III. Monumental Synthesis

1. Monument to the Fallen, Forlì, 1927
2. House of the War Disabled, Forlì, 1933
3. Monument Soviet Army, Sofia, 1950
4. Penio Penev Park, Dimitrovgrad, 1958
5. Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest, 1959
6. Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak, 1971
7. Monument Banner of Peace, Sofia, 1979

The group of monuments most clearly represents the entire nature of the arts, subject to the ideology present in the considered period. The strong presence of aesthetic and artistic synthesis in all case studies of this group makes them extremely interesting within the context of the current analysis. On the other hand, elements of synthesis are present in many of the representatives in the other typological groups. There are interesting visual and plastic-artistic parallels which give the Monuments the role of a connecting element in the juxtaposition of all case studies in the three basic groups defined in the study.
3. Detailed Analysis 3.A. Analysis by Typology Group III. Monumental Synthesis

246. Monument to the Fallen, Forlì

247. House of the War Disabled, Forlì
3. Detailed Analysis 3.A. Analysis by Typology Group III. Monumental Synthesis

248. Monument Soviet Army, Sofia

249. Penio Penev Park, Dimitrovgrad
3. Detailed Analysis 3.A. Analysis by Typology Group III. Monumental Synthesis

250. Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest

251. Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak
The volumetric, spatial and compositional characteristics of the case studies necessitate their division into several subgroups which cannot be synonymously differentiated, because each one includes elements from the others. Therefore, it is expedient to differentiate two basic groups:

1. Chronological – corresponding respectively to the stylistics of a particular period in the development of the totalitarian regimes

2. Aesthetic – according to the basic artistic means used

The role of the town-planning solutions developed with respect to the surrounding space, is valid for all monuments.

Similarities can be typologically identified between the Monument to the Fallen and the House of the War Disabled in Forli both created at the same time and representing a re-interpretation of Roman heroic symbolism relating to the fascist ideology. The strict classical compositional features completely comply with the identified artistic requirements. The use of various elements – columns, porticos and decorative plastic arts, provide a clear expression of the concepts of heroism and
the belief in war. The use of the same decoration symbols i.e. the short swords, a
token of the warriors’ steadfast will for victory at any cost and absolute obedience to
orders. The shields, the roman helmets and other attributes, typical of legionary
battle equipment, additionally adorn the monuments with their war symbols.
Sculpture compositions are typologically similar. The heroic and heraldic figure
compositions in the House of the War Disabled are simple and are a separate element
in the construction of the monument’s architectural image.

In the **Monument to the Fallen** in Forlì the figure compositions play the
role as a major herald of the concept of artistic pieces with the commemorative Pieta
composition, so typical of Italian art. In this composition, the entire impression is
overturned by the replacement of the basic characters of the classical motif with
figures of grieving warriors in defensive postures. The recognition of one of the
everlasting Christian symbols, in which grief, admiration and love are entangled, is
emblematic in the use of the generally accepted motifs for expressing the concept of a
new artistic imagery. The emphasis on the athletic figures of the warriors is typical, in
praise of the ‘Aryan ideal’. The realistic interpretation of the images of grief for the
fallen is supplemented by the allegoric element of water, which is poured out of two
glasses, symmetrically located on both sides of the pedestal. The use of elements of an
ancient Roman pantheon in the base of the Monument to the Fallen in Forlì may be
juxtaposed with the concept of a memorial church, which has been designed in a new
manner and has its analogues in other pieces of art in the group. There the memorial
function of the temple had been replaced with the function of a public space.
The House of the War Disabled and the Memorial House of the Party on Buzludzha peak combine the hallmark function of a monument with the utilitarian designation of a building intended for public needs. This typical feature differentiates the two sites into a separate subgroup, with comparisons here at the level of symbolism and exploitation of the concept.
Ideological aim of the project programme

Ideology influences both the major volumetric and spatial characteristics and the interpretation of the purposes set forth in the design. All case studies in this subgroup have a marked propaganda element and clearly reflect the stages of ideological development, combining them with the imposed aesthetic and symbolic styles.

The presented sites are an expression of the diversity in the creation of monumental pieces of art through the different periods of totalitarian development, from the 1930s to the 1980s. Four of them are metropolitan; three are situated in the country, and one is in a natural environment – far away from any settlements. As part of the ideological tendency in the design program there appears to be domination of the monuments over the environment by means of volumetric – spatial characteristics. The House of the War Disabled may only be considered a dominant in the environment with regard to the impact of the artistic façade.
decoration. The differences between the separate monuments are defined by the political situation, in that they propagate and therefore are emblematic for the age of their creation.

