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Cinematography - A Propaganda Tool in the Period 1945-1965
DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

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Cinema, Propaganda, Communism, Totalitarian regime, Securitate, Censorship, Directors, Film.

The political influence on cinema during the communist regime in Romania was profound and pervasive, reflecting the ideological orientations of the era. Cinema served as a powerful propaganda tool, with a clearly defined strategic purpose: to shape the perceptions and attitudes of the public and to foster adherence to communist ideology and values. Against the backdrop of widespread illiteracy in Romania before World War II, cinema provided an efficient and accessible means to communicate and promote the official narrative. The ability of film to combine visual, auditory, and narrative elements in a deeply emotional way made it an especially potent and influential propaganda medium. In this context, the "Noble duty of filmmakers" served as an ideological benchmark, indicating how authorities hoped to manipulate and shape collective consciousness through film. It is evident that cinema was perceived not only as an art form but also as a tool of "psychic engineering," designed to construct and uphold the "new man" in line with communist ideals. However, despite these efforts of control and manipulation, it is crucial to remember that the public's reception of films was never a passive or monolithic process. Viewers brought their interpretations, beliefs, and resistances, suggesting that the process of psychic engineering was never entirely successful or unchallenged. Ultimately, the study of cinema during the communist period provides a valuable window to understand the complex dynamics between power, art, and society in this historical context.

In this regard, a correlation between the political pressures on the film industry and its strained financial situation in the post-war period is imperative. It's evident that the intersection of the regime's ideological orientations and the economic imperative for survival greatly shaped the dynamics of the film industry. Viewing cinema as a tool for ideological propaganda was accompanied by a series of practical challenges manifested at the level of production and distribution. In this context, the role of cinema as a key state apparatus for disseminating ideological messages and its ability to generate revenue had a contradictory nature. On one hand, the clearly defined strategic goal of shaping the public's perceptions and attitudes required maintaining affordable prices for movie viewing, thus limiting the potential for profit generation. On the other hand, the rising costs of producing and distributing films in a difficult economic

context exerted significant pressure on the financial structures of the film industry. Therefore, the communist regime, with its aim of controlling and manipulating collective consciousness through film, faced a series of economic challenges that limited its ability to fulfill this "noble duty of filmmakers." This tension between political objectives and economic realities provides an essential perspective for understanding the evolution of the film industry in communist Romania and represents a key element in grasping the complex dynamics between power, art, and society in this historical context.

The study of the financial situation of the Romanian film industry in 1945 reveals a period marked by difficulties, with cinemas facing increased operational expenses and unsatisfactory ticket pricing. Although the Association of Film Importers and Distributors in Romania highlighted these issues, price hikes for tickets were largely rejected by the authorities. This strained situation set the stage for major reforms post-1947, initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts. The introduced regulations aimed for comprehensive control over the industry, heavily influenced by the preceding economic context. These developments highlight the interplay between economy and politics in shaping the regulations of the Romanian film industry in the post-war period.

Starting in 1947, the Romanian film industry underwent significant restructuring, with the introduction of stringent regulations by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts. This established exhaustive control over cinematic activities, from the licensing process to operations, imposing strict criteria for functioning. Aspects like citizenship, morality, and hygiene conditions became pivotal in authorizing cinemas. The regulation also strengthened and institutionalized censorship through the Central Censorship Commission, overseeing projected content. Moreover, a substantial tax was imposed on cinema revenues, with potential reductions if reinvested for cultural purposes. A clear intent was the eradication of monopolies and cartels in the sector, with the Ministry having the authority to exercise control over every cinema. These measures reflect post-war Romania's political and social evolution, emphasizing the state's prominent role in the cultural domain.

In the post-war period, Romania's film industry underwent significant transformations, starting with the introduction of a new regulation in 1947. These changes were particularly catalyzed by the "State Plan" of 1949, highlighting the government's efforts to consolidate and stimulate the film sector, even amidst stringent regulations. This mirrors the Romanian

government's tendency to balance political control with the need to support and expand the film industry, considering its use as a propaganda tool. Consequently, an analysis of the "State Plan" reveals major budgetary investments in film infrastructure and close collaboration with the Soviet Union. However, even though the film industry was viewed as a priority, the introduction of tax laws in 1949, inspired by the Soviet model, brought additional challenges to its development. These measures illustrate how the Romanian government navigated between political control, economic interests, and cultural imperatives in the post-war era.

An examination of the 1949 tax regulations highlights a considerable impact on the development of Romanian cinema. The significant taxes and fees, especially those for advertising, hindered the expansion of the film industry. Although the government saw cinema as a propaganda tool, it had to adjust the Soviet tax model to the specific Romanian context. Complications arising from adopting this model led to legislative revision proposals, including reductions in screening and advertising taxes. The exorbitant advertising fees affected not just cinema but the overall culture by limiting advertising means. The analysis also reflects Romania's clear interest in distributing Soviet films, suggesting a potential reorientation of tax policies to support this industry and consolidate cultural ties with the Soviet Union. In 1949, the Romanian cinematic landscape underwent a substantial transformation, highlighted by major investments in equipment and studios, thereby acknowledging the industry's economic potential. This transformation, influenced by the Soviet Union, which provided not only financial but also technical and human support, illustrates Romania's ideological reorientation during that period and the importance attributed to cinema in the national strategy.

The year 1949 represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of Romanian cinema, highlighting a transition from an approach centered on cultural and aesthetic values to one dominated by political ideology and state interests. In the post-war context, cinema was reconceptualized, becoming a key instrument for consolidating and legitimizing political authority, especially within the totalitarian regime. This regime used film not merely as an art form but primarily as a means of propaganda, aiming to disseminate the ideology of the Romanian Communist Party. Cinematic productions in 1949, though limited in number, played a strategic role in promoting the regime's policies, both domestically and internationally. Films from that period not only glorified progress and labor values but also emphasized the transformations in society promoted by the regime. This propagandistic dimension is also

manifested through international recognition, such as the award won by the documentary "Petrolul" in Czechoslovakia. Thus, the cinema of 1949 was not just an artistic act but also a crucial political instrument for supporting and legitimizing the prevailing regime.

Moreover, in 1949, Romanian cinema underwent significant transformations, marked by reorganizations and strategic planning aimed at enhancing film production and distribution. This included the appointment of Nicolae Bellu as the main responsible for cinema, integrating artistic expertise by involving directors Wolfinger Siegfried and Nicolae Dinescu, and centralizing control over cinemas. Clear production objectives for 1950 were also established, and plans were initiated for the construction of studios in Buftea, reflecting an intent to strengthen the film infrastructure. These measures, as a whole, indicate the authorities' recognition of cinema as a potent propaganda tool. Continuing into the 1950s, despite challenges such as decentralization, financial and technical difficulties, the growing audience validated cinema's essential role in shaping public opinion. Thus, the years 1949-1950 provide a significant example of the interaction between state politics, economy, and culture in the post-war context, underlining the adaptability and resilience of the Romanian film industry.

