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Social Constructions of the Past and their Significance in the Bulgarian Socialist State

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Abstract

This study is part of the ongoing dialogue between anthropology and history. The lack of inclusion of history in anthropological studies has been understood in a political context – in which the Western anthropologist constructs a relation of domination over the colonised Other. I take the view that the uncritical inclusion of history, as a taken-for-granted Western concept, is also problematic and renders history as much an ideological tool of domination as if it were excluded. To address this problem I treat history as an ethnographically determined phenomenon.

Accordingly, the central concern of the thesis is with the significance of social constructions of the past in the Bulgarian socialist state; focussing on three temporal representations in a Bulgarian village, as meaningfully constituted in village celebrations. The state-controlled historical events defined the past as characteristically linear in nature, the teleological orientation of history being provided by its goal of communism. Political activity was associated with the nature of commitment to supporting such a past. Traditional celebrations, as representative of a past that was both cyclic and religiously based, posed a means of resistance to the state-advocated history. Folklore – which displayed elements of each former construction of the past but was nevertheless distinct from both – provided the way in which the state appropriated tradition for its own hegemonic purposes. The relationship between these three constructions of the past is also explored; I discuss an instance when villagers reconfirmed the monolithic view of the state and another occasion when they contradicted it. In the first situation, the past advocated as a particular configuration between history, tradition and folklore, was the means by which villagers articulated their support for state ideology. On the second occasion, state ideology was rejected; history attained a differing significance which marked its contentious nature and more ambiguous position in respect to folklore and tradition.

In being raised alongside other constructions of the past as ethnographically problematic, history is denied a position of authority. Instead, the past is understood as a site of struggle for the negotiation of meaning. Further, this approach provides an insight into socialist Bulgarian notions of temporality which were based on a spatial-temporal framework different from that in the West. Notably, my interest is not in history's role in defining particular relations with Other (non-socialist) countries, but in the way Bulgarian temporal constructions of the past were used to establish its Other within its own boundaries. The recognition of temporal representations as an ideological force used to define relations *within* as much as between countries, is of some relevance to anthropologists in their further understanding of Western notions of temporality as constitutive of relations of domination and of their own involvement in this process.

Statement

This Thesis contains no material which has been submitted or accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the Thesis.

If accepted for the award of the degree, I consent to the Thesis being made available for photocopying and loan.

Deema Kaneff
May 1992

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Conventions and Abbreviations

Foreign words have been printed in italics, except for names of people and places.

Where Bulgarian words have been used, an attempt has been made to write these in a manner such that an Australian speaker reproduces closely the original sound of a native speaker from the Veliko Turnovo region.

B C P	–	Bulgarian Communist Party
B T U	–	Bulgarian Trade Unions
B Z N C	–	*Bulgarski Zemedelski Naroden Soyuz* or Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (for convenience, designated the Bulgarian Agrarian Union)
N A	–	National Assembly
T K Z C	–	*Trudovo – Kooperativno Zemedelsko Stopanstvo* – Labour-cooperative farm economy
Y C L	–	Young Communist League
Pionerski Dom	–	Children's political organisation
Chitalishte	–	A cultural-political educational organisation
Zarezan	–	Holiday of the Vines
Obraztzovo Selo	–	Model Village

Because of the politically sensitive nature of some of the material provided herein, the names of all people (except those of the head of the Bulgarian state at the time of fieldwork, Zhivkov and his wife) have been fictionalised. 'Talpa' is not the true name of the village; and the names of the district capitals and neighbouring villages have also been changed.

Introduction

Anthropology and History

Social(ist) constructions of the past, expressed as historical, folkloric and traditional celebrations in a Bulgarian village, provide the central concern of this study. Such constructions were actualised within the context of the Bulgarian Marxist-Leninist state and represented villagers' distinct interpretive application of Bulgarian Marxism-Leninism: serving as a commentary on the Bulgarian socialist state and villagers' location in respect to it. In giving prominence to these temporal representations, I am involved, at the most general level, with the past and more specifically with history – one means of representing the past – as a contribution to the current dialogue between (Western) history and anthropology[1]. This allows me to engage in recent anthropological discourse with respect to the political uses of temporality where Western history has been identified by various authors as an ideological relationship of domination between Western historicised anthropologists and their object of study – the a-historical Other (Fabian 1983; Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986).