Both monuments in Forlì are chronologically the earliest and represent a tendency towards a reinterpretation of the classical motifs in the art, as most suitable for the integration of new, conceptually substantiated symbolism.

The Monument Soviet Army in Sofia expresses the ‘socialist realism’ doctrine largely conveyed in the Eastern Bloc in the 1950s. Victory in war gives the communist regimes grounds for the realization of the aesthetic concept of triumph, reflected in town – planning, architecture, and monumental arts, a logical outcome of the directions imposed during the Stalinist period (1946 – 1953). The basic requirement of the monument’s designs is: “To express in permanent artistic forms, in clear, understandable and realistic images the strength and irresistible might of the Soviet Army, liberator of Bulgarian and other peoples, guardian of peace, culture and progress. It should also express the gratitude and appreciation of Bulgarian people to the great Russian people and the Soviet Army”.

255. Monument Soviet Army, Sofia – side relief
The use of similar artistic approaches during construction of the artistic images in this monument and in the Monument to the Fallen in Forlì, i.e. central allegoric compositions, supported by various scenes, developed in different reliefs in the base of the monument, are a sign of propinquity of the artistic processes in the steady development and succession in European Art, and not so much as a token of ideologisation.

The propaganda associated with these pieces of art lies in their declarativity, imposed through all possible means. Regardless of the fact that it belongs to a later period, this group provides a more realistic visualization of the ideological platform of the pieces of art and also comprises the Penyo Penev's monument-ossuary as well as other pieces of art in the Penyo Penev Park in Dimitrovgrad, which quite realistically reflect the principal concept of the park as a monument to brigade labour and, at the same time, a memorial to the poet, who praises this labour in its poems. In this complex monument the ideological impact of the pieces of art is in synthesis with the non-traditional pieces of art as well – the verbal one.
The transition to a new important stage in the interpretation of the ideological platform has been demonstrated by the pieces of art in the park in Dimitrovgrad, but have been further developed in the Monument to the Heroes, Monument Banner of Piece and the Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria in front of the National Palace of Culture (NPC). The new trend in the development of ideology has been reflected there, and particularly in the promotion of the role of art and culture in the harmonic development of the individual and society in the context of the new socialist society development, aimed at the innovation of early symbolic values of the communist design, claiming to transform the old labour enthusiasm into a new creative euphoria with the communist ideological make-up i.e. into humanism. In the last monument, the dominance of the ideology over the historical past is markedly expressed.
258. Monument Banner of Peace, Sofia

259. Monument 1300 years Bulgaria in front of NPC, Sofia – archive view
The culmination of this process of transition from development of the concept to implementation as a path to the future is the construction of the **Memorial House of the Party on Buzludzha peak**, where the ideological symbolism implies its supremacy over nature. The enriched design for the memorial envisages a ceremonial hall for various political events, related to the Party’s activities. The conceptual aspect aim at reflecting the might, the power and the beauty of communist ideals, the historical importance of communism on a global scale and, in particular, the historical role of the Bulgarian Communist Party in the development of society, for the victory over fascism and the development of socialist society and emphasizing the fact that communism had a bright and happy future for the whole of mankind. The gradation in the monuments is clearly differentiable from the development of the ideal image and its heroisation to the domination of the urban space, used and created by men, and to its overriding supremacy not only over people, but over nature as well.

![Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak – the original interior of the hall](image_url)
Public and professional reaction

It is no wonder that the public response to all considered sites was enthusiastic and saw them as examples of the proper presentation of the ideology by art. There are no data relating to any critical opposition to the realization of the monuments, most of them having been created with great enthusiasm. This is typical of all monumental pieces of art in the age of totalitarianism – the impossibility of public expressions of a critical nature, notwithstanding the merits of the works. The
sites were accepted in professional circles, though not always synonymously, but always with silent criticism. Following the democratic changes in Eastern Europe, there have been calls for the removal of certain monuments, not for any radically new assessment of their artistic qualities, but because of their connections with the era of totalitarianism.

**Relations to the environment**

The relationship of the sites to the environment has been different and in most case studies – aggressively destructive.