In the 1950s, the Romanian film industry faced numerous challenges and transformations, influenced by the complexity of sociopolitical changes. The management of cinemas evolved from centralized control to local Provisional Committees.

This transition brought with it financial and technical difficulties, including the payment of venues and precarious technical equipment. However, during this tumultuous period, the number of viewers increased by 20%. Despite this growth, cinema's fundamental role in sociopolitical propaganda was not sufficiently appreciated, which manifested in proposals to restructure the perception and operation of this industry, largely inspired by the Soviet model. Efforts from 1951-1953 to integrate cinema into higher education also stand out, underscoring its potential in education and reaffirming film's essential role as an influence tool in the totalitarian political context. These developments mark a defining stage in the development of Romanian cinema, with profound implications in the public and academic spheres.

During the period of communist Romania, the five-year economic planning revealed a significant adaptation in the allocation of funds for the film industry. Initially, they faced limited financial allocations, which were later rectified following the recognition of costs associated with major developments, such as the construction of the "Buftea" Film Centre and investments in

cinematic infrastructure and education. These adjustments illustrate the communist administration's effort to understand and support a continuously evolving industry and the recognition of cinema's value both as a propaganda tool and as an art form. Within the context of these changes, there was a clear tension between the needs of industrial development and the constraints of a planned economic model. This economic and political framework represented a landscape navigated cautiously, balancing economic and political demands with the artistic and cultural aspirations of cinema. Thus, the funding of cinema during this period demonstrates the intricate interaction between macroeconomic policy and artistic expression in a controlled political environment.

In the fifth decade of the 20th century, the film sector in Romania underwent significant changes against the backdrop of notable political and cultural transformations. State policy aimed at the stringent control and organization of film activities, manifested by establishing standards for the types of films produced, highlighting the ideological function of film in socialist society. Increased control over production and the dissemination of state ideology through film was encouraged. However, measures were also undertaken to improve working conditions in cinemas and to increase cinema accessibility to the wider public, including in rural areas. The Council of Ministers' decision on June 17, 1954, was a key moment in this context, facilitating the centralization of the sector and collaboration between state regional film enterprises and the Regional People's Councils. This period underscores the complex intersection between politics, economy, and art in the development of Romanian cinema and highlights the role of film as a tool for education, propaganda, and culture in socialist society.

In the 1951-1952 academic year, Romania attempted to integrate cinema into higher education, an endeavor marked by numerous difficulties, including a lack of resources, projection equipment, and specific visual materials. Although there was a growing recognition of the value of cinema as a pedagogical methodology, associated costs and a lack of involvement from university leadership represented major barriers. Within this initiative's context, the period 1951-1953 became essential not only for introducing cinema into the academic environment but also for reassessing resource allocation within five-year economic planning, with an emphasis on cinematic needs. This phase reflects the maturation of the communist administration's perception of the film industry and the recognition of its role as a propaganda tool.

In the 1950s, Romania reinforced the role of cinema as a primary tool of propaganda, emphasizing the promotion of socialist and national values, especially regarding the rural environment. Agrarian films, which extolled the achievements of socialist agriculture, became central in efforts to cultivate a new national identity. This emphasizes the use of cinema in consolidating socialist ideology and influencing the public. By 1954, an analysis of Romanian cinematic activities revealed challenges and opportunities concerning film imports and exports. The limited fund for imports and the need to restructure the Foreign Relations Service were identified as major issues. Additionally, the need to adapt the export strategy was recognized, with a suggestion focusing on short documentary films showcasing Romania's culture and geography. Overall, 1954 was marked by adaptation and optimization efforts in the film sector, emphasizing balancing ideological and economic imperatives.

Between 1955-1956, the script department of the "Buftea" Film Centre faced various challenges, such as difficulties in evaluating scripts, neglecting young talents, and inefficiency of leaders. In an attempt to address these issues, measures were proposed such as revising thematic plans, reorganizing leadership positions, and adjusting financial rewards for writers. These efforts occurred within a strict control exercised by the communist regime over the film industry. 1956 highlighted numerous obstacles in the field of film production, including issues related to quality, coherence, and ideology of the scripts. These shortcomings affected production efficiency and resulted in rising costs. Moreover, the "Ion Creangă" Slide Film Studio faced issues in defining its profile and target audience, affecting the quality of the final products. Despite reservations, films with undefined or "controversial" scripts were still launched into production, causing significant delays and exerting excessive pressures on the production capacity of the studios. These delays not only affected production efficiency but also led to significant cost increases.

