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to impose yet another cut on the army's budget. It is worth noticing that Ceauşescu's speech at this forum included an uncommonly open admission of cases of insubordination in the army, as well as oblique references to rumors concerning the military's dissatisfaction with the political leadership.

So an anti-Ceauşescu coalition should be made up of reformists in the party plus the military.

The Security Forces

Any anti-Ceauşescu coalition would strive for popularity and, just as the present Rumanian party leader did in his bid for legitimacy, it would therefore curtail - if only temporarily - the omnipresence of the *securitate*. It is true that the allegiance of the police (secret or other) to the ruling "clan" is by no means certain. East-European security forces are notoriously loyal to themselves. In fact, it was the secret police to which a high official in Rumanian party attributed an attempt to assassinate Ceauşescu in 1983. This rumor, however, should be taken with a pinch of salt. The security forces' interest lies either with the "family" or in making a bid for sole power, perhaps using an acceptable figure-head as proxy. The latter scenario is only conceivable in the event of a popular upheaval developing in the political vacuum produced by Ceauşescu's departure - a possibility which is remote for two main reasons: first, there is no reason to believe that Ceauşescu's death would generate such a vacuum (to distinguish from political diffuseness) and, second, the occasional local outbursts reported lately from Rumania, for instance in 1986 in Iaşi and Braşov, have a long way to go before developing into a mass upheaval. Will it stand a chance for success? All along I believe it will. It might get Soviet support particularly in the Gorbachev era when accent is put on efficiency, but that of course would also mean that the political orientation of a post- and anti-Ceauşescu Rumanian regime at the same time would necessarily and gradually be less anti-Soviet.

Notes

* A previous version of this paper 'Coalition and Political Successions in Communist Systems: a Comparative Analysis of the Future of the Rumanian Leadership' was published in: *Süd-Ost Europa Forschung*, 35, Nr. 3-4, 1986, p. 201-222.
A Dutch translation appeared in: *Oost-Europa Verkenningen*, Nr. 86, Utrecht, August 1986, p. 14-20.

1. *Le Figaro*, 18/19 August 1984.
2. Socor, Vladimir (1986): 'Toward a Post-Ceauşescu Leadership in Romania?, in: *RFE/RAD Background Report*, 5 (Eastern Europa), 10 January 1986.
3. *Scînteia*, 21 November 1985.
4. *România literară*, XX, Nr. 36, 3 September 1986, p. 19.

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REGIME AND SOCIETY IN RUMANIA

Introduction

Three years ago, in the pages of this journal,[1] several observers discussed whether Rumanian society was in crisis, in stagnation, or "muddling through". Today, all scholars are in absolute agreement that Rumania is in a crisis as profound as could ever exist in any East-European country. The crisis is most obvious in the collapse of formal institutions - the economy, the planning system, the political life, in social services, the cultural sphere and the system of internal security. The crisis is also indicated by the rise of neo-protestant religious groups, by the emergence of small dissident groups among the Hungarian minority and the "National Peasant Youth", and by the increasing incidence of scattered protests by workers and students. Finally, the crisis is indicated by the growing exasperation of Ceauşescu himself at the efforts of his own cadres to carry out his plans.

At the level of social and personal relations, the crisis may be less visible, but it is just as profound. The mood among Rumanians ranges from "things could not get any worse" to "nothing is impossible", to "even a Russian occupation would be better than this".

In contrast to the situation of the mid or late 1970's, the regime has lost legitimacy with all social groups. From being one of East Europe's most popular leaders in the early 1970's, Ceauşescu is now undoubtedly its most hated. For most Rumanians, the personality cult has now developed a reverse effect: Rumania's entire crisis is blamed almost exclusively on Mr (and Mrs) Ceauşescu. Western scholars also find it quite easy to swallow the "Ceauşescu-Rumania" slogan and attribute the crisis of Rumanian society to Ceauşescu's personal preferences and megalomaniac behavior.