The case of the **House of the War Disabled** differs somewhat from the others. This is a building, part of a regular development, constructed in an existing urban environment. With respect to volume and façade it is not in disharmony with the surrounding edifices and in this regard it matches well with its immediate environment. The **Monument to the Fallen in Forlì** and the **Monument Soviet Army** were designed to fit into the existing urban spaces and their initial appearance has significantly changed the existing sites. The example in Bulgaria even destroyed part of the historic garden in which it was built.

The **Monument to the Heroes in Bucureșt** was designed for an existing park, where it takes the role of a spatially leading and organizing element. During its creation a promenade was constructed, which was needed to connect the monument to the access to the Palace of People. This intervention significantly impaired the park’s historical line of development.

The **Penio Penev Park in Dimitrovgrad** is a newly created park, part of the entire town-plan of Dimitrovgrad. In the course of its construction and the evolution of the idea of its dedication additional memorial and monumental plasticity was created that enriched, in a harmonious manner, the original appearance of the park.

The **Monument Banner of Peace** and the **Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria** in front of the **National Palace of Culture** were designed
simultaneously with the relevant surrounding park spaces. **The 1300 Years Bulgaria** is part of the integral design of the **NPC** and complies with the large-scale urban performance.

![262. Monument 1300 years Bulgaria in front of NPC, Sofia – archive view of the complex](image)

**The Memorial House of the Party on Buzludzha peak** entirely dominates the environment. Designed on a mountain peak, it violates the natural environment and irreversibly changes the overall landscape.

![263. Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak – archive aerial view](image)
Manifestation of the totalitarian ideology

The totalitarian ideology is demonstrated in all of the sites considered by various means. The sites in Italy (House of the War Disabled and the Monument to the Fallen in Forli) are a reinterpretation of the symbolism borrowed from Roman art. Thus parallels between the fascist military discipline and organization and the invincible Roman legions, famous for their endurance, selflessness, and implicit obedience to orders, has been sought, by employing elements of the ancient temple in the symbolic message of the sites.

Approval of the new political doctrines was seen in terms of the obvious propaganda, expressed by synthesys of monumental arts and architecture. There has been a chronological transition from the stage of realism (the Monument of the Fallen in Forli, the Monument Soviet Army in Sofia, Penyo Penev Park in Dimitrovgrad) to a more symbolic treatment of the ideological messages, based on accenting the plasticity in the compositions and adorning of the works with additional figurative symbolism (Monument Banner of Peace and Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria in Sofia).

The Buzlidzha Monument achieved a monumental status and has turned into a symbol of the communist era in Bulgaria. It immortalizes the ideology, that placed foremost the glorious purpose to transform the society and symbolizes the everlasting idea of a heroic past, glorious present and great future. The monument not only immortalizes a particular event, but also aims to impact on and inspire following generations to take up new exploits and to identify with the bright communistic ideals.
3. Detailed Analysis 3.A. Analysis by Typology Group III. Monumental Synthesis

264. Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak – sculpture group “Torches”

265. Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak – the pylon with the red ruby star
Typological value

In a typological sense the sites are indicative of the course of development of the figurative interpretation, through the different stages of totalitarian ideology. Their presentation, in a common context, enables the development of a more detailed concept concerning the processes in the plastic arts. They have been formed by the ruling ideology, but have also been correlated with the natural mechanisms of monumental arts development within the period. The signs of national specificity, especially in the earlier monuments – the Monument to the Fallen, Forlì and the Monument of Heroes, Bucureșt have also been taken into account.

The House of the War Disabled and the Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak combine the hallmark memorial function and the purely ideological designation, refracted through utility. From an architectural point of view they may be considered as two different monumental types – a memorial symbol and a memorial building. The particular point here is that the memorial symbol has a utilitarian function, a solemn hall for various communistic rituals and in this sense it approximates in terms of contents to the building. In this case the building of the House of the War Disabled is a symbol of war and living national heroes. The Monument on Buzludzha peak makes an assessment of the past through the present and looks at the future from a supra-national, communist standpoint. In this regard the typological proximity is functionally ideological rather than architecturally artistic.

Innovativeness

Innovation has not been applied everywhere, notwithstanding the technical possibilities. The juxtaposition of the monuments with respect to this index identifies two groups – the earlier monuments in Forlì and Bucureșt keep to the classical methods of creating the artistic image. The later ones - the Monument Banner of Peace and the Memorial House of the Party in Bulgaria, reflect common tendencies in plastic arts development, new technical and structural methods of work.
are pursued and more adequate modes of integrating the basic concepts into the work are sought by all possible means.