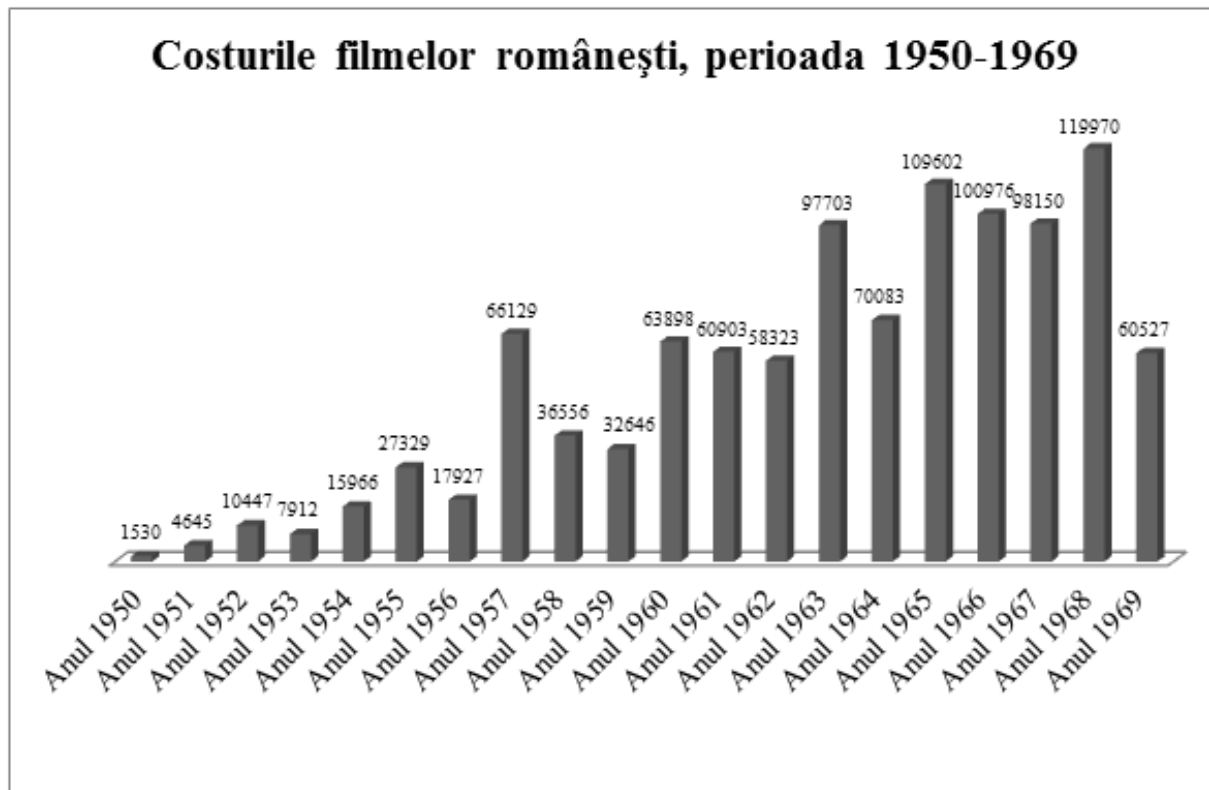


Fig. no. 1: The costs of Romanian films, period 1950-1969

During the same period, the Romanian film industry faced significant challenges. Inadequate coordination between theater and cinema led to an overuse of resources, including actors and filming sets, affecting the quality of the productions.

This situation highlighted an urgent need for better management of human and material resources. Furthermore, yearly planning resulted in gaps and disorganization, putting pressure on production teams and limiting the thematic diversity of films. An extension of the planning to a minimum of two years was suggested for more efficient use of resources, requiring financial support from the Ministry of Culture. Additionally, censorship, imposed by the communist regime, played a pivotal role, ensuring that productions adhered to party ideology and using cinema as a propaganda tool. Films underwent stringent control, promoting socialist values and patriotism. Essentially, in the 1950s, Romanian cinema was closely aligned with the political agenda, thereby underscoring the political role of art in that society.

In analysis of Romanian cinema in 1956 reveals a period marked by complexity and tensions. Central to this process was the intention to establish the Union of Film Creators and the

Film Fund, a move accompanied by friction within the cinematic community. This materialized in rumors related to restructuring and major changes, creating uncertainty, despite the clarifications provided by the party. The Ministry of Culture proposed direct involvement in the establishment of the Union, emphasizing the need for strict oversight by party members. This context suggests the communist party's resistance towards the new Union and indicates a strain between the desire for modernization and regime control. Thus, 1956 is viewed as a pivotal moment, dominated by uncertainty, in which a balance between artistic aspirations and communist ideological constraints was sought.

Thematic planning of films was heavily influenced by the communist regime, with scripts often required to align with state ideology. The study of film studios, such as "Alexandru Sahia" and "Ion Creangă", reflects the adaptations and challenges of this era. Despite the constraints, this period was, surprisingly, a source of artistic innovation, with directors and screenwriters exploring new forms of expression. This complex framework of adaptation in the 1950s underscores both the influence of the communist regime on cinema and its essential role in the Romanian cultural and artistic landscape.

Romanian cinema faced significant challenges related to film stock supply, affecting both production capacity and the quality of the productions. These difficulties, combined with the often inferior quality of the available film stock, had significant implications for the entire industry, limiting the dissemination of Romanian productions both domestically and abroad. This issue highlights the essentiality of adequate material resources in supporting a successful film industry. However, despite these limitations, Romanian creators showed remarkable resilience, producing valuable works even under unfavorable conditions, paving the way for a significant expansion of cinema in the sixties and seventies. This subsequent period was characterized by notable diversification, with the emergence of many talented filmmakers, strengthening and expanding the creative front of Romanian cinema. Directors such as Mircea Drăgan, Lucian Pintilie, Mircea Săucan, and Liviu Ciulei, among others, significantly influenced the evolution and themes of Romanian cinema.

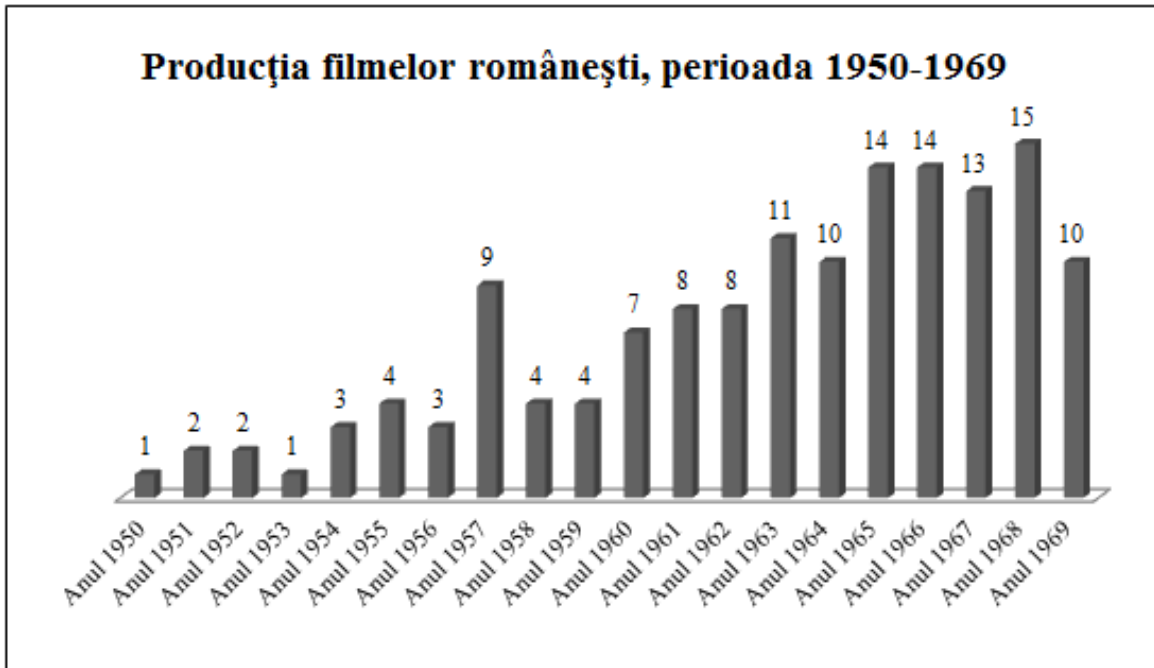


Fig. no. 2: Production of Romanian films, 1950-1969 period

During the expansion period of Romanian cinema, there were, however, significant ideological and technical constraints. The communist regime markedly influenced the style and content of films, alongside the financial and technological challenges of the industry. Nevertheless, audience data indicates an increased public interest in Romanian productions, emphasizing their significance in the sociocultural landscape of the time.

