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“Liberation Day” by Ugis Olte and Morten Traavik

The first band ever to play in North Korea is a Slovenian group, originally Yugoslavian, formed right after Tito's death. Forever surrounded by controversy for their brazen use of Nazi-fascist aesthetic, they strenuously refuse to be identified with anything, not even a specific music genre, be it rock, pop, industrial rock or techno. Their name is Laibach.

Under the directorial guidance of a long-time fan, they make the decision to unleash their songs on a public that has never been exposed to rock and roll and knows nothing of its power, thus coming face to face with the ideology of the regime, an ironclad censorship and vast cultural differences. Laibach are nothing like anything the North Koreans have ever seen, and yet there is something familiar to be found in their style, their iconography and music – something that gives them an affinity to military parades and solemn and pompous orchestral arrangements. The truth is that even in their lyrics, if one looks at their old hits, such as a cover of *Life is life* or *One vision*, phrases can be found that might have been lifted straight out of the North Korean Worker's Party program. This is a paradox too,

and with it, certainties are bound to be dismantled. The band's project is precisely that: to plagiarise the aesthetic language of totalitarianism, to create parallels between art and power, to become the mirror of a reality the better to deconstruct it, to boycott manipulation by co-opting its own instruments. Slavoj Žižek has said of Laibach that the fascist image that so unsettles us should be viewed favourably, precisely because they do not represent "satire", but rather a tremendously serious way of incarnating the brutal power that resides in any government that cloaks itself in an apparent rationality.

It's about exactly that: a "liberation", a reaction in the viewer – Western or North Korean – also regarding their own vision of the world. Which at least brings with it the freedom to ask themselves whether they are truly convinced that they understand the way things are.