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ISRS Regulations / Statuts de l'AIER
RUMANIA TODAY: A SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW

Steven L. Sampson
Copenhagen

MUDDLING THROUGH IN RUMANIA
(OR: WHY THE MAMALIGA DOESN'T EXPLODE)

Introduction

For those of us who observe contemporary Romanian developments, the most pressing question seems to be the passivity of Romanian society. With its economic shortages, political over-centralization, social alienation and personal pressures, why do the Romanians not rise up? Why doesn't something happen? Why is there not fundamental reform, social protest or pressures for change in the political leadership? In light of what appears to be economic stagnation and social crisis, why the lack of social upheaval? This is a question asked not only by those in the West, but by many observers of Rumania within Eastern Europe. This paper (and the following discussion) is directed toward these questions.

There are two popular explanations given to explain Rumania's osten
tible passivity. One explanation focuses on the efficiency of the repressive apparatus. Romania's security police are seemingly able to identify and crush manifestations of dissent or protest as soon as they appear. One hears ad infinitum how "they are everywhere", how "one out of four Romanians works for (or with) the security organs".

The second explanation emphasizes Romania's national specificity, and especially its so-called "Balkan mentality". Having suffered under the domination of Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Czarian Russian and Soviet empires, having been oppressed by foreigners and foreign interests, Romanians have been forced to rely on "defensive strategies" (Spittler 1983) rather than direct social revolt. These strategies include silence, apathy, hypocrisy, inaction and an emphasis on individual rather than group action. As one Romanian expressed it, "If we had a Solidarity here, each Romanian would have his own".

In general terms, neither of these explanations is false. Yet I find them to be inadequate to explain the specific situation of Romania in comparison with other East European countries and with the non-socialist countries of the Balkans. The presumed effectiveness of Romania's internal security organs has reached an almost mythical level. Surely, it is in the interest of this organization to make people believe that they

society reproduces its conditions of existence. Passivity is not a result of the crisis but a way of dealing with the day to day problems of daily life. In short, far from stagnating or submitting to crisis, Rumania is "muddling through".

The initial problem of Rumania’s lack of social movements can now be rephrased into another question: How does Rumania muddle through? What factors enable Rumania to remain content with objectively worse social and economic conditions so that these are not expressed in a Hungarian (1956), Czechoslovak (1968) or Polish (1980) situation, not to mention the instability of Latin America. To explain how Rumania muddles through, I will cite four principal factors: the social mobility, the linkage between formal and informal systems, the diffusion of information throughout the society and the psychological adjustments embodied in the Rumanian term dedublarea (duplicity). In discussing each of these factors, it will be seen that what initially appears to be an easily explicable passivity on the part of Rumanians is in reality much more complex. A society perceived as "stagnating", "declining", "in crisis" or irrevocably "corrupt" is in fact operating with a dynamic of its own. It is muddling through.

Social Mobility

The official explanation for Rumania’s relative social peace is that the people are "doing well". In part this cannot be disputed. Peasant boys have become engineers. Skilled workers have become high party functionaries. Some collective farmers have built modern homes and have stock-piled cash. Members of the security, military and government apparatus have high incomes and special perks, though nothing approaching the Soviet nomenklatura system or pre-1980 Polish corruption. Some of these privileges can be passed onto their offspring: children of high officials are disproportionately represented in the most prestigious educational institutions, in travel abroad and in their ability to obtain scarce Western consumer goods. These privileges are partly a function of their parents’ office, but also involve the apparatchiks’ better access to information on how these scarce goods, services and resources can be best procured.

Among the ordinary citizens, certain categories of workers have been awarded high incomes to compensate for reduced prestige. Coal miners, oil field workers and steel workers are given a kind of "heroic" status in Rumania, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe (Jowitt 1983). Many peasant-workers profit from industrial wages in the city and free food and housing in the village. Suburban peasants can obtain high prices for their produce by contracting to the state and especially by selling in urban markets. The exploits (and profits) of auto mechanics, repairmen, butchers and hairdressers are well known in Rumania.
Nevertheless, in all these social categories, a certain amount of instability exists, sometimes leading to discontent. For example, the slowdown in upward social mobility has made it harder for newly educated functionaries and engineers to reach top-level positions. State policies restricting open-market prices make it unprofitable for peasants to sell or even produce a surplus. Increased transport costs and high consumer prices make life harder for peasant commuting workers. Even among the preferred worker categories in heavy industry, there have been protests when salaries, pensions, or working conditions were reduced (the miners in 1977). While many Romanians can point to economic advancement, many others expected even more. Additional incomes beyond the wage have had to be procured either through legitimate extra employment or by working within or outside the system, in extra-legal or illegal ways (the so-called "Second Economy," see Sampson a and b).