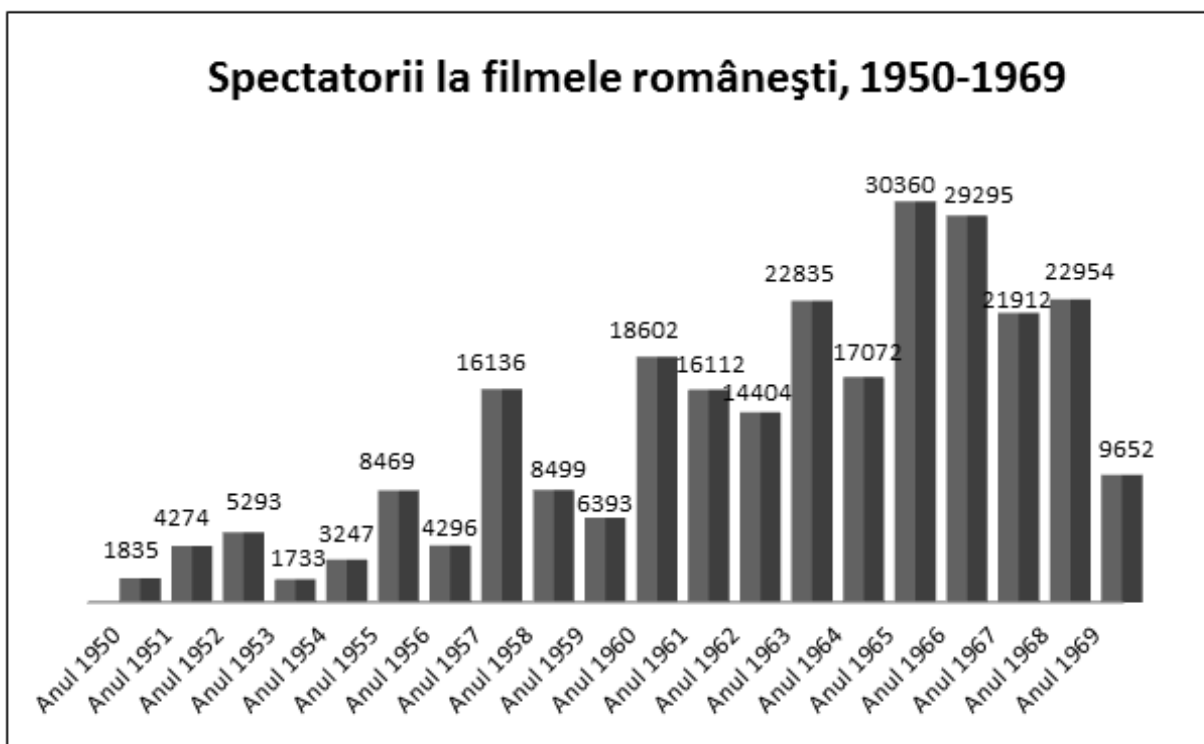


Fig. no. 3: Viewers of Romanian films during the period 1950-1969.

During the span of 1945-1965, Romanian cinema underwent an essential process of maturation and consolidation of its identity. This period was significantly influenced by dialogue with foreign film industries, particularly the Soviet one. This impact began in the 1940s but intensified in the subsequent decade, coinciding with the strengthening of communist power in Romania. Soviet cinema played a dual role in Romania: as a tool for propagating socialist values and as an aesthetic and cultural influence. Examining this relationship reveals a complex web of influences and interactions at multiple levels - political, ideological, cultural, and aesthetic - reflecting the intricacy of the ties between the two film industries in the historical and political context of the era.

In the immediate post-war period, the Soviet influence on the Romanian film industry grew considerably, mirroring the takeover by the Romanian Communist Party in 1945. This impact was manifested through requests for tax exemptions for documentary and anti-fascist films, demands for the monopoly on the distribution of Soviet films and cinema equipment in Romania, and calls for technical assistance from the USSR to develop Romania's cinematic

infrastructure. On October 19, 1949, a significant effort to develop Romanian-language dubbing for Soviet films was launched with the arrival of a Soviet technical team in Romania. This aimed at establishing a dubbing infrastructure, with substantial financial investments from the Romanian state. This progression underscores the pivotal role Soviet influence and collaboration had in shaping the Romanian film industry during this time and Romania's endeavors to fortify and expand this sector.

The Council of Ministers Decision No. 166 of February 6, 1954 signals a firm commitment by the authorities of the People's Republic of Romania to rejuvenate the film industry through the integration of Soviet expertise. The Ministry of Culture's request for the support of Soviet specialists for a duration of 12 months indicates a recognition of the need for technical proficiency, as well as the integration of this expertise into domestic film production processes. During this time, cinema was not just an art form but also an ideological tool used for propaganda and social control, playing a crucial role in the cultural and political propaganda strategy of the communist regime. Socialist film festivals and their productions held a central role in promoting the political agenda, incorporating ideological messages and communist values. This propagandistic dimension was further amplified by the way these films were presented and received by the public. Analyzing the first decade of the communist regime in Romania underscores the strategic role of cinema, with filmmakers navigating at the intersection of art, ideology, and politics. The development of the "Buftea" Studios in the 1950s highlights the regime's strategic investment in cinema, positioning it as a center of excellence in the socialist bloc and as a symbol of the aspiration to rival major Western film powers.

Examining the evolution of Romanian cinema during a particular historical period and emphasizing the development of the "Buftea" Studios identifies the relevance of cinema in the sociopolitical context of communist Romania. Cinema, through productions and investments in studios like "Buftea", served as a propaganda tool and reflects a clear ideological vision. An indicator of the industry's maturation is the annual production increase from 4 to 16 films within a span of five years. Additionally, the positive reviews garnered by the "Buftea" Studios on the international stage underscore their quality and ambition.

The importance of cultural and professional exchanges with the Soviet Union is essential in this discussion, exemplified by the visits of filmmakers Victor Iliu and Dinu Negreanu. These interactions not only "enhanced" the skills of the filmmakers but also introduced Soviet

aesthetics into Romanian cinema. Under Soviet influence, Romanian cinema became an ideological instrument.

Another noteworthy aspect in the context of the relationship between art, ideology, and state politics is the contribution of the Animafilm Studio. While subjected to political and ideological pressures, Animafilm was a relatively "autonomous" space for innovation and artistic experimentation, having a significant impact on the history of animated cinema and the artistic culture of communist Romania. This study underscores the intricate interconnections between politics, culture, and art in the communist era, offering valuable insights into this period.

Special attention is given to the "Alexandru Sahia" Film Studio, which, unlike other institutions, had an explicit role as a tool for state propaganda. Although designed as a propaganda vehicle to reflect a positive image of socialist society, the "Sahia" Studio nevertheless offered opportunities for artistic expression and nuanced representations of reality. In summary, this analysis highlights the central role of cinema in the propaganda strategies of the communist regime and emphasizes the political impact on art and culture during that period.

An analysis of the "Alexandru Sahia" Film Studio reveals the complexity of documentary cinema in communist Romania, in an era marked by propaganda and political control. Although the studio is often seen as a propagandistic instrument of the regime, it also served as a space for artistic expression. It struck a balance between conformity to political pressures and artistic freedom, thus producing works of historical and artistic relevance. The newsreels produced by "Sahia" underscore its propagandistic role, being media tools used to disseminate the ideology of the Romanian Communist Party. They played a significant role in shaping public perceptions and constructing a state-controlled reality. Research on these newsreels highlights not only the productions themselves but also optimization strategies for the production and broadcasting process, as well as their active role in shaping public ideology.