Before turning to my own treatment of the past in the Bulgarian socialist state, previous anthropological attempts to consider – or neglect to consider – history, are discussed, noting that even relatively recent works which recognise the need to include history, do so in a manner which causes some concern. This approach allows clarification of the manner in which my own stance for dealing with the past differs from that of other studies and how it attempts to address some of the problematic issues of previous anthropological works pertaining to history.

The lack of attention given by anthropologists to history in their ethnographic works until relatively recently is well recognised, both within the discipline and outside it. The general

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1 In the Introduction and concluding chapters the level of discussion requires marking two types of history, which are distinguished by prefacing the term with *Western* or *Bulgarian socialist*. In the rest of the thesis where I deal more specifically with Bulgarian ethnographic notions of temporality, Bulgarian history, tradition and folklore will remain unmarked while Western notions of temporality will be indicated by quotation marks.

view held by past generations of anthropologists may be exemplified in a remark by Evans-Pritchard (1954, p.59) who stated about anthropologists that "so long as they were investigating such peoples as Australian aborigines or South Sea Islanders, who have no recorded history...[they] could ignore history with an easy conscience" (cited in Sahlins 1985, p.xviii). As Thompson writes, "Anthropology has evolved as an unhistorical discipline or with an inadequate historical component or even with an anti-historical bias" (1972, p.45). Even those works which did include history were considered unsatisfactory. Ortner states that "Traditional studies had their...problems with respect to history. They often presented us with a thin chapter on 'historical background' at the beginning and an inadequate chapter on 'social change' at the end" (1984, p.43). History was normally based on recorded documentary evidence such as manuscripts (Thompson 1976, p.389); thus fieldwork which involved dealing with peoples who rarely recorded information in written form, combined with the short term duration of the fieldwork period, resulted in the presentation of the Other as possessing an a-historical character.

The lack of a historical dimension in anthropological ethnographies has more recently been understood in a political context. Consequently such ethnographies are now viewed as creating a politicised relationship between anthropologists and their objects of study, a relationship by which Western history is reinforced and the domination of the West over its colonised Other established (see Cohn 1981, pp.228-229). Fabian writes, "...Among the historical conditions under which our discipline emerged and which affected its growth and differentiation were the rise of capitalism and its colonialist-imperialist expansion into the very society which became the target of our enquiries" (1983, p.143). Apart from colonisation, another important aspect of these 'historical conditions' in which the anthropological discipline had its roots, was the development in the nineteenth century of the theory of social evolution. While all explicit ties with an evolutionary temporal categorisation have been left behind, Fabian considers that evolutionist assumptions are still embedded in the discipline's theoretical approaches (1983, p.39). Lévi-Strauss' (1966, pp.233-234) 'hot vs. cold societies', is but one of the many anthropological categories which create a temporal separation between the Western observer and colonised Other; where the latter is placed in another time to the contemporaneous one in which the Westerner exists. Such categorisations, termed 'distancing devices' (Fabian 1983, pp.29-31), serve to constitute temporally the object of anthropological study in a time quite separate from our own Western historicised existence, and are discussed in a number of works, including Cohn (1981), Fabian (1983), Marcus and Fischer (1986). Fabian notes that "...When, in the course of disciplinary growth and differentiation, evolutionism was attacked and all but discarded as the reigning paradigm of anthropology, the temporal

conceptions it had helped to establish remained unchanged. They had long become part of the common epistemological ground and a common discursive idiom of competing schools and approaches...each became a means toward the end of keeping anthropology's Other in another Time" (1983, pp.147-8) – a time, it can be reiterated, perceived to be static and unchanging[2]. This portrayal of an a-historical Other is part of the process of the construction of Western history; a particular politicised notion of social time, which may be viewed as a Western ideological tool of domination. As Cohn reviews the situation, "The capacity to control the past, by defining it as history, and to establish classifications which differentiate Europeans from others are central to...what we call the history of the modern world" (1981, p.244).

The recognition of the discipline's involvement with Western historical relations of domination, has had deep repercussions on the nature of anthropologists' theoretical frameworks (Ortner 1984, p.138). The portrayal and construction of the Other as timeless, was reflected in the a-historical nature of anthropological theory, be it from its earliest functionalist beginnings, through its structural-functionalist and structuralist approaches and then even more recently by semiotic and symbolic methods developed in the 1960's and 1970's. The unsatisfactory nature of these theoretical frameworks which neglected or gave only token importance to history, has been an issue well covered in a wide range of anthropological literature over the last few decades (for example see Fabian 1983; Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.95). This has ultimately resulted in a recognition of the need for anthropologists to more-successfully incorporate history – as a distinct means of temporal expression – within their ethnographies. Interestingly – and of some significance to the following discussion – anthropological attention has focussed on the necessity to include a particular type of social time, history, as opposed to any other temporal form. Presumably history holds the prominent, indeed dominant, position in any Western reference or understanding of temporality.