Seen from a Rumanian point of view, where incomes are largely equalized between intellectuals, workers and peasants, social mobility in Rumania takes on an entirely different character. The real social difference in Rumania is not between occupations but between "us" and "them" (noi și ei). It is a dichotomy which pervades Rumanian life (as it does the rest of Eastern Europe). "They" are not simply the security apparatus or high party officials. "They" are all those (at any place in the social hierarchy) who are in a position to achieve private goals. The "us/them" distinction is a relative one. The villager can refer to the local party secretary—perhaps his next-door neighbor—as one of "them." The local party secretary, in trying to fulfill his commune's plan, may complain about "them" (sic) at the county who don't provide enough assistance. A county official might be heard to say, "we are doing our job, but 'those people' in the ministry don't understand our conditions here". A minister or cultural official can be heard to complain how "we" are trying to do our job effectively while "they" (i.e. the very top of the Party hierarchy) keep coming with their particular wishes.

While many of "them" may at times feel like one of "us," the smallest promotion can also make one feel that he or she has entered the ranks of "them." Social mobility in Rumania has little to do with income, occupation, or party membership. As perceived by citizens, social mobility occurs when one of "us" becomes one of "them." The minute differences between "us" and "them" reflect differences in the ability to realize personal or household goals by obtaining access to scarce resources. These resources may be monetary, but usually non-monetary resources such as friends and information become much more important.

If one is unable to achieve "them" status, the next best thing is to link up with a "patron," good friend, or special connection (pila). In this way social stratification is transformed into personal ties. Any social upheaval would thus constitute a break-down in one's personal network. In such a complex system people have an interest in maintaining (or getting access to) even the pettiest of privileges. The possibility to become one of "them" even in the most minor way gives people a stake in maintaining the social system in its present form. Here lies one reason why Rumanian society "muddles through." Even as they complain, it makes people fear radical social change.

**Linkage Between Formal and Informal Systems**

The joke about the meaning of PCR is typical of the complex interrelationship between formal and informal systems. PCR means "Paramilitary Communist" (a literal "pila" cumnește și relații). Romania today is not simply a Leninist Party-State (as Jovitt (1983) would have it). Nor is it simply degraded by corruption (as Sima implies for the USSR). The essence of Rumanian society is the way formal institutions and informal social structures interlink and conflict with each other. The dominance of primary group affiliations often entails that formal organizations become simply resources for the exploitation of informal group interests. In contrast to the moral sphere of relations between kin and friends, formal organizations seem to exist outside the moral sphere of primary group relations. For example, most Rumanians feel little primary group attachment to their work place. They do not work for the collective farm but on the collective farm, for their own household enterprises, and for a more general purpose. Achieving household strategies may be done simply with normal wage from the collective; or it may require exploiting the resources of the collective or borrowing wagons or pilfering from the fields (i.e., borrowing wagons or pilfering from the fields).

Much like the notion of Poland as a federation of families (Experience and Differentiation Group), Rumania can also be seen as a society linked by strong ties of kin, friends and "friends of friends" (Boisgavin). Between the nation and the family, the mobilization power of intermediate institutions is weak. These intermediary institutions—party, trade unions, national fronts, enterprises, bureaucratic organs—lack the mobilization power of primary group relations (the only possible mobilization power of primary group relations). Not even the Romanian Orthodox Church can accomplish this mobilization, since it is thoroughly integrated into the state organization (unlike Poland). Finally, mobilization is state-oriented (like in Russia) and party's long standing manipulation of anti-Russian sentiments and narrow group relations. One can pilfer from the factory or collective farm without feeling guilty. One can do inadequate or inadequate work without feeling guilty. The party tries to
extend the moral sphere of family and community to these formal institutions asking for more discipline, exhorting a higher sense of responsibility, offering moral and material incentives, requiring workers to (re)purchase a "social portion" of their enterprise as a form of direct profit sharing, and most recently, requiring oaths of allegiance by workers to their work place (and directors and party secretaries to their respective enterprises).