In a separate note, the meticulous surveillance of the employees of the "Alexandru Sahia" Film Studio through the personal files of the Securitate illustrates the invasive methods by which the communist regime controlled society. These files, which detail private information, demonstrate how the regime attempted to ensure ideological conformity. They are also essential historical resources that provide insight into daily life in communist Romania and the relationship between citizens and the state. Analyzing the surveillance practices of the Securitate over the employees of the "Alexandru Sahia" Film Studio during the communist period in

Romania highlights a deep intrusion of the state into the private sphere of the individual, going beyond simple professional monitoring, touching the intimate details of their daily lives. This omnipresence of state control manifested in various spheres, such as marital behaviors, dress code, social relations, health, and financial status, even international travels. These measures reflect the communist system's attempt to shape and control citizens' behavior in line with the values of the official ideology.

Against the backdrop of this constant surveillance, the communist regime established a climate of fear and suspicion, using surveillance as a tool for political and social control. Such practices, although justified in ideological terms by the regime, constitute severe violations of individual freedoms from a human rights perspective. The case of the "Alexandru Sahia" Film Studio exemplifies how the film industry, despite the considerable resources allocated - as evidenced by the figures relevant for 1951 - was not immune to the strict and omnipresent control of the communist regime. This detailed attention to the cinematic field underscores the importance the regime placed on propaganda and informational control.

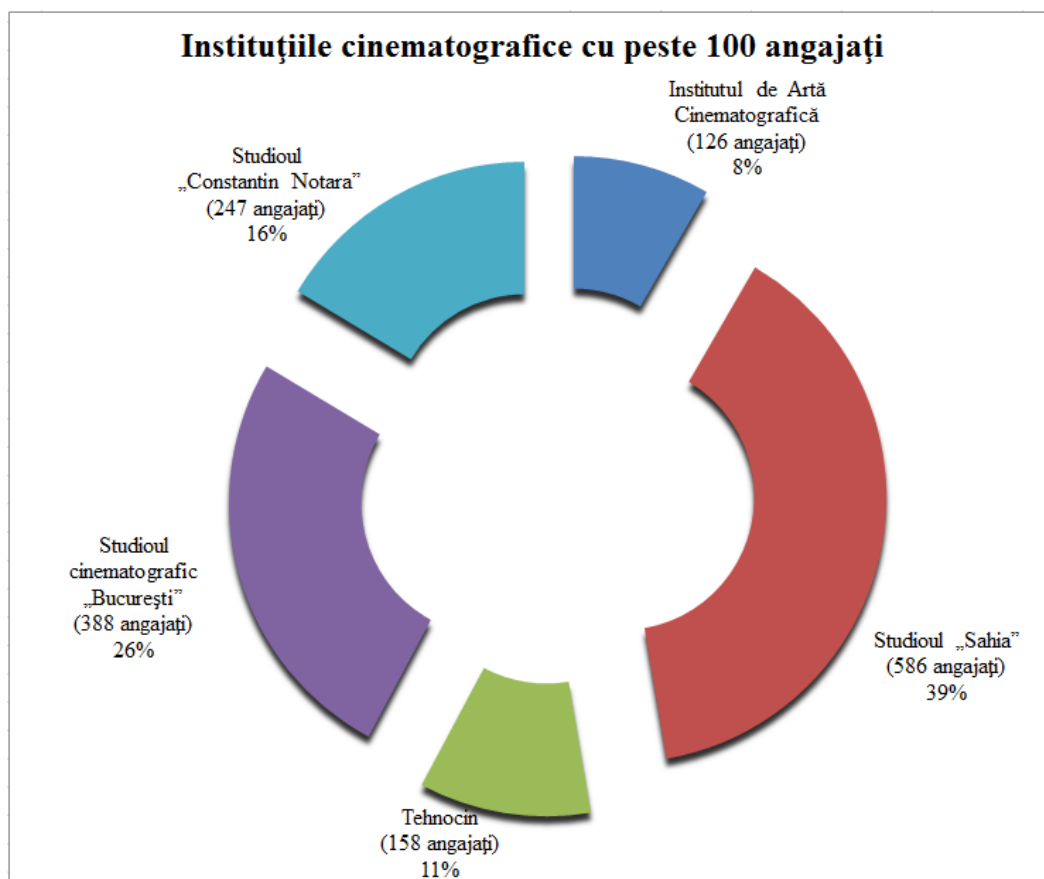


Fig. no. 4: Cinematographic institutions with over 100 employees in 1951.

The 'Ion Creangă' Slide Film Studio represents a paradigm of how the Romanian communist regime approached influencing the collective mindset not through coercive means, but educational and cultural ones. With the mission of disseminating communist ideological messages and values, the studio used slide films to shape public perceptions, addressing a wide range of subjects, from scientific topics to representations of the socialist "new man". However, despite its objectives, the studio faced significant challenges, from technical problems and poor staff skills to criticisms of the quality of the slide films and ambiguities regarding the target audience. Thus, an analysis of this studio highlights the complexities of using arts and visual media for propaganda purposes in the sociopolitical context of the time. It underscores that the success of propaganda strategies is not guaranteed solely by ideological directive but is influenced by multiple variables, including resources, competence, and the target audience. Therefore, exploring the 'Ion Creangă' Studio provides a detailed understanding of the ways in which the communist regime tried to influence culture and society through cinematography and visual arts.

During the communist regime, film clubs and the amateur film movement made a significant contribution to cultural and social development in Romania, but within a deeply politicized and ideological context. While they played a crucial role in shaping and educating the "new man", they also served as instruments of the regime's control and propaganda, molding public perceptions and tastes according to state agendas. A prominent example in this regard is the Romanian Association of Amateur Cinematographers (A.R.C.A.), an organization founded in the post-war period that promoted amateur film in Romania. However, the suppression of A.R.C.A. by communist authorities highlights the regime's manipulations of cultural discourse. On the other hand, the existence of a variety of forms and approaches within film clubs suggests some artistic autonomy despite ideological pressures. In summary, although film clubs were tools of the state's propaganda strategy, they influenced and enriched the Romanian cinematographic scene, with repercussions even in the contemporary era.

The establishment of the first film club during the communist regime in Romania, in 1957, at the Students' Culture House in Bucharest, illustrates an intersection of pedagogy, promotion of cinematographic culture, and artistic sensibility within the political context of that period. The film club, in essence, had a dual function: on one hand, it was used as a propaganda tool of the regime, conveying the party's ideology through films, especially to workers. On the

other hand, it provided a space for creative expression and artistic autonomy, where certain amateur filmmakers explored themes that could be considered contrary to the imposed ideological lines. Despite its potential for propaganda, film clubs highlighted a desire for authenticity, reflecting the socio-political realities of the period. However, film clubs faced significant opposition from the regime, especially in attempts to consolidate at the national level, due to fears of losing propagandistic control. Essentially, film clubs operated in a tense balance between official propaganda and artistic autonomy, playing a crucial role in Romania's cultural and cinematographic evolution during that era.