Such an explanation would be too easy, however, for it equates the dynamics of a society with the intentions and machinations of a single individual. Just as Stalinism was more than Stalin, Ceauşescu's Rumania is more than just Ceauşescu. The important questions are: What is it that makes a Ceauşescu possible? What has maintained him in power so long? What keeps him in power now? And what is it that keeps Rumania, despite its crisis, relatively passive (even by East-European standards)?

One alternative to the "personality" explanation of Rumania's crisis is the "systemic" one. In polemical terms, one can see Ceauşescu and Ceauşescu's Rumania as an example of "communism in practice". Clearly,

Ceauşescu was and remains a party man, a cadre *par excellence*. Yet communism in Rumania is certainly quite different from the communisms of other East-European states. As Shafir (1985) has noted, Rumania has adopted the Soviet model even more than the Soviets did themselves (the difference being even more poignant now that Gorbachev is seen as liberal compared to Ceauşescu). Rumania's economic and cultural dogmatism, political repression and declining living standards make it resemble Stalinist Russia of the 1930's or the Eastern Europe of the 1950's more than anything else.

Another possible explanation for Rumanian communism and Ceauşescu's role is the "culturalist" one. Similar to explanations of Stalinism which cite Tsarist autocracy, the Ceauşescu regime could be viewed as a distinctly Rumanian (or Balkan) product. It is a regime of opportunistic Oltenian peasants who take power in a familistic society, a society where the state and formal institutions are to be kept at a distance, where the "civil society" of Central Europe gives way to a Turkish style *ketman* or Rumanian *dedublare* as forms of dissimulation.[2]

The biographical, systemic and "Rumanian" traits of Nicolae Ceauşescu have been explored by other scholars, notably in the works of Mary Ellen Fischer.[3] Here I wish only to caution against an automatic equation of Rumania's crisis with Ceauşescu personally. This means that Ceauşescu's ultimate disappearance from the political scene (voluntarily or otherwise), while giving Rumanian society a period of respite, will not constitute a "solution" to the profound "multilateral" (*sic*) crisis of Rumanian society.

What *will* constitute a solution, however, will be a new type of relationship between regime and society in a post-Ceauşescu Rumania. In this sense, I believe that the key to understanding Ceauşescu's staying power, the social passivity of the society and the imperatives of a post-Ceauşescu regime lies in the kind of "social contract" established with Rumanian society. Along with Poland's Gierek, Ceauşescu is unique in having been the East-European leader who had established high legitimacy and then lost it. The way legitimacy was established and the way it was lost relate to the kinds of social contracts they established with their respective societies. In Poland, the broken social contract led to what have been called "events". In Rumania the results of the broken contract have produced what sociologists call "anomie" or "atomization". The society is passive and without any unifying values except that of survival. This means that subsequent social movements in Rumania will have more the character of jacquerie - bursts of rage - than anything else.

In this paper I will discuss the nature of mobilization in Ceauşescu's Rumania and the kind of social contract he established with society. I will then deal with the post-Ceauşescu leadership and the revised social contract that the future leadership will be compelled to

negotiate with the population. It is with the notion of "social contract" that we can perhaps circumvent the unidimensional explanations of Ceauşescu and Rumania which tend to focus solely on his personality, on communism as such, or which see him and the regime solely as an expression of Rumanian cultural heritage. Moreover, it will be possible to compare the contracts established in other East-European states, the way they were broken and how they were renegotiated.