The ensuing dialogue between practitioners of the historical and anthropological disciplines (see Cohn and others 1981; Thompson 1972, 1974, 1976) represents a new

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2 The temporal conceptions to which Fabian refers are categorised by him as: Physical, Mundane or Typological and Intersubjective Time. The first represents apparently objective, clocked time, the second (Mundane or Typological Time) connotes temporal distancing (for example terms such as 'stone age economics') and thirdly, Intersubjective Time, based on a communication model which projects a temporal distance between sender and receiver. For more detail see Fabian (1983, pp.29-31).

appreciation of history by anthropologists[3]. It also indicates the road taken by anthropologists, who have attempted to address these previous inadequacies through the incorporation of (Western) history within their theoretical frameworks. As noted by Cohn, "...The emergence of a common area of research at the border between the two disciplines has been triggered by two crises: the end of the structured, self confident notion of history and the growing consciousness among anthropologists that the presumed native cultures were themselves a historical product. Both crises are connected to the end of the world colonial system and to the collapse of the related unilinear notion of history" (1981, p.277).

More detail of this anthropological interest in the historical dimension of ethnographies is provided by focussing on two current works which reflect a sensitivity to the need to incorporate history within an ethnographic work. Both Sahlins (1981, 1985) and Thomas (1989) present accounts which give central importance to history. Their works have been chosen because they represent differing, recent and relevant exemplars of the way in which anthropologists are incorporating history within ethnographic work. Thomas is well aware of the politicised relationship established between anthropologists and their a-historical Other; hence the title of his book, *Out of Time*. Sahlins' *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, is viewed as a leading study in attempting "...to demonstrate that two of the most influential styles of synchronic analysis in recent decades – structuralism and semiotics can in fact assimilate and explain the particulars of historical events and the social changes that they register" (Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.98). In considering Sahlins and Thomas, I do not extend the critical comments as applicable to all recent anthropological ethnographic works which claim an interest in history. (Indeed Marcus and Fischer (1986, p.98) discuss two other modes of text which deal with current historical perspectives in an ethnographic framework which are not covered here). However as significant and influential works, I emphasise the widespread character of the problem exemplified by the two studies considered below. These studies provide an opportunity for emphasising the point that while aware of the issue of temporality, their approaches nevertheless remain problematic.

Sahlins recognised the importance of the past in any anthropological explanation when he wrote that "...culture is precisely the organisation of the current situation in terms of a past" (1985, p.155). From this point, however, things become more confused as he uses a number of undefined and taken-for-granted terms in referring to the past as history,

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3 A dialogue, we are reminded, which is not new but can be traced back to Herodotus and his description of different peoples' customs, in his history of the Persian Wars (Davis, in Cohn and others 1981, p.267).

folklore, myth, legend or tradition. He does not clearly sort out or define these terms or how they relate to each other, despite the central importance they hold to his studies. In *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, for instance, we find sentences where three different temporal references are used to denote the past with no clarification offered, thus: "...The same progression appears within Hawaiian *folklore* itself, when the *legends* are placed in the *traditional* sequence set by the great chiefly genealogies" (1981, p.15; my emphasis)[4].

Sahlins not only displays a lack of clarity between different designations of the past, but his use of the term *history* is particularly problematic. We note two basic ways in which Sahlins uses this concept. The first general sense attributed to history was its association with change (1985, pp.30-1), its degree of factuality (1981, p.17, 24 and 26) and that it was a means to temporally represent events in the recent past and present; it denoted post-mythic times (1985, p.47 and p.146). Further, history was a chronologized account of the factual past. In support of this we note, for example the manner in which Hawaiian history was presented, in a chronological, sequential manner in *Islands of History* (pp.1-9). This is equally true of *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, where the whole presentation