The case study explores the potential of film clubs as tools for interpreting social and cultural realities, focusing on the "Oțelul Roșu" Film Club in the context of communist society in Romania. The analysis highlights the fact that film clubs played an essential role in the cinematographic culture of the communist era, serving not just as centers of consumption, but also of cultural production. The "Oțelul Roșu" Film Club was used as a major propaganda tool, its films being used for educational purposes and indoctrination. Furthermore, the study shows that film clubs were strictly monitored by political authorities, which ensured a certain stability but also rigorous control.

After the fall of the communist regime, research revealed the challenges faced by film clubs, including restrictions imposed by artistic censorship, a lack of resources and equipment, and denial to associate with international organizations. Despite these hurdles, the film clubs managed to produce numerous quality films, thanks to the passion and dedication of film enthusiasts. Names such as Emil Mateiaș, Ludovic Dama, Corneliu Dimitriu, Iosif Costinaș, and Victor Colonelu played a pivotal role in shaping amateur filmmaking in Romania.

In the communist era of Romania, cinematography became a central tool of regime control, aiming to disseminate ideological and political messages. The state nationalized the cinemas, eliminating the autonomy of private film producers and distributors. This action profoundly influenced the content of cinematographic products, with a dominance of communist propaganda. While there was an attempt to compensate owners whose assets were confiscated, in many situations, these compensations proved to be non-existent. The legal framework eliminated any form of legal challenge to the nationalization process, ensuring the state's total control over the film industry. The planning and coordination of the nationalization process reflected a strategic and systematic approach, integrated into the internal structure of the communist party.

This approach underscores the desire for control and suppression of any alternative perspectives in the field of film, as well as the regime's ability to incorporate political decisions into the economic and social transformations of the period.

The nationalization of cinemas in communist-era Romania illustrates the deep intertwining of politics and culture, highlighting how political control influenced and reshaped the film industry. This transformation was not just about changes in ownership and management, but represented a reconceptualization of values and priorities in film production and distribution. More than a mere administrative change, nationalization was grounded in a political strategy intended to centralize the means of cultural production and dissemination, thereby emphasizing the ideological objectives of the communist regime over any other considerations, such as efficiency or profitability. An extension of this control was the introduction of film caravans, designed to amplify the propagandistic message in rural areas, thus showcasing the regime's adaptability and determination in influencing and shaping cultural perception. The analysis of the nationalization of cinemas and film caravans highlights not just the methods of manipulating cultural production during the communist era, but also the need for a deep understanding of their impact on society.

In the context of our research on film caravans during the period before the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, we identified the evolution and complexity of this phenomenon within a specific sociopolitical framework. Film caravans, developed in response to challenges of the era, such as limited access to cinemas, were perceived as effective propaganda tools in rural areas. This perception was reinforced through legislative changes and the official recognition of the power of film as a means of influencing the audience. Technological advancement, especially the introduction of sound film, brought a new level of sophistication to the Romanian film industry, despite the challenges posed by adapting to these innovations. Film caravans, both before and during the communist regime, were strategically used by authorities as means of disseminating communist ideology, especially in rural regions with limited access to information and entertainment. They played an essential role in the propaganda machinery, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of cinema as a tool for cultural and ideological influence. This phenomenon was further emphasized by the varied production of films, which served both as means of education and promotion of party policies.

In conclusion, the analysis of film caravans provides a deep understanding of how film was used as a strategic tool for manipulation and control during the communist period, thus underscoring the power of mass media in influencing public perception within a defined sociopolitical context.

The present research addresses the relationship between power, culture, and economy in the context of Romanian cinema during the post-war period. Sovromfilm, established at the end of 1948, represented a Soviet influence felt in reshaping the Romanian cinematic landscape. Through the "Timpuri noi" cinemas, Soviet propaganda was promoted under the guise of public education. The centralization of control over cinema had a significant impact on the Romanian cultural and political narrative, but also encountered resistance from certain film entities, highlighting dissent against Soviet intervention. Despite the official portrayal of the "Sovroms" as bilateral partnerships, they actually represented tools for the economic exploitation of Romania. The period 1954-1956, marked by the dissolution of these entities, reflects the geopolitical and tense changes of the time. The conclusion emphasizes the interconnection between art, culture, and political and economic forces.

Additionally, the research highlights a detailed investigation of the role of the Securitate (Romanian secret police) in cinema, with a focus on the impact on the works of directors Paul Călinescu and Mircea Săucan within the context of the Romanian communist regime.

The study on the files of director Paul Călinescu in the context of surveillance and censorship during the communist era offers a detailed perspective on the dynamics between art and power in Romanian cinema. Paul Călinescu, an emblematic figure for the development of the Romanian film industry, navigated a landscape marked by ideological constraints, managing to provide valuable contributions in the field. However, the research emphasizes the need for careful interpretation of the Securitate's files, given the possibility of distortion or manipulation. The intense surveillance under which Paul Călinescu was placed highlights the authorities' concerns about his activities, fluctuating between considerations of direct threat and suspicions. The acknowledgment of his contributions to Romanian cinema came late, also marking his resilience and dedication to art, even within the context of rigorous oversight. In conclusion, the analysis of the interaction between Paul Călinescu and the Securitate offers a deep understanding of cultural life and political pressures in communist Romania.

Paul Călinescu made significant contributions in an era marked by political and social complexity. His works ranged from documentaries to artistic films, reflecting adaptability to the regime's demands. Despite his claims of non-political involvement, Paul Călinescu collaborated with the authorities, producing films in line with their agendas. Călinescu's case study illustrates the interaction between cultural production, surveillance, and politics in communist Romania, providing insight into how artists had to navigate an environment of control and censorship. However, this analysis represents just one component of a broader spectrum of similar situations that require additional research for a comprehensive understanding of the historical context.

Analyzing five of the cinematographic works of director Paul Călinescu, we observe a complex representation of Romanian society in the 1950s. Each film, from "Răsună valea" with its propagandistic tone and idealized representation of the working class, to the satirical comedy "Titanic Vals", reflects Călinescu's ability to navigate and express the realities of the time, even within the context of political and ideological restrictions. These works are not just means of entertainment but also significant documents of the era, emphasizing Călinescu's directorial ingenuity despite external limitations.

Continuing the research in the field of Romanian cinema, we turned our attention to Mircea Săucan, whose activity represents another example of the tensions between creativity and the censorship of the communist regime.