Despite these measures, securing primary group attachment to these intermediate institutions remains a difficult task. Rumania remains a "federation of families", not only at the bottom of the social ladder but even in the elite rank (Jovitt 1978). Historically, Rumanians as a people have been exploited by and felt suspicions of outside institutions. Where they formerly retreated to the forests and mountains, they now retreat to close kin and friend connections. The public sphere - the sphere dominated by the state, the party, the large social, political, economic and cultural institutions - is the sphere where the moral values of primary kin do not apply. Seen in the eyes of the American anthropologist, the public sphere is where the most polite and friendly Rumanian at home becomes rude while standing in line or boarding a bus; where the personable woman who adores your children looks past you when you appear at the counter of the shop where she works. It is this striking contrast between the intimacy and intensity of the domestic sphere and the apathy of the public sphere which necessitates a connection between formal and informal institutions in contemporary Rumania. This is not only true for the domain of public courtesies or interpersonal relations, but also in the sphere of economic relations, the so-called "second economy". The second economy includes legal and recognized activities such as home repair and gypsy peddlars, undocumented activities such as household exchange and housewives' unpaid labor, and more spectacular illegal activities like speculation, under-the-counter selling, bribery, pilferage and theft (Sampson). Despite consumer shortages and complications, there always exist intermediaries who help to establish connections between formal and informal systems. In a land of rampant shortages, nothing is even totally unavailable either. People believe that by cultivating informal ties they can obtain these scarce goods and services. Obtaining them becomes a mark of one's social status and one's ability to "get by" (a se descura). Insofar as Rumanians are disposed to use these informal links, a food shortage (to take the most relevant example) does not attain the kind of political content that it did in Poland (Chase). Instead of asking why there is no meat, Rumanians ask, "how can I get meat?" Failure to obtain a scarce resource is not a failure of the system, but of the individual. Those who do not obtain meat are regarded as inept. Energies are expended in finding individual solutions to what are essentially social-political-economic problems. Occupied with these private pursuits, the shortage of scarce resources (from meat to passports) fails to attain "crisis" character.

Serving goods on the table or Western cigarettes is a sign not only of having money but of having the right connections to obtain these goods. The butcher becomes a more important connection than the engineer. The link between formal and informal institutions and between "us" and "them" is made explicit. "They" are the people whose positions within formal organizations furnish them with wide networks of informal relations. Anyone of "us" who can link formal and informal networks becomes one of "them". The most well-placed of "them" do not have to buy or bribe for scarce resources: they receive them through mutual networks, as gifts, favors or "at cost" from friends or from party organs. Those immediately below "them" are forced to obtain resources via bribe payments or intermediaries (i.e., brokers rather than "friends") or through patrons (cf. Kenedi's excellent description of this process in Hungary). Finally, the people without extra cash, central network positions, formal administrative privileges or social ambitions simply wait in line. Typically these are old women, housewives, pensionists, immigrant workers from the countryside, newly educated specialists, visitors and Western journalists used to purchasing things in shops for cash. (Hence the journalist finds no meat in the market but many refrigerators full of meat.)

"Standing in line" in Rumania (here used as a metaphor for going through the normal bureaucratic procedures) is not just time consuming. It is also a way in which one's social status is communicated. It signifies that one is "us" rather than "them". Were one to see Rumania in deep crisis instead of "muddling through", we would see a situation where those who did not have to wait in line before are forced back into it: where neither extra cash, formal position nor informal networks are enough to procure scarce resources. It is my impression that this situation has not occurred. Rather, there is an increase in the cost of obtaining goods informally (the skyrocketing cost for a package of Kent cigarettes); there is more pressure on informal networks to procure more things (e.g., coffee, cheese, aspirin) which were not necessary before. And mainly, it seems that those who used to wait in line (i.e., were without extra cash, formal access or informal networks) are now forced to "wait in line" longer. This is especially true in the provincial towns, which generally have fewer resources and lower-ranking brokers and patrons.

The particular problem for Rumania is the state's attempt to allocate all scarce resources via formal organizational means, including rationing. Where resources are scarce, where organizations are themselves not competent to distribute them, and where the population historically distrusts these institutions, the use of informal channels grows correspondingly. The goods and resources allocated by the bureaucracy are set
outside the moral sphere of interpersonal relations. Formal institutions can thus become "resource banks" to be exploited for personal or household needs. Links between formal and informal organization - between official and "second" economy for example - become that much more important. The fact that these linkages can reproduce themselves is one explanation for why Rumanian society - and its economy - keep "muddling through".