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4 Problems arise in respect to the lack of clarity between terms which denote the past – history, folklore, legends, traditions and myth – and which are not explicitly addressed or defined by Sahlins. Sahlins noted that to be historically inaccurate was to be true to Hawaiian myth (1981, p.26). From this we surmise that history as used by Sahlins carries some sense or level of factuality non-existent in myth. When Sahlins speaks of Cook's fate as "...the historical image of a mythical theory..."(1981, p.17 and p.24), history is portrayed as denoting what actually happened when two cultures clashed, while myth was the theory or abstract system behind the actions of the Hawaiians. Again, in *Islands of History*, myth represented "primordial concepts" that provided paradigms of contemporary Hawaiians' own historical actions (Sahlins 1985, p.14). In short, history was 'myth as practice' (1981, p.30). This provides the basis for the delineation between myth and history. While not explicitly equated with myth, Sahlins appears to use tradition in a similar way (for example 1981, p.35). Traditions represented a repetitive and cyclic order (as indeed did myths, Sahlins 1981, p.14), while history instigated change and was therefore opposed to it (for example Sahlins 1985, pp.30-1). Thus Sahlins writes in respect to the way UK seamen defined Hawaiian women's sexual invitations as 'services' by the gifts they made to them, that "With transactions such as these, the exotic commerce ceased to repeat tradition and began to make history" (1985, p.6). On other occasions, history was represented by Sahlins as both reproduction and transformation, (for example 1985, p.vii; 1981, p.50). (To digress momentarily, the equating of history with change appears to be a common characteristic of a Western understanding of the term. Macfarlane reveals this association when he writes that "...histories would seem well qualified to contribute since they have always dealt with change over time" (1977, p.640)). As with myth, tradition was viewed by Sahlins as distinct from the factual (1985, p.148). Folklore was also deemed to be historically inaccurate and therefore opposed to a historical factuality (1985, p.29). In this sense folklore, along with tradition, appears to be used by Sahlins in place of 'myth', while all three were distinguished from history in terms of level of factuality and notions of change. Further, myth, tradition and folklore, were terms which distinguished the contemporary period from previous periods; so for example folklore represented a different temporal epoch being "...set about 20 generations back from historic times..."(Sahlins 1981, p.16). Such a distinction was also expressed as one between custom and historic times where the latter implied a more recent and recorded past, a delineation of a period which was post-mythic (Sahlins 1981, p.45).

had an underlying sense of chronology from pre-Cook times to Cook and transformations which could be observed after his death. Such a chronology served to make evident the transformation of traditional Hawaiian culture. Further, the chronological nature of history was closely associated to archival, textualised records inevitably made by Westerners and relating to the time of European contact. The appeal Sahlins makes to historic records (for example 1981, p.47; 1985, p.41 and p.43 footnotes) contributed both to the chronological and factual nature of Sahlins' notion of history. Indeed the discovery of their documented past indicated the Pacific islanders' existence as historical beings (1985, p.xviii). Of such documentation he writes, "...the histories of South Sea Islanders and other distant civilisations deserve special attention: the recency of the textual record may guarantee an archival abundance not always matched, for example, by medieval Europe; and the texts are wonderfully surprising precisely as they are culturally remote" (1985, p.xviii. We note also the connection between spatial-cultural remoteness and temporality, recognised by Fabian as an important aspect of Western historical time. See below). The emphasis on history in such a manner also suggests it to be a process comprised of one-off, unique occurrences. When Sahlins speaks of historical events, he appears to be referring to a temporal order made up of individual and unique occasions (1985, p.155); indeed he underlines this with the comment that "...an event is a unique actualisation of a general phenomenon, a contingent realisation of the cultural pattern – which may be a good characterisation of history *tout court*" (1985, p.vii). Finally, history in numerous cases was also implied to hold value as a resource and tied up with political-religious powers. Sahlins makes this point in respect to Madagascar but notes that it is applicable to other cultures as well (1985, pp.49-50). All these factors contribute to the taken-for-granted way in which Sahlins used the term *history*, a usage largely 'common sensical' – pointing to some of the implicit meanings incorporated within a Western anthropological understanding of history.

Sahlins also uses *history* in a more specialised way, which constitutes the second meaning he attributes to the term. He is concerned in proving that conventional structuralist distinctions between structure and history are disadvantageous and, at the phenomenological level, unsustainable. History, Sahlins believes, is not relegated to practice while structure remains untouched by it. Instead, he argues that structure is historical; it is "...an historical object" (1985, p.vii). Sahlins' notion of history is thus founded on a theoretical anthropological concept of 'structure'.

