

**“ABREAST OF TIMES”. BEYOND THE ALTERNATIVE IMAGES AND HISTORIES
OF SOFIA**

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Abstract

On 17th of June 2011, in the cover of the night anonymous young men painted one of the bronze reliefs of the Monument to the Soviet army in Sofia. The Soviet soldiers from this composition which represents the victorious march of the Red Army during the Second World War were turned into popular comics characters – the Joker, Wolverine, Santa Claus, Superman, Captain America, Wonder Woman, etc. – while the Soviet flag was painted with the stars and stripes of the American flag. A caption saying “Abreast of Times“ was added beneath as well. The article examines several aspects of this particular case of street artwork and its sometimes divergent understandings, representations and interpretations, by referring to two substantial local debates – the debate over the future of the Soviet war memorials built in socialist times, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the debate over the nature of modern graffiti or street art and their increasing presence on some of the most important topoi in the urban cityscape.