Mobilization in Ceauşescu's Rumania

Given Rumania's ambitious planning goals and Ceauşescu's own "style of work", the society has always been in constant mobilization. All such mobilization relies on a combination of formal-bureaucratic institutions together with informal, personalized relations and obligations. The first type reflects the relation between state and society, and between state functionaries and their subordinates. The second type of mobilization hinges on a commonality of values or interpersonal relations articulated as a link between leader and followers (i.e., charisma), as patrons and clients ("influence", corruption, patronage) or in terms of egalitarian role relations like kinship and friendship ("connections", "obligations"). In Rumania's administrative system, the planning apparatus, in local mobilization, and in procuring resources of everyday life (the "second economy"), both the formal and informal systems tend to overlap with each other,[4] a phenomenon which occurs in other East-European societies as well.[5]

Ideally, the informal organization helps bridge gaps where formal organization is inadequate. It supplements the formal system, making it more flexible and more effective. When the relation between the two systems is of such a functional or "benign" character, the system as a whole will "work". However, if the relationship becomes dysfunctional, i.e., if the informal system begins to impede the operation of the formal system - for example, theft from factories for use in the second economy - the system as a whole begins to only "muddle through" or may "stagnate". Finally, when informal social networks and values operate to directly subvert the formal system - rather than simply going around it - we can speak of a "crisis". The crisis may lead to "events", and it may also result in anomie or atomization, or the two may exist together.

Through the 1970's and early 1980's, Rumania "muddled through": the informal system either helped the formal system achieve regime goals, or kept the system from breaking down completely. Planning operated together with improvization, censorship with rumors, bureaucracy with flexibility and corruption, the official economy with a second, parallel economy.[6] This means that the shops may have been short of food, but

refrigerators were often full. People complained that there was no coffee, but everyone seemed to have a "connection" which enabled him or her to obtain some.

By the mid 1980's, this *informal system*, once thought to be so resilient, was itself beginning to lose its effectiveness and even to break down, as virtually all goods and services became scarce resources. Under the effect of the general economic crisis fewer people are able to bypass the lines. At a personal level, Rumanians now remark that they "don't have energy anymore" (*nu mai au niciun chef*); that "each person has his own problems" (*fiecare cu problemele lui*), that "I have my own family, my own children to take care of" (*am familie, am copii*). Rumanian society has degenerated into smaller and smaller bands of competing networks, none of which is sufficient to procure even the basics of life.

With the scarcity of resources and the inability to procure them, it is small wonder that Rumanians remark that people have become "bad" (*răi*) towards each other, that people have become more and more "uncivilized" (*necivilizaţi*). There are also other signs of the crisis in Rumania: dependence on the most fantastic of rumors,[7] the escape into religious revivalism, the degenerated consumerism and status competition, and a conspiracy mind-set in which even a dissident is considered to have some kind of ulterior motive. While such phenomena occur in other East-European countries, they seem most profound and most exaggerated in Rumania.[8]

This feeling that people have become "bad" is not constant. I believe that we can even put an approximate date on it: the cold winter of 1984-1985. This was the winter when the regime decided to save energy by turning off the heat in thousands of urban apartments in Rumania's cities. Living for months in a freezing apartment is not only uncomfortable and unhealthy. It constitutes a symbol of one's own (one's family's) powerlessness. To obtain food in Rumania is an individual endeavor. There are "winners" and "losers" in this daily struggle (winners don't have to stand in line because they "know somebody"). Each day there may be small victories; other days perhaps defeats. However, when the regime turns the heat off, it is a centralized act. Everyone in an entire apartment complex - an entire neighborhood - suffers. In Bucharest, for example, even the privileged diplomats were suffering. No amount of *pile, cunoştinţe şi relaţii* could get "them" to turn the heat on just for me. Hence, if there was one event which began to forge the individualistic Rumanians into a single mass, the cold, dark winter of 1984-1985 was it. It was the catalyst for the broad *feeling of betrayal* which pervades Rumanian society. It is a feeling of betrayal in the sense that somebody - "them", the regime, Ceauşescu - has broken an agreement, a contract.

