fascist regime!*

A day or two before the last parliament elections, I found ESTO TV in some supermarket campaigning for a new right-wing populist party called Respublica by serving raw meat to people. The anti-star constellation of ESTO, the inseparable Ken & Tolk screamed in their favour: "Eat meat, meat makes you aggressive!" and "Respublica takes the arm from the thief and separates the Negro from his balls" and "Choose order!", their retro-fascist campaign slogan. And guess what? Finally they formed the new government.

Media-punk and TV-revolutions, that's the bread and butter of ESTO TV, a group of media gangsters using a deceptively patriotic name which refers to the quadrennial meetings of expatriate Estonians, once considered to be

a political stance against the Soviet regime. In those days, ESTO was really about group meetings of aliens dancing folk dances somewhere in Montreal and sharing their nostalgia for their home planet. ESTO TV is a group of aliens as well, but of a rather different kind. Operating in the field of media, they create chaos and disturbance by digging micro-holes to the well-organized patterns of polite and politically correct behavior. They approach politicians with questions impossible to answer, do offers hard to refuse, convince naive German pop-singers that they are victims of a political plot, and discover natural catastrophes in the backyards of rich business men. For one of their most painstakingly aggressive interviews ESTO TV approached the father figure of Miss Estonia competitions. The situation could be described as follows: "Valeri Kirss – judging from the broadcast show – had recently organized another embarrassingly tasteless beauty competition, mainly consisting of endless bikini sessions and



Esto TV praises Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts with American flag



Esto TV gets involved in the pro-war demonstration in front of the American Embassy



Esto TV host Rain Tolk is arguing with real American patriot

distressful vulgarities. As an ageing male lion defending his territory and harem, he was trying to convince the viewers, robes of courtesy unraveling at every seam, that his motives were something far more noble than the simple and sincere wish to sleep with the etalons of beauty as proposed by the TV boys." (Mari Laaniste, "Who is afraid of Ken and Tolk?", Sirp, 4th May 2001)

What is ESTO's phenomenon? According to their actions they don't seem to have any definite political platform nor preferences. They share solidarity with no one. A sentence from their manifesto says it all: "Esto steals the cent from the poor and the kroon from the rich!" ESTO is ready to take a stand in favor of every political party, they are ready to announce every politician as their ally, just to give him/her a nasty, cold shower the next minute. They somewhat remind me of Laibach, which has jumped on the wagon of every sort of political regime – with Tito, Mussolini, NATO etc. They really started to fulfill the empty rituals nobody took seriously, and got their noses bloodied doing it. But suddenly the mythological background and mystified ideology of those things started to get revealed only because it was carefully overdosed.

Roughly – the right wing extremists mystify things: Jews, the Nation, the State, History,

the Superiority of Economy. Leftists demystify them. Somewhere in between, there is surfascism, a counterstrategy of fascism created by George Bataille in the thirties by turning fascism into surrealism. It is something that Laibach does and ESTO TV seems to do mostly as well. Their latest movie, "Welcome to Estonia", was a one-hour journey through the year 2002. The thin red strand which tied everything together was the "conflict" of white and black forces, in which the "Troopers of Truth" rocked the most important events of the year – Eurovision song contest, local elections, anniversary of the Republic etc. And so the Sanitary Unit of the State discovered plots and secrets everywhere. In adopting their strategic idiocy to the media, ESTO TV seems to be more effective than art with clearly defined social pathos and a somewhat more intellectual approach. Esto TV succeeds in creating a stage for the real-life idiocy of televirtualised democracy to climb on. There is no need for actors to parody a media-greedy politician! And actually, there is no need for Ken & Tolk, either! ESTO TV has enrolled the Prime Minister and the ever-charismatic opposition leader to do a great job of being Ken and Tolk themselves. That's the real effect of ESTO TV, that's the thing that raises them far above the general mediocrity of sketch shows and TV-programmes.

Anders Härm



Esto TV host Ken Saan gives a speech at Estonian Independence Day parade



Police force is arresting Esto TV at Independence Day parade



Things are turning violent