The professional trajectory of director Mircea Săucan in communist Romania illustrates the effects of an authoritarian regime on artistic freedom. Despite his ideological affiliations with communism, Săucan felt the communist censorship and oppression, facing interrogations by the Securitate and being confined to a psychiatric institution as a response to the regime's displeasure with his work. This context suggests a dissonance between personal ideological adherence and the realities of an oppressive political system. The implications of the Securitate's actions and the communist regime on Săucan's activity and mental health were deeply negative, resulting in intimidation, stigmatization, career obstruction, and psychological trauma. His experience underscores the fact that, regardless of an individual's beliefs or status, no one was immune to the abuses of the communist system in Romania.

During the communist era, art and culture in Romania were used as means of propaganda to promote the state's ideology and maintain control over the population. Artists who opposed the regime's requirements were often marginalized or persecuted. Mircea Săucan was one of these

artists, being unfairly treated by the regime due to his refusal to disseminate propaganda through cinema. Săucan's opposition to the regime's demands, combined with his open criticism, might explain the severe measures taken against him. Additionally, his connections to the USSR and his Jewish background could have contributed to the authorities' suspicions, although we cannot determine with certainty the extent to which these aspects influenced his treatment. Moreover, the complexity of his work might have eluded the comprehension of the censors, leading to precautionary measures by the regime. This situation highlights the severe restrictions imposed on freedom of expression in communist Romania and the consequences for artists who did not comply with the regime's requirements.

In the context of the communist regime in Romania, artists, especially directors like Mircea Săucan, were often subjected to repression and censorship. The repressions Săucan experienced illustrate the adversities faced by artists during this period, possibly influenced by various factors such as his nonconformist artistic style, ties to the USSR, the potential enigmatic interpretation of his works by censorship commissions, and possibly his Jewish origins. The communist regime's interference in Săucan's career, including the removal of certain films from circulation, had profound implications for his professional development. The Securitate, the main repressive organ of the regime, closely monitored Săucan, yet failed to gather incriminating evidence against him, highlighting the system's limitations. Despite constraints and censorship, Săucan maintained his artistic integrity, striving to innovate Romanian cinema and oppose the official narrative promoted by the regime. This resistance underscores the value of artistic freedom and the tenacity of the human spirit in the face of oppression.

Analyzing historical episodes, such as that of director Mircea Săucan, emphasizes the importance of knowing the past to understand historical progress, social structure, and freedom of expression. Studying Săucan's situation during the communist era highlights the necessity of defending artistic freedoms and fundamental rights, with implications for anticipating historical recurrence, education, supporting democratic values, and collective memory. Despite political constraints, Săucan asserted his place in Romanian cinema, having a significant impact on subsequent generations. In the contemporary era, Săucan's work is reevaluated and appreciated for its contribution to the development of Romanian film, demonstrating the power of art to resist adversity and promoting values of freedom of expression. In analyzing Mircea Săucan's

cinematic trajectory, the resilience of art in the face of restrictions imposed by the communist regime stands out.

In the context of external propaganda, between 1945-1965, Romanian cinema served as an instrument to disseminate the regime's views. Supported by the Romanian Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the period from 1957-1962 was particularly productive in terms of external propaganda, although there was a felt need for more efficient coordination. This need led to the 1969 proposal to create a single entity to coordinate external propaganda. To consolidate its role in film, regular productions of documentaries with international distribution potential were proposed. Consequently, various cinematic events were organized in countries across multiple continents, where Romanian documentaries were translated into several languages and presented to international audiences.

The financial analysis of the film industry during the communist regime in Romania (1945-1965) highlights the dissonance between the use of cinema as a propaganda tool and its economic performance. Although the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party and the Council of Ministers of the Romanian People's Republic emphasized positive achievements in the field of film, financial evidence suggests otherwise. The discrepancy between the box office receipts from Romanian films produced between 1950 and 1969 and their propagandistic role underscores the regime's tendency to prioritize the transmission of ideology over economic profitability.

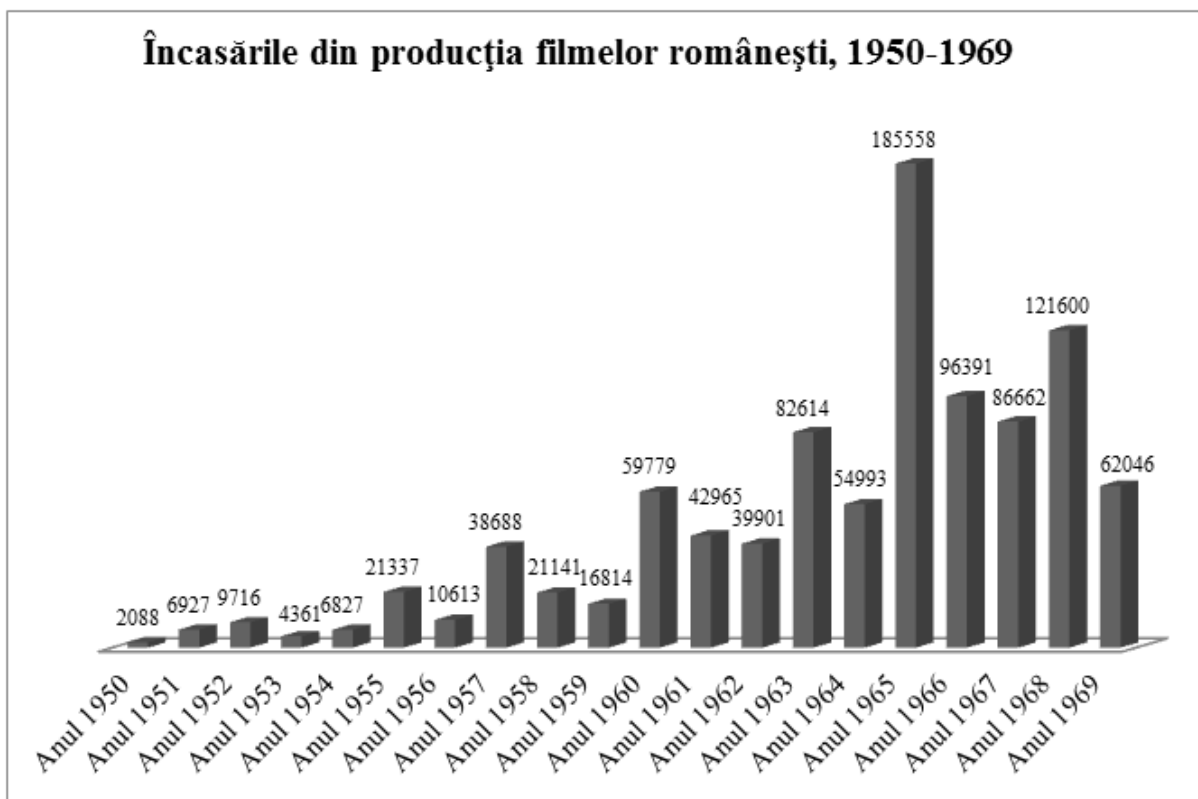


Fig. no. 5: Box office receipts from the production of Romanian films during 1950-1969.

