

MIESKUORO HUUTAJAT

_suomeksi s. 89

SHORT HISTORY OF A STATE

We founded a state on an island in the Perämeri sea. In fact, it was not even an island, because it has been thus far marked in maps as a shallow. At the Perämeri sea, a shallow can be a zone with a thin layer of water, or entirely without water. In the Ice Age, huge masses of continental ice forced our country into hiding under the sea. Gradually, it popped back up, very conveniently for our purposes. Much in the way of ancient Britain: "at heaven's command arose from out the azure main" (Arne: *Rule Britannia*). Our country emerged at the right moment, as it happened that the existing states were not suitable for us. I remember making the following definition at the time: "A state is a monopoly of violence and economic crime which functions in a certain area." The same definition applies to superpowers, with the exception of not acknowledging any regional borders. In other words, I pretty much thought that the system stank. But all of the sudden, at heaven's command, a region for a state emerged from the sea for us, and we had to start paying attention to the state of affairs.

The area, which in classical definitions of states is a necessary prerogative of a state, proved to be a rather annoying stumbling block to our empire. To start with, it was located in a rough sea region with extremely poor transportation possibilities. Furthermore, the vegetation, topography and natural resources of our state did not appear to possess the potential which the People, or, as I think is more fitting to say, the Population, expects from its state. In addition to this, it is not absolutely certain whether the area exists at all. It may be that the nautical chart's marking about magnetic disturbances, random navigation errors or just plain imagination produced the illusion of the location and existence of the island or shallow.

Thus, it was possible that our constitution, flag, national anthem, trade policy, diplomatic principles and media were based in a non-existent location. In any case, nobody had ever visited the state. This meant we were slightly worse off than our numerous colleagues who had gone around the world founding so-called micronations in recognised locations. So, let our global empire then be called a nanostate. It consists of boast-

State citizens, photo by Jaani Föhr

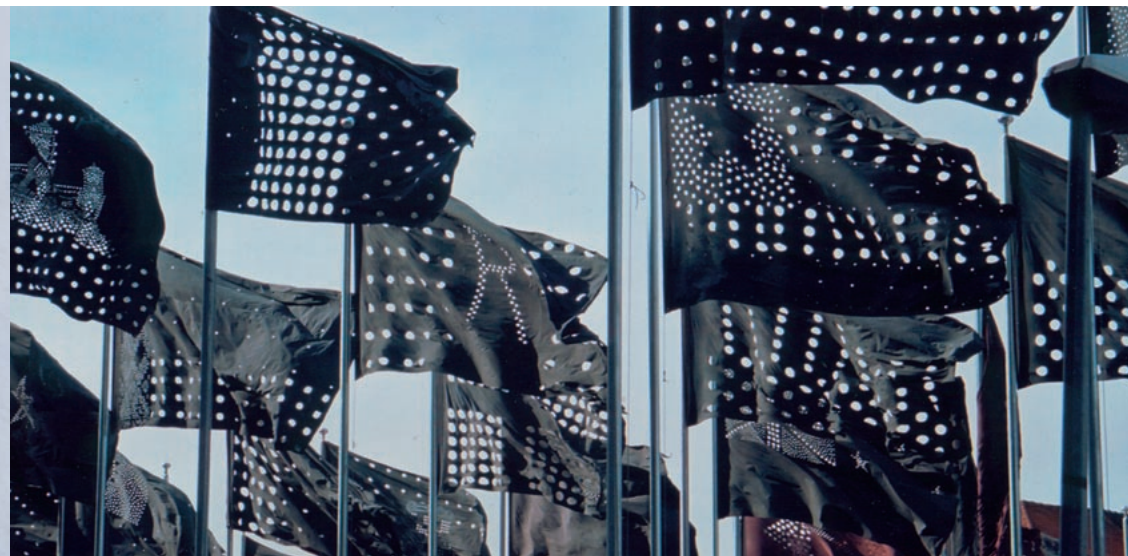


ing, a need for communality, separation games, escapism, old-fashioned attempts to understand large concepts with the help of a scale model or a molecule, macho bravado and competing in knowledge and wit.

When I studied the state alone in silence, I came to the conclusion that it holds water. It answered most of the questions of how people who experience a certain unity, of broader nature than blood ties, can define and control their union. Its basic building blocks are pretty much the same as other states'; certain mental events and constructions, and on the other hand the way the citizens realise and dabble with them: words, signs, acts.

The brilliance of this state was the way it, unlike other states, did not carry with it the smell of enforcement and violence which generally looms over states. It's odd how dump sites smell the same all over the world, if they are sensed in a normal temperature from a fair distance. Similarly, states have a common stench, and nobody can really say which particular ingredients cause this characteristic aroma.

State flags, work by Elsebeth Rahlff



But my state in the Perämeri sea was odourless. This brought about a uncertainty within me, which ultimately led to the dissolution of the state through an extremely bloodless revolution. For the one thing missing from my state was discipline. I realised that the glue which holds states together in the end is discipline, either inherent or cleverly forced upon from the outside, and this was not necessary for the existence of our abstract constructions. The aroma of actual states is heavily tinged with national discipline and its comical attributes which reek above the stern military order and arbitrary income transfers; the peculiar habits and rituals which are considered perfectly natural and are performed every moment as silent vows of loyalty to our invisible father, the state, our benefactor and oppressor, the lasher and the head-patter. Discipline and order, either raw or subtle, started to seem more important than the state as a whole or its symbols, and so my nanostate ended up in its final resting place: a shallow grave.

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Translation by Antti Pasanen