Transmission of Information in Socialist Society

In all contemporary socialist societies, information becomes a key commodity. It is a commodity much more important than money since it circulates in stratified forms rather than "freely". Rumania is a society where everybody seems to believe they know something important, but where nobody seems to know everything. The peasantry is the last line, absorbing the most outlandish rumors, or lapping up gossip distributed by local elites. Even urban intellectuals have a marked tendency to believe all that is diffused via these informal, oral channels. To reverse the Western phraseology, the Rumanian situation often appears as, "if it's not in the papers, it must be true". This is particularly the case with serious accidents or disasters, with rumors about certain political figures who suddenly disappear from the scene or are denounced, with unexpected shortages of food or other goods, personal stories of crime (especially murder), with events surrounding unauthorized worker protests or intellectuals' dissident activity, and especially with Rumania's top leaders and their families.

The lack of verifiable information is partly due to restrictions in the official sector, i.e., the editing or censorship of the press concerning events which are controversial, distasteful or likely to give rise to uncontrolled reactions among the population. But the lack of information, especially in the economic sector, also has its source from "below", from the ranks of the population itself. Villagers who state their actual amount of wealth risk having it taxed or confiscated (one must, for example, prove that one has the means to build a house or buy a car if an investigation is made). The factory manager who knows his plant can produce 50% more risks alienating his workers if he tells this to the ministry. Enterprises which do not produce according to plan have an obvious interest in doctoring production figures. Hence, the state and party apparatus have innumerable control organs which make surprise raids on enterprises or localities to find out the "real" story, or root out "indiscipline" and "shortcomings" among local party, state, economic or cultural organizations. In the majority of these negative instances, it it not a "bad apple" or "poor leadership", but organized suppression of information which enabled things to get so out of hand.

The stratification of information diffusion - in both value and verifiability - is intrinsically linked with the stratification between "them" and "us". In fact, the most reliable index of someone being a member of a local or regional elite is not their income, job or residence, but their ability to clean up rumors; i.e., their access to reliable and socially significant information regarding, say, a train accident, a workers' protest, an epidemic, a meat shortage. They are in a position not only to give details about these matters, but to explain why they occurred and what measures were taken by the authorities.

Some of this information can be considered a form of gossip which could only have a diversionary effect. For example, that famous writer X was allowed to publish his novel even though it had critical references to the system, or that a certain restaurant was serving human meat, or that the child of a high party official was involved in a car accident, or that a well-known politician was in a fight with a famous actor, or that miners threw stones at the official helicopter, all these are part of the diversionary effect of rumor. In typical conspiratorial fashion, some Rumanians consider these rumors to be started by official circles so as to preoccupy the population. In particular there are stories about the exploits of local party secretaries who "surprised" a factory manager, butcher, or doctor, catching them red-handed in some kind of illegal or immoral action (bribery for instance). And jokes and stories about President Ceausescu abound in Rumania. They are as much a part of the cult of personality as are the poems, speeches, demonstrations, telegrams and proclamations of undying loyalty and praise published daily in Scinteia. The ability of the state to keep the population off balance via information control is crucially important. People discussing the latent disdain in a book of poems will tend to forget how many other works remain unpublished. Those with an interest in keeping the system going also have an interest in restricting access to information. If more information circulated, they might lose their middle-man niche. Much of the information and rumors which circulate cannot be verified. Official organs tend to ignore it rather then deny it, or tend to deal with rumors in a clumsy fashion. For example, during the winter of 1981, there circulated a rumor that Stefan Voitec (a high party official) had been imprisoned after arguing with Ceausescu; some said he was in a psychiatric hospital, others that he died. When this rumor finally reached Radio Free Europe, the Rumanians televisied a Ceausescu speech in which the camera frequently focused on Voitec. This only gave rise to further speculation as to the story.