The following chart analyzes the financial losses of Romanian film production between 1952-1967. Over this 15-year period, it's observed that the film industry recorded only losses. This situation reflects the fact that the propagandistic aim of cinema had a significant impact on the financial performance of this sector, resulting in a negative tilt of the financial balance.

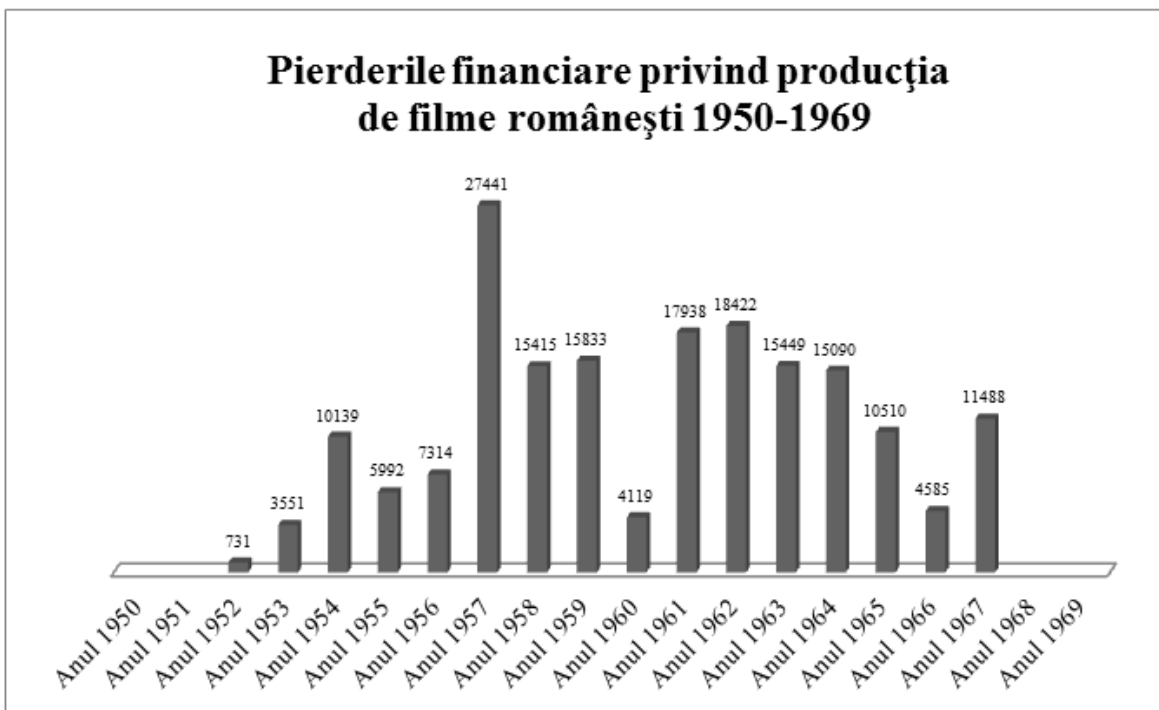


Fig. no. 6: Financial losses concerning the production of Romanian films during 1950-1969.

The third chart provides a perspective on the financial benefits associated with the production of Romanian films during the same period. However, the data shows that no profit was made during this 15-year span. This evidence further underscores the regime's priority to use cinema primarily as a propaganda tool, with a secondary interest in generating profits. This suggests that economic considerations were often sidelined in favor of fulfilling the regime's political agenda.

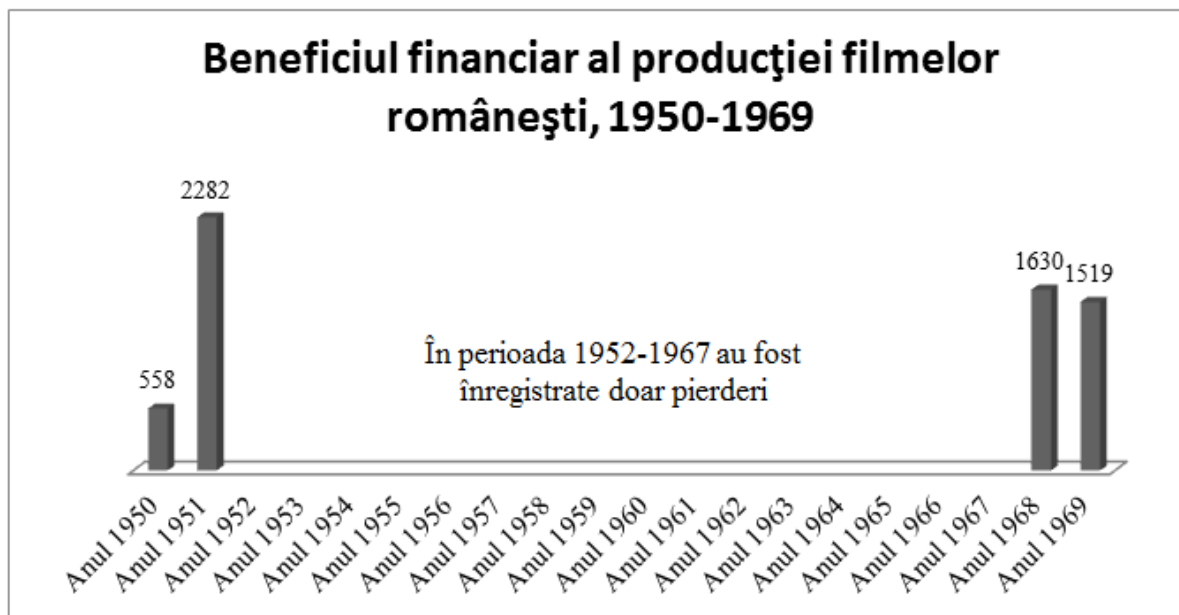


Fig. no. 7: Financial benefits of Romanian film production during 1950-1969.

The analysis of this graphical data invites us to a profound contemplation of the priorities and strategies of the communist regime. These not only shaped the content and direction of film productions but also had a palpable impact on the economic structure of this industry. A strong conclusion emerges regarding the intersection between politics and economics within Romanian cinema during the period 1952-1967.

In the era of the communist regime in Romania, the film industry predominantly served as a propaganda tool, a decision that had negative implications for the financial performance of the sector. This subordination of economic goals to political interests transformed cinema into a strategic ideological vehicle, considering the significant level of illiteracy existing among the population. Films were used to project official narratives, aiming to shape perceptions and attitudes of the audience and promote adherence to communist values. The concept of "psychic engineering" and the notion of the "noble duty of filmmakers" highlight this deliberate use of cinema as a means to construct collective consciousness. However, the public's interpretation of films was not uniform but influenced by individual experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. Thus, while film played a central role in promoting the official ideology, the audience was not a mere recipient but an active participant in the interpretative process. This research provides a deep insight into the intersection of power, art, and society in the context of Romanian communism.

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