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RUMANIA

CREATION  
LADE MONOPOL

Playing cards for money is not prohibited in Rumania and the down hazard games like baccarat, chemin-de-fer, poker, etc. are still quite popular. These games are played mostly by persons, who have no regular occupation (former officials, middle-class people, etc.) but who have evaded up to now to be sent to forced labor. The bets are however, no longer 100 to 1,000 Lei like in former times, but only 1, 2, Lei, because money is very scarce indeed.

The informant and a limited number of friends played cards each evening, usually they were a foursome for playing bridge, but never more than eight to 10 people, even if playing other games. This was a precautionary measure, because the assembling of more than 10 people could not only have caused suspicion, but would also have violated existing regulations concerning unauthorized gatherings. Even so, these daily card playing parties were soon discovered by Securitatea, and several times some plainclothes men "raided" their place, suspecting secret meetings, the preparation of a coup, etc. However, as they could not find anything but four people playing bridge, they could not interfere. There are many such card playing circles arranged in private homes. Some people who have no other income, make a living out of this. They regularly arrange such card playing parties, serve some sandwiches and a few drinks and earn 15 per cent of the total turnover of the game.

While card games are not prohibited, the regime does not cultivate these games either. The Communists are never playing cards, nobody ever heard of PAUKER Ana, GEORGESCU Techari, or the couple KISHI-LEVSKI indulging in such games. The only exception is, of course, the "bourgeois gentleman-Communist" GROZ Petru, cultivating all "capitalist" pastime entertainments.

Cards are still imported by the regime, because it is profitable. The State has the card monopoly and sells one deck of imported cards for 860 Lei, which is very expensive. The cards now on sale are the same "Piatnik" cards known from prewar times, imported from VIENNA, but now the duty stamp of the Communist Ministry of Commerce appears on the faces.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Current period

EVAL. COMMENT: Source : reliable  
Information: confirmed by other sources.