**Historical value**

All sites have a high historical value, as carriers of the visual model of the ideological framework they were created for. Meanwhile, significant elements in the national arts can be identified in the same period, which had been considerably influenced.

An attempt to interpret the historical past, through the prism of the ruling ideology was made. This fact is also indicative for their role in the presentation of the totalitarian ideology through the various forms of art.

For instance:

- The use of symbols from the panoply of ancient heroism in the works of Forlì.

- Use of historic retrospection during the creation of the sculpture compositions Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria, Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak, the Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest.

- Use of historically grounded but ideologically rejected symbols which, entangled in the context of the new monuments, are given completely new essence – the Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest, the Monument Banner of Peace.

Successful parallels can be made with sites outside those specified within the ATRIUM project. From a spatial and artistic view point, the Monument Soviet Army has a lot in common with the Treptow Monument in Berlin and with the Monument to the Soviet Army in Bratislava. The Memorial House of the Party on Buzludzha peak has no analogues.

**Artistic value and urban planning significance**

Each one of the sites claims to achieve aesthetic and artistic integrity. The visual perception of the Penio Penev Park in Dimitrovgrad creates the
impression of an integral, artistically inseparable site, with scaled proportions, balanced composition and regularly located structural elements and details.

The unifying concept in the **Monument Soviet Army** has been convincingly achieved through the hierarchically located spaces, emphasized by the volumetric and compositional elements. The picture has been supplemented by grading of the synthesis into groups, reliefs and sculpture compositions.
Despite the historical cataclysms the Monument in București manages to preserve its aesthetic and artistic integrity, mostly because of the compositionally convincing, but ideologically discreet, appearance of a powerful and to a large extent neutral spatial sign. This outer indifference to politics, in particular, contributes to the artistic completion of the Monument Banner of Peace in Sofia. The artistic integrity of the Monument to the Fallen, Forlì was inspired and supported by a deliberately sought after town-planning environment, refracted through the well-known but somewhat out dated military platform, subjected to a new political ideology.

In this regard, the House of the War Disabled is rather eclectic with the Renaissance building and the somehow mechanically added fascist symbols – but here the unity has also been protected by the ideological platform.

The Memorial House of the Party brings forward the idea of plan-ornament and ‘completed artistic integrity’, well known from the Stalinist period, and
submits to the architectural and ideological program of a large-scaled spatial and artistic language, unknown at that time. The ideology, that has been emptied of content, has been given here its most material expression and the relevant, fully completed, aesthetic and artistic integrity.

In all the sites in this group the artistic synthesis is an important factor, through which the ideas of the works are imposed at different levels: by means of shape development, through the combination of the plastic form with various elements of the architectural environment, the combination of different art types, as well as the skilful manipulation to focus the attention on the specific messages of each of the monuments. It should be pointed out that the synthesis in these works is one of the most significant factors in their ideological platform modelling.

The House of the War Disabled, Forlì was intended to be an integral whole and the separate elements of the artistic decoration are organically combined with the artistic shape. Meanwhile, the particular conditions at the time of its creation prevented the finding of the most suitable means of its expression in the urban ensemble in which it was situated.

The Monument to the Fallen, Forlì represents the entire development of a work of art within the context of the urban environment. The combination of all parts of the monument, including sculpture figures, architectural elements and park areas, on the whole, has been supplemented by the formation of a memorial – park ensemble within the urban space. The change in the appearance of the park area partially destroys the original interrelationships between monument and building from the point of view of the semantic messages of the thematically arranged garden.
In the case of The Monument Soviet Army, Sofia similar to the previous site, we also have an integral approach to the creation of the monumental work in an already existing park environment (similar to the construction of the Monument-ossuary of the antifascists, Sofia, the Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha, the Monument to the Soviet Army in Plovdiv, the Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest, etc.). The examples given are of the respective periods, the practice has become general and the methods themselves could be considered typical of the totalitarian art. New spaces are formed with the relevant volumetric and structural compositions, approaches, target and public areas, necessary for the presence of a monument with clearly expressed ideological content. The interrelation between the
various elements has been well considered – a combination of park environment, architectural elements and sculpture, the monument is integral with respect to composition.

