


# Chapter 8

## Censorship and Propaganda in the Romanian Literature After World War II

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### ABSTRACT

*Since its theoretical dawn in 1848, the communist ideology has underlined the theory of social determinism, which states that each person's behavior is not induced by his own individuality, but by the social class which he belongs to. As a result, in the communist Romania it was of strict necessity to educate each person in the spirit of the new society, as it was considered to be the only one capable to ensure his full development. In this situation, the role of literature as a means of propaganda became overwhelming, as it aimed to educate the individual in the spirit of submission to the party and its leader(s) and also hatred towards everything that might have opposed this attitude. Artists and writers in particular also went through a long process of adaptation as many of them submitted to the new ideology and others campaigned for the aesthetic value of literature. The present paper aims at identifying different aspects related to literature during the communist period as it brings to the foreground the scars propaganda and censorship left on art, culture and literature.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Literature and all other arts are fundamentally determined by historical, political and social reality. Art is social by its nature, and content creators are individualities who react differently to external stimuli.

In August 1944, the radical change in political, economic and social realities occurred when the Soviet army entered into Romanian territory as ally. Literature would be most visibly affected by the turmoil of the century, even if it was not the first to be affected. The social and political life of the time was mirrored by literary life with the aim of overcoming or contesting the defining concepts of the first half of the 20th century.

The forced set up of the communist regime was materialized by the implementation of repressive measures on everything that meant culture. Through the oppressive measures exercised with the help of new formed security on key areas, the communist ideology wanted to show the population that only its vision of the “new man” was the one that should have been embraced by the entire population. Any deviations from the party doctrine in the representations in literature, theatre, film, even science were to be erased from the collective memory, or rewritten in such a way as to achieve the ultimate goal, namely the manipulation of the masses towards an obedient acceptance of everything that comes from the East. Thus, in the shadow of the “Great People of Russia”, the right to express oneself existed only as long as the limits imposed by the party were respected. Every aspect of everyday and intellectual life was passed through the filter of censorship, carried out with the aim of directing the population towards its transformation into the individual who would correspond to the new norms. It is therefore common knowledge that communist censorship acted on the culture of our people like a modern Procrustes.

The article presents the manner in which literature was used as propaganda in the Romanian communist regime and, more specifically, how it underwent changes in forms, thematic and discourse to fit in the narrow limitations of the new ideology.

## **BACKGROUND**

The process of (over)taking power by the communists under the leadership of the Red Army was spectacular, but also tragic, being a theme of interest for the following decades. Romanians and foreign historians have approached the period 1944-1948 by trying to explain the events that marked the stages of the power takeover by the Communist Party of Romania (August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the signing of the Armistice Agreement, the establishment of the National Democratic Front (Frontul Național Democrat, F.N.D.), government led by Dr. Petru Groza, the royal strike, the 1946 elections,

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