Ceauşescu's Social Contract

While Ceauşescu had never enjoyed popularity among the intelligentsia or minorities, he had attained a degree of legitimacy among other sectors of the population through the mid 1970's, even though he had never been elected. This legitimacy was based on common values and aspirations of the population and their confidence that the regime was fulfilling these aspirations. It was a tacit agreement between regime and society which has come to be known as the "social contract". The idea of social contract has a long history in political philosophy.[9] With reference to Eastern Europe, the notion of social contract (or "new social contract") was formulated by the Czech Antonin Liehm[10] and was originally applied to the Central European societies which had experienced social movements in the 1950's (while Hauslohner[11] in an important article has applied the notion of social contract to Gorbachev's reforms). Liehm's social contract was an unwritten concord between regime and society. It was to substitute for both reform from above and workers' control from below. Both these options were impossible because of Soviet intervention. Hence, the social contract is a post-Stalinist "solution" to the political tensions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany. Liehm writes:

> According to this contract, the citizens hand over to the state all their individual and collective rights and the state assures them in return stable employment at an average wage for a minimum contribution of labor and personal initiative.[12]

As long as both parties respect the contract, there exists "social and political calm".[13] Those who refuse to acknowledge the contract - who take their work too seriously or who contest the rights the regime has taken from them - are the dissidents and critical intellectuals. Such people tend to be criticized by both parties to the contract: oppressed by the regime, scorned or isolated by society. This was especially the case in Rumania, where dissidents suffered as much at the hands of their colleagues (*Ce i-o fi venit?*) as from the police organs.

Ceauşescu's social contract differed from those of Central Europe because it was more than an exchange of political rights for material welfare. The contract linked economic development, political independence, Rumanian nationalism, welfare, prosperity and social sacrifice. In Rumania - as distinct from other East-European states - economic development was both an economic and political goal. Industrialization was the means by which Ceauşescu and the Party would realize what they believed to be Rumania's true historical destiny. Those who contested this strategy were not just putting forth economic arguments; they were seen as working against Rumania's national interests, as Soviet surrogates.

As part of the contract, Ceauşescu promised to fulfill Rumania's historic mission. But he demanded - and received - enormous sacrifices from Rumanian society. Independence from the USSR and future prosperity could be achieved only if the population did not make excessive demands for consumer goods, public services, energy resources or political pluralism. Society was to help achieve these goals via "self-management", "self-financing" and "self-sufficiency" programs.

Through the 1970's, the amount of sacrifice was considerable by East European standards, yet Rumanians could muddle through in daily life. Besides, there were genuine positive accomplishments. Peasant youth became technicians and engineers; workers became functionaries. Cities and apartments were constructed. Incomes rose and so did aspirations. The newly constructed, 3-story peasant house, the Dacia 1300 in the driveway, the modernized bathroom, the Blue Jeans, the Kents, the trip abroad, the restaurant wedding where the couple earned 100,000 Lei, all were symbols of the progress and social mobility of this period.

Ceauşescu's social contract had special aspects for each social group in Rumania: the workers were promised a degree of economic welfare without too much effort. The peasants saw the possibility of economic and social mobility for their children. The intellectuals could indulge in nationalistic works and foreign contracts in return for loyalty to the national mission. The party cadres, in return for absolute loyalty, received a degree of privilege making them what in Eastern Europe is known as "them".

Rumania muddled through because all parties accepted the contract, because they could see tangible benefits (however small by East European standards) and because any shortcomings and sacrifices could be explained as part of the price of nationalism. Whereas Rumania in the 1960's was characterized by economic dynamism, political legitimacy and a degree of optimism among the population, and where the 1970's saw a progressive slowing down of the economy, loss of legitimacy and more cynicism among the population, the 1980's have shown a near collapse of the system in its economic, political and social institutions. Rumania's economic and planning system had revealed its incapacity to adapt to the necessities of intensive growth. In the absence of any genuine reform of the formal apparatus, pressures on the informal system also increased. More charisma was needed, more appeals for sacrifice, more sanctions were employed to compensate for the lack of normal, systemic rewards. The social contract between regime and society - sacrifice and discipline now, welfare and "independence" later - began to rupture. The regime-society contract now became society's duty (datorie) to the Leader. Society now had the duty to work harder, to walk instead of demanding adequate public transport, to grow their own food instead of expecting state shops to supply it, to live in cold and dark apartments instead of demanding heat and light, and to solve the "demographic

problem" by having at least three children. The watchwords of today's Rumania are "order and discipline". The primary goal is "fulfilling the plan for export". Society has been "militarized": the army runs mines, electrical power stations and does other "social tasks". The mayor of Bucharest is a General.