Information thus has an ambiguous character, neither outright lie nor verifiable truth. It is this ambiguity, akin to the ambiguity of social mobility and formal-informal relations - which enables Rumanian society to "muddle through".
Psychological Consequences - Dedublarea

In a society of ambiguity, where public and private spheres are separate and where information is uncertain, numerous psychological consequences will reveal themselves. By Rumanians' own accounts, rather than my own observations, Rumania is a society in which people have difficulty trusting one another, in which an individual's "inner circle" is restricted to the closest of family and a couple of trusted friends. Beyond this circle, it is expected that public views will contrast sharply with private sentiments. Rumania is a society in which one simply cannot be sure that what one hears is the genuine view of the individual. This idea of amoral hypocrisy is not just tied to political opinions, where fear of denunciation and surveillance by the security organs may color some individuals' entire daily activity. It also exists in day to day life in an apartment house or in a village, where themes of solidarity and cordiality coexist with jealousy, guarding of wealth and protection of honor. Hence, some of the most frequently heard advice in Rumania is to "watch out" (fii atent) and "don't get involved" (nu te amestecas). Rumania has become a society of conspiracy, a society in which public utterances, conversations and behavior are by definition to be interpreted to mean something else. Hence, one "reads between the lines" in a newspaper even where there is nothing there. One expects public utterances and private opinions of the same person to differ radically. One casts doubt on motives for action; the village woman with a new dress is connected to the theft of money from a neighbor. The American anthropologist, no matter how explicitly he explains his research plan, is still asked (as are his colleagues): "What are you really after?" (Ce caută la noi?). One is told to "watch out" because telling one's real motives can only get one into more difficulty.

This conspiratorial attitude, this dichotomy between public face and private sentiment is known as dedublarea (sometimes duplicate, or duplicity). It is not simply a case of lying, or secrecy, but something much deeper - a separation of private and public spheres from each other as if one will contaminate the other. The political implications of dedublarea are clear enough. A school teacher may suffer a kind of schizophrenia because his personal opinions and experiences contradict the optimistic message of the Party which he is required to teach. Parents cope with a similar problem: how to teach their children that family affairs and political opinions (especially anti-regime opinions) are to be kept out of the classroom. What are the consequences for a society when parents instruct their children that what goes on inside the house is secret, and where anything heard in public is to be taken with skepticism, or as untrue? What kind of society is it when parents tell children that their teacher had to say that the Communist Party was the most popular political force in pre-war Rumania? How do children learn this code? How does the Young Communist League functionary learn to praise the party during the meeting and degrade the party after it is over? The ability of individuals and families to cope with this "social schizophrenia" (Wink-Lipinski, referring to Poland) is a measure of how Rumanians can "muddle through" on the individual level. Similar parallels can be made with Alexander Zinoviev's "Homo Sovieticus". It is an accommodation to life, but an accommodation with a price.

Implications: Crisis, Stagnation, or Muddling Through?

In this paper I have discussed four factors which contribute to the dynamism of Rumanian society. Rumania possesses a degree of actual social mobility or the potential of mobility via the establishment of relations between "us" and "them". There is a system-reinforcing link between formal and informal organization, such that the informal social structures help to appropriate resources which lie beyond the moral sphere of interpersonal relations. Moreover, Rumanian society is cross-linked by networks and stratification of information and by a priority of informal, oral and unofficial channels. Competition for information and diversions of gossip serve to compensate for the discovery of "simple truths" or genuine social action. Finally, Rumanian society has created and perpetuated the psychological consequences of the public/private distinction via the concept of dedublarea. It is a society of assumed conspiracy and mistrust, keeping citizens off-balance.

These factors lead us to reevaluate the frequently held views that Rumania is in "deep crisis" or "stagnation". A stagnating society is one where the essential conditions of existence are not being reproduced. In terms of this paper, a stagnating society is one in which mobility does not occur, where formal and informal institutions attenuate their linkages, where information does not circulate, and where people mechanistically or apathetically adapt to the "duplicity" of public and private spheres. I would submit, however, that Rumania is not a stagnating society. In each of the domains cited, Rumania experiences a continuing dynamic based on ever changing conditions. The society has not come to a halt. It is simply adjusting in a more subtle fashion, both functionally and dysfunctionally. Social schizophrenia is a sign of the subtle adjustments in the muddling through society.

A society in crisis could be characterized in several ways: citizens find their essential social aspirations unfulfilled; the state and formal institutions seem unwilling or unable to rectify the situation, to find solutions of essential problems. No new value orientations are proposed. Individual solutions are seen as dominating social solutions to all problems. The alienation from officially proclaimed values or ideology is spread throughout the population, affecting each individual (or household) personally. Again, I would submit that regardless of the ob-
jective conditions, Romania is not in a state of genuine crisis. Citizens have not renounced their original values or aspirations. While not having so much faith in formal or state institutions, they persist in seeking solutions to problems which appear insolveable. The faith still exists that everything is possible, even if it must be achieved in a difficult, improper or underhanded fashion. Romania is not yet in crisis. It is simply muddling through.

