

SCALCĂU, A.

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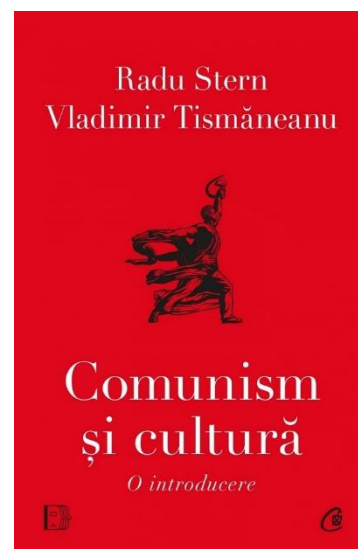
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24818/beman/2023.13.3-07>

Radu Stern is an independent curator and art historian who taught Art History at the University of Lausanne and was also Director of Education at Musée de l'Elysée in Switzerland. In 2004 he published *Against Fashion. Clothing as Art, 1850–1930* on the subject of avant-garde fashion.

Vladimir Tismăneanu is a professor of Politics at the University of Maryland and the author of many books among which: *The Devil in History: Communism, Fascism, and Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century* (2012), *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (2003), *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (1992). In 2006 he was the head of the Presidential

Commission for the Study of the Romanian Communist Dictatorship, which presented its report to the Parliament of Romania on December 18th, 2006, thus making Romania one of the few countries to openly condemn communism.

Radu Stern and Vladimir Tismăneanu's book was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2022, translated into Romanian by Marius Stan and published by Curtea Veche the following year.



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The book explores the relationship between the communist ideology and culture and it shows how the former perverted the latter so that it could serve its purpose. The authors investigate the ways in which culture was disciplined in order to serve the interests of the communist party and they describe several practices that existed in various countries during the twentieth century and which affected different cultural fields, such as: literature, education, music, the visual arts, the cinema. The two writers discuss several important events, such as the emergence and expansion of social realism, different manifestation of censorship, the Zhdanovshchina, the Thaw, the Cultural Revolution and many more.

In my opinion the book has three major strengths. First of all, it reads easily (like a collection of stories) although the subject matter is far from being simple; moreover, the events which are described are real, not fictional. Secondly, it manages to sift out the truth from the propaganda and offers a variety of captivating examples to back up all the factual information. Last but not least, it gives the readers a clear understanding of the ways in which communist ideology invaded the culture of several countries, in an attempt to turn all people into good communists.