270. Monument Soviet Army, Sofia – archive view of the area

271. Monument Soviet Army, Sofia – sculptural detail
With respect to the implementation of the ideological concept of The Monument to the Heroes, Bucurest, the existing park area on this site has been redesigned and the existing memorial complex, dedicated to the Unknown Soldier (from the period of World War I) has been integrated into the newly built monument. The contemporary spatial environment forms part of the compositional integrity of the monument. The architectural elements and the central monumental composition form a unified whole and their separate consideration is not possible.
In the Monument Banner of Peace, Sofia the combination of the volumetric and spatial composition, the integration of various supplementary elements (the bells, donated from various countries), the temporality of the impact (the inclusion of the sound effects when viewing the monument), as well as the sculptured memorial composition in its central area, make it a unique and explicitly valuable example of the synthesis in monumental art, surpassing the boundaries of the totalitarian period.

Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria, Sofia is part of a larger ensemble and, from this point of view, is a vivid example of the synthesis in the development of architectural ensembles of the considered period. We should point out that the National Palace of Culture complex combines, in the most complete manner, all monumental and applied arts, and the monument is just one of the examples. As an individual site, the monument also constitutes a combination of spatial and architectural solutions and a sculptural composition, which are inseparable.
Memorial House of the Party, Buzludzha peak, like the other emblematic monuments presented in this selection, is also an example of the harmonic combination of architectural shape and monumental arts. The entire organization of the work includes its gradual perception by the spectator. In the preceding periods of totalitarian art the direction of the approaches was realized by more laconic, often park and architectural shapes – formation of approaches, fragmentation of the space, spatial and composition scheme, solved along the vertical as in the Monument to the Fallen in Forlì, Monument Soviet Army in Sofia, Monument to the Heroes in Bucharest). The idea underlying the development of the ensemble of the National Palace of Culture in Sofia has been completely elaborated with a combination of the separate forms of the artistic language in an integral space, marked by domination over the environment with clearly outlined architectural shape.
The synthesis in Penyo Penev Park, Dimitrovgrad – is multilevelled:

1. Harmonic combination of the sculptural ideological and artistically performed works of art and the park environment;

2. Combination of the simple sculptural forms with epigraphical elements, which form the synthesis elements with the inclusion of the non-traditional poetic form in the sculpture works.

The monuments are emblematic urban and, in some cases, territorial structures and have a crucial importance for the structure of the environment. They actually reflect and immortalize an idea, and in modern times remain significant elements in the environment. In most cases these structures have been developed in central, attractive places but, as tokens of the historical processes they often occur in areas of low public activity. They are usually transformed, in a basic manner, to reconsider the environment and subject it to the general concept of the site.

Such is the nature of the Monument Banner of Peace in Sofia and the Memorial House of the Party on Buzludzha peak. Despite the different scales, both monuments are similar, like true sole dominants, prevailing in the ambient environment. Nevertheless, the Monument Banner of Peace stands out as a mighty symbol, which can be seen both from the city and from the mountains. The aim of the Monument on Buzludzha is the subordination of not only the immediate but the distant space as well, and this has definitely been achieved.

The monuments in Forlì and Bucureșt are a natural culmination of the town-planning solutions – one is in the street space in an urban environment and the other is on natural rising ground in a park environment. The street space is a felicitous sector of the urban dominant, whereas the powerful silhouette of the monument in Bucureșt is balanced by means of high vegetation.
Compared to Bucurest, the Monument Soviet Army in Sofia creates the impression of a more large-scale urban operation and takes a more active part in the
surrounding spaces. Both monuments in Sofia and Bucurest dominate their close vicinity with the strictly conducted symmetric composition and the powerful vertical accents. They are both situated in a park environment, although the Sofia monument almost participates in the street space. The monument in Forlì is a real square monument, developed in the Italian tradition as part of the street life. It is convincingly imposing in the urban space and is a compositional element for lots of important city directions. This turns it into a focus of the central area.

With the exception of the **House of the War Disabled**, which is a terrace building in a closed city block, all other works have, to a great extent, predetermined the arrangement of their own surrounding environment.

**The Monument 1300 Years Bulgaria in Sofia** is part of a more large-scaled project, to which it is integrally bound with respect to both composition and ideology and has a major role in the rationalization of the entire complex. It defines the beginning of the monumental alley trough the park toward the National Palace of Culture, with its own passages and calm spaces.

The space of **the park in Dimitrovgrad** is related particularly to the ensemble along Third of March Boulevard and other neighbouring areas.
The monumental pieces of art in the ATRIUM project represent most vividly the ideological platforms on whose grounds their artistic conception has been based. Thus they depict the course of the ideological development, the shapes and the means of impact of political doctrines over artists and arts as a whole.

277. Map: Geographical location monumental synthesis case studies in ATRIUM, ©NIICH 2012