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Editorial

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Beyond performative resistance and melancholic complicity with the existing order, a crucial strategy emerged in the 1980s from a collective of artists in Yugoslavia who used complicity as its most lethal weapon. Inke Arns and Slavoj Žižek have respectively described the activities of NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst) and its sub-groupings (the band Laibach and the artist collective IRWIN, and Scipion Našice Sisters Theatre, among others) variously in terms of over-identification or subversive affirmation, as performing the “hidden reverse” of state ideology. From Laibach’s nationalism in drag to the issuing of a passport for an imagined “NSK state,” NSK is perhaps now best known for having found a way to produce radical ruptures within the logic of totalitarian power without necessarily having to take recourse in critical distance.

An interesting twist to the story emerges when these strategies enter our present time, within a total economic regime that is less overtly coercive, and dependent rather on affirmative and inclusive modes of critique in a globally networked field of fluid friendships. Not only are many state structures now far from authoritarian in their use of power, they are themselves subject to the flows of desire that comprise global trade. This makes it all the more fascinating to read Inke Arns’s account in this issue of the warm reception the NSK State passport received in Nigeria, where the fake passport was itself over-identified with – taken at its word and returned from the projective to the real by passport-holders who explained to her and IRWIN members Miran Mohar and Borut Vogelnik that they knew people who had in fact been to the NSK State. And it was a beautiful country.

The April 2012 issue of *e-flux journal* also features essays by Mladen Dolar and Slavoj Žižek, as the third and final installment of texts from the conference “One Divides Into Two: Dialectics, Negativity and Clinamen,” held at the Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry from March 28–30, 2011, and organized by Aaron Schuster, Gal Kirn, Pascale Gillot, and Ben Dawson.