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DISCUSSION
(SUMMARY)

Claude Karmouh (Paris)

Post-war Rumania was not born out of nothing, even though a revolu-
tion took place. There are local traditions, for example differences be-
tween Transylvania on the one hand, and Moldavia and Wallachia on the
other, in the relationship between the peasantry and civil servants.

Steven L. Sampson (Copenhagen)

These are not basic differences. The relationship between one peasant,
and another peasant in town who, is also a civil servant, is the
same throughout the country.

Michael Shafir (Tel-Aviv)

This type of relationship is not unique to Rumania at present. Rădu-
lescu-Motru observed in the 1930's that in Rumania it was not this or
that institution that mattered but "whether you've got somebody at City
Hall". This "tradition" still exists today. I believe, unlike Sampson,
that you can talk about stagnation in Rumania today, while in other East
European countries you have progress or decline.

Karmouh

The relations between peasants and the Church in Transylvania is also
different from that in Moldavia and Wallachia. In Bucovina for example
the peasants in one village built a church without authorisation, and the
State had to give them authorisation later.

Sampson

Many people explain the situation in Rumania today through its tra-
ditions and continuity; I, on the other hand, put the accent on new, in-
trinsic elements.

Karmouh

In Russia, unlike in Rumania, there was a real revolution; that is
why the concept of tradition is more important for Rumania.
Many of the things Sampson has said about Rumania also apply for another Balkan country, a capitalist one: Greece. What then is different about Rumania?

In Rumania everything is nationalized: if you steal something there, you steal from "them", in Greece, on the other hand, you steal from "somebody". In Rumania, unlike in Greece, things are taken out of the moral sphere and go back to nature in a way. In other socialist countries, Hungary for example, many things remain private property, thus within the moral sphere; therefore the responsibilities are also different: if something goes wrong, it is "somebody's" fault, in Rumania it is "their", i.e. the "State's" fault.

One can speak of an institutional crisis in Rumania, manifested in an anarchical fashion. In Poland a new institution (Solidarity) has been created because the old sindicate was not working. In Rumania the people "manage", that is they do not "institutionalize" the crisis.

The new institutions in Poland depend, nevertheless, on an old one: the Church.

S. Alexandrescu explains the situation through (moral) norms, Karnoouh and Shafir through traditions, which imply a normative code. Therefore the two explanations are not contradictory.

Many "Rumanian" aspects are not unique: a parallel economy (to the official one) also exists in the Soviet Union, for example, and it is even better organized. A grave problem in Rumania is the "inverse" selection of the high rank personnel (the political criteria play a greater rôle than the professional ones). This situation seemed to improve between 1965 and 1971 but afterwards the "contract" between the Party and the technocrats was broken. The problem of the professional cadres is now more serious in Rumania than in other East European countries and it affects all social groups, not only the intellectuals. This is one reason of the decline of the economy.

When I speak of the absence of stagnation I mean that it is not true that nothing is happening in Rumania, as it is the case in Czechoslovakia; on the contrary there is a social dynamic at work in Rumania.

That dynamic reduces itself to acquiring certain minimal items necessary to live; it gets in the way of other preoccupations and explains the stagnation.

Intelectuals are not promoted because they can become dangerous for the activists, just as in Czechoslovakia.

Another problem, although perhaps again not unique, is the preponderance of the Party and security apparatus: I for every 5 active people. Even though the secret police is not thoroughly efficient (its omnipresence is a myth), it is, nevertheless, better organized than other institutions. Regarding the queues: I think some 80% of the population stand in the queues, it is a mass phenomenon, those who "manage" are few.

OK, but I am interested in the 20% who do not stand in the queues, a few million people who perhaps have a stake in maintaining the status quo.

The economic crisis is a diversion, it blocks other actions, though we should not forget the Jiu Valley strike, also as a form of passive protest, with the catastropic perversion of moral criteria through which it becomes "moral" not to work and to steal from the State.

Certain German colleagues speak, in connection with South Africa, of a Bauernstaat in which the peasants have developed defensive strategies similar to those of the Rumanian peasants: they avoid contact with the authorities, they seem to agree with the suggestions of the authorities but they do not do anything, or they lie outright ("the best answer is not to tell the truth!").