The Broken Contract

As the formal system collapsed, the contract has been broken with each segment of Rumanian society. The guaranteed minimum for the workers has been abolished. Energy, food and consumer goods have been rationed and urban consumers have been increasingly unable to find alternative solutions. Living standards have declined. The turning point, to repeat, was the winter of 1984-1985.

The contract with the peasants was broken also, as more and more of their autonomy was impinged upon. They were prevented from getting adequate prices on urban markets and from provisioning themselves in the cities. Moreover, the peasants saw the living standards of their children in the cities dropping.

The contract with the intelligentsia was broken by the regime's progressive restrictions on intellectual freedoms (beginning with the July 1971 "mini-cultural revolution"), by the impositions of "reds" over "experts", by restrictions on contacts with foreigners and foreign ideas ("moral pollution").

Even the contract with party cadres, the military and the security apparatus was broken as Ceauşescu began rotating them indiscriminately, as he saddled them with impossible demands, as he refused to allow them the resources to achieve plans, and as he blamed them for his own (or his wife's?) mistakes. The us/them distinction in Rumania became transformed such that the only real "them" is now the Ceauşescu clan. The best example of this is the November 1985 CC Plenum, when he accused County party secretaries of "false humanism" because they had tried to help each other avoid fulfilling unrealistic state procurement plans.

In breaking the social contract, Ceauşescu has alienated every segment of Rumanian society - workers, peasants, technicians, intellectuals, women, nationalities, party cadres, even the military. His only remaining tactic is to foster competition among these groups for the few rewards left. One way to do this is to offer what amounts to "feudal privileges". In September 1986, for example, Ceauşescu visited the city of Tîrgovişte and promised to make it "the second capital of Socialist Rumania". Yet this declaration was followed by what amounts to a threat:

> If you work in such a way that both your industry and agriculture meet the demands of the new technical scientific revolution and the new agrarian revolution, then we will modernize you ...[14]

Urban planning had been part of the party program - the contract - for two decades. Yet now, what was once part of the contract has been transformed into a privilege. Rumania's localities compete for this privilege, and Ceauşescu and the Central Committee are the ones who grant it.

One might argue that in societies which are both socialist and Balkan, the bureaucracy has *always* treated citizens' rights as privileges (for example, the "right" to a passport). Yet it is only now that Ceauşescu has articulated the granting of privileges (or deals) *publicly*.

Ceauşescu's efforts to make deals with certain groups or localities can only set them against one another in the struggle for scarce resources. It may prevent any social explosion, but it will not earn the regime much support.

Post-Ceauşescu Rumania

A post-Ceauşescu leadership will be faced with the task of bringing the country from its current "crisis" stage up to a level where it at least "muddles through" or even reaches the level of "stability". To accomplish this, the leadership will have to alter the relationship between the formal and informal systems so that they become more functional to each other. This means a reestablishing of legitimacy to the formal system, what I have called "faith in the state".[15]

Under the Ceauşescu contract, faith in the state - i.e., party legitimacy - was based on "fear of the Russians", "development as a political imperative" or the "nationalist-historic mission". Yet these ideologies have already been preempted and misused by Ceauşescu himself. A sensible post-Ceauşescu leadership can only resort to a social mobilization based on a "renewal" via welfare legitimation. Providing a comfortable material life has been the basis of the social contracts established elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Stabilizing salaries, lowering the level of sacrifice, and increasing the amount of certainty in Rumanians' daily lives would be imperative if the new leadership is to renegotiate a successful contract with society. Simply supplying regular amounts of bread, meat, heat and gasoline, letting people drive their own cars and inserting some Western films on the evening television schedule would - given the Rumanian context - earn the new leadership millions of supporters, both within and outside Rumania. It would give it valuable breathing space to confront the deeper structural problems of the economy.

