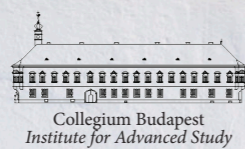


The present book was born of an international research project on "Classics and Communism" which aimed to discover and explore the history of classical philology after World War II in what was then considered the camp of Socialist countries. Working together with colleagues from these countries, sharing and comparing common experience, participants were able to acquire a better grasp of a subject not yet examined in detail, peeling layer after layer off the still unknown history of this important aspect of European culture under Communist siege. Soviet seeds fell on more or less fertile soil in the respective countries, and strategies applied by the new authorities towards studies of antiquity differed accordingly. The work involved a number of "case studies," such as personal histories of prominent philologists in the region, as well as national surveys. Classical studies were explored in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany, and the Soviet Union, particularly in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine; the situation in Yugoslavia was examined on the example of Serbia and Slovenia.



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*Classics & Communism* is not merely a study of an age past that has been conducted for the love of scholarship: each of its chapters provides a different perspective on what now seems a futile attempt to exercise crude and naked power in order to intimidate minds and control ideas. One cannot be entirely sure whether the comrades in the Politburo read Henry Miller or not; they certainly agreed with his assessment in the *Tropic of Cancer* that "every man with a bellyful of the Classics is an enemy to the human race." To those who did not witness Communism personally, this volume explains some of the logic behind the reduction and abandoning of classical languages in education, the persecution of insubordinate scholars, marginalisation of Classics, and the priority given to Party connections over scholarly merit. Almost a quarter of a century after the fall of Communism, such extreme measures seem absurd, while the rationale for maintaining classical education and scholarship does not grow old but branches out towards finding benefits less ideological and more concrete, *matter over spirit*.

classics and  
communism

# CLASSICS AND COMMUNISM

Greek and Latin Classics behind the Iron Curtain

Published research on the history of Classics during the Communist period shines by its absence, to use a term borrowed from Tacitus, and exceptions to this rule are few and far between; even the authors dealing with the subject pay only tangential attention to the region. In contrast, the issue of Classics in both Italy and Germany before World War II has already been carefully examined. Nonetheless, the classical tradition in the former people's democracies has recently become a salient research topic. This book probes a subject that remains a scholarly terra incognita — investigating the context for the classical tradition and its transmission in what Winston Churchill once called "the ancient states" behind the Iron Curtain that stretched "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic," defining a significant part of Europe after World War II.