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### **The origins and development of Soviet totalitarian era. Architecture and monumental art**

Continuing the research that was started a few years ago on the impact of the totalitarian regime on art during the 20th century in Latvia and elsewhere in Europe, my field of interest has widened, now covering even more fields of art during the time period between 1930 to 1959 and also including the artistic and architectural nuances of this time in the US.

Researching and analyzing the 20th century art monuments, commissioned by the governing political regime as communal buildings and public works of art, I have noticed certain correlations and similarities in the many crossroads of civilisation, such as the US, Europe and Russia (USSR). The governing power positions itself as a stable, respectable and even often times, a repressive force, which does not allow for any objections or free thinking in the minds of the public under the regime. Throughout history, since the times of ancient Sumer, Egypt and Rome, immense resources have been squandered for this exact purpose. We can see the continuation of this in the ambitious projects of Christian churches, Muslim mosques of Central Asia and Hindustan, and even the Forbidden City of Chinese emperors during the Middle Ages. The governing power displays its grip not only ideologically, but in a practical and material way as well. You would think, as millenniums pass, certain changes would happen in the visual aspect of this display of power, however this is not the case in the least. Power has always attempted to portray itself as a deity and elicit associations of itself as God's manifestation on Earth. Since one of the most important archetypes of collective subconscious is that a road which leads to a temple, is the correct one, then all that is left to do is to build the representative buildings in this likeness. That, without a doubt, will leave the necessary impression in the minds of the people. These exact likenesses we can witness in the recent history – the artistic and architectural legacy left behind by the bloody regimes of the 20th century. Even in the 19th century, when William Le Baron Jenney (September 25, 1832 – June 14, 1907) built the first, so called skyscraper – The Home Insurance Building in Chicago during 1884-1885. It was a never before seen construction, but also served as a display of the

owner's financial power, that simultaneously invoked associations of a church tower. As this tendency evolved, many money-bags of the new continent adapted this idea, creating an entirely new urban environment in US cities. The development of this idea can be already seen during the 1930s in the capital of USSR – Moscow, where comrade Joseph Stalin rejected many submissions of constructionism and functionalism on the 1932 contest for the design of the Palace of the Soviets, but accepted Boris Iofan's ( April 28, 1891–1976) hypertrophied neoclassicism style offer (which was never built, due to World War II). In this absurd project, we can observe an eclectic combination of all previous periods of history – a pyramidal multi-story construction from a Mesopotamian zikkurat, but in the mild, yet representable Egyptian desert tones, with the columns from a Greek temple and a curved facade, like the one of Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, which would be endowed by a Colossus of Rhodes type statue of Lenin. Even though this monster was never realised, in the later post-war years, buildings of this type were erected as a gift from the USSR leadership in many European capitals. Today we take it with a sense of sarcasm, but sadly, even the political and economic elites of the 21st century continue to squander the public's funds and resources on similar, ambitious, narcissistic monuments to their own stupidity.