A renegotiation of the social contract would mean giving the peasantry more autonomy, letting the intellectuals have more freedom for foreign contacts and to criticize the former (Ceauşescu) regime, letting

the military occupy itself with professional rather than "social" tasks like building canals or running mines, and providing more job stability and privileges to party cadres in return for their loyalties. Only via such a renegotiation of the contract would formal bureaucratic mobilization be made easier. More importantly, the tasks of informal mobilization would be lightened as well. Those charged with implementing policies on the factory floor, in the city planning office, in the party committee or on the collective farm would have more certainty and more flexibility in their jobs. They could promise both sanctions *and* rewards.

The most important task for a post-Ceauşescu leadership, however, would be to provide a value orientation as a support for mobilization. The only possible solution here is to elevate private values to public values. The private values have included education, hard work and material rewards, professional competence, consumerism, travel, civil freedoms, stability for one's family and mobility for one's children. These are not the values of Nicolae Ceauşescu, who emphasized "reds" over "experts", political activism over professional competence, and sacrifice over consumerism. He tended to view such private values as "egotistical". Yet these private values are the values of the professional class, and it is this professional class which Rumania needs behind it to get back on its feet.

A post-Ceauşescu regime will also require sacrifice. Such a sacrifice cannot be extracted by the now discredited calls for "nationalism", "socialism" or "development". Only these private values have the power to mobilize the population for further sacrifice. Hence, the new regime must raise these so-called "egotistical", private concerns into public values. By establishing a contract based on "renewal" and "getting down to work", by promising *private* rewards, the future leadership can lift Rumania out of its current crisis. Such a contract may not produce a population which is enthusiastic, but it will mobilize them without resort to coercive methods, useless slogans, military orders, or outdated appeals to anti-Sovietism. Only by putting *private values on the public agenda* can post-Ceauşescu Rumania reestablish a new social contract. This will in itself not produce the dynamism and legitimacy which characterized Rumania in the 1960's but may at least help the society to muddle through as it once did. Given the appropriate international climate and national leadership, a new social contract will be a necessary, though not sufficient condition, for achieving the more substantive reforms Rumania still requires.

If the post-Ceauşescu regime is unwilling to pursue such a strategy, the already exhausted society can only be subjected to further atomization, increased anomie, and to chaotic, violent explosion.

Notes

1. Sampson (1984b); Shafir (1985). A longer version of this paper will appear in a forthcoming book on *Post-Ceauşescu Romania* edited by Ivan Volgyes. An abridged version of this paper has been published in Dutch in: *Oost-Europa Verkenningen*, Utrecht, 1986, Nr. 86, August, p. 9-13.
2. *Ketman* is a Persian term used by the Turks to denote the prestigious attribute of misrepresenting one's real motives; see C. Milosz (1953); on familism see Jowitt (1978); on dissimulation see Shafir (1983, 1985) and Sampson (1984b, 1986).
3. Volgyes (ed.) (1988).
4. Sampson (1983-1985).
5. Kenedi (1981); Sampson (1986, 1987); Simis (1982); Wedel (1986).
6. Sampson (1983a, 1983b, 1984a, 1984b, 1984d).
7. Sampson (1984d).
8. Feher (1984); Sampson (1986); Vale (ed.) (1981).
9. *Social Contract*, 1947.
10. Liehm (1975, 1983).
11. Hauslohner (1987).
12. Liehm (1975), p. 158.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Scînteia*, September 20, 1986.
15. Sampson (1983a, 1986).

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