In *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* and developed further in *Islands of History*, Sahlins (1981, 1985) is concerned with showing how transformation in meaning occurred through the reproduction of traditional practices in Hawaii, initiated by the occurrence of an extraordinary event, the arrival of Cook. Sahlins grounds his

understanding of history in terms of "structures of significance" (1981, p.8) based on the valuation of signs and their relationships with each other in the system. He writes that an understanding of history as meaning must recognise the role of the sign in action; where assigned with individual interests, signs are defined in terms of the particular contextual situation and thus may attain new conceptual values (1981, p.68 and 70). While conceptually signs have numerous meanings, "...in human practice they find determinate representations, amounting to some selection or inflection of the conceptual sense" (Sahlins 1981, p.70). In this way, signs may be revalued. More importantly in respect to our concern with Sahlins' understanding of history, he notes that "...action unfolds as a temporal process" (1981, p.71). In action, the value of any particular sign for any particular individual "...depends precisely on the subordination of one sign to another "*in one direction only*". In action, the logic of relationships between signs lies precisely in their orientation: sequentially and consequentially..." (Sahlins 1981, p.71 my emphasis). History is therefore understood as an irreversible and linear process, a temporal framework which is a "...systematic ordering of contingent circumstances" (1985, p.144).

The analytical separation made by Sahlins between the reproduction and transformation of structures is effected in terms of such a temporally historical framework. Reproduction was the resumation of the existentially unique in respect to conceptually familiar categories, that is, the grounding of their present in the past (Sahlins 1985, p.146); while transformation was the failure of reproduction through attribution of new functional values on old categories initiated by the specificity of practical circumstances and Hawaiians' differential interests in respect to them. In action, the creative reconsideration of conventional schemes occurs and thus a series of revisions not only to the values of given relationships, but also to the relationship between such relationships, is initiated (Sahlins 1981, p.53). The structure is thus altered, which in turn affects human practice from one moment to the next. For example, with the event of Cook's arrival in Hawaii, we have from the Hawaiian viewpoint the returned God Lono (= reproduction) and with this incorporation of Cook in Hawaiian myth, the consequential 'corruption' of Hawaiian society in an uncharacteristic condition of internal conflict as a result of tabu violations (= transformation). Thus as Sahlins notes, in the confrontation of two cultures – the British and Hawaiian – both change and resistance to change were "historic issues" (1981, p.68), which is to say that history was used by Sahlins to describe both the reproduction and transformation of Hawaiian structures and to show that in the maintenance of the former, transformation occurred so that "...the more things remained the same the more they changed..." (1985, p.144).

History, in Sahlins' terms, is therefore a dialectical process "...the historical process unfolds as a continuous and reciprocal movement between the practice of the structure and the structure of the practice" (1981, p.72). More than being a dialectical process founded in structure, history also had an important role as the synthesis of "radical dichotomies" (Sahlins 1985, p.156); it questioned a wide range of "...ossified oppositions by which we habitually understand both history and cultural order" (Sahlins 1985, p.145) – between structure and practice, system and event; between an "...inescapable past and an irreducible present" (Sahlins 1985, p.151)[5].

Thus for Sahlins, the basis of an understanding of history is dependent on its association with structure. He notes, "Hawaiian history is throughout grounded in structure..." (1985, p.144) and "Ultimately at issue is the being of structure *in* history and *as* history" (1985, p.145). His notion of history is based on an analytical model, history being a phenomenon existent only through an understanding of social intercourse as structure, practice and the relation between them. History is first and foremost a concept derived from structuralism – an abstraction providing, in his terms, a "theory of history" (Sahlins 1981, p.8; 1985, p.138 and p.143) – and is used by Sahlins to explain a specific cultural situation, rather than deriving a theoretical position from the ethnographic data. In creating and advocating an absolute concept of history – a general model applicable to all cultures – dependent on understanding society in terms of the structure-practice dialectic, Sahlins deems it to hold broad relevancy. It also defines history as primarily abstract and theoretical rather than rooted in ethnography.

We can recognise the predominantly abstract rather than ethnographic nature of Sahlins' history by looking at the way he explains or understands history in specific cultural contexts. Sahlins' opening line in *Islands of History* states that "History is culturally ordered, differently so in different societies, according to meaningful schemes of things" (1985, p.vii) and his Chapter 2 is devoted to discussing in more detail how various cultural orders have their own types of historical production (1985, p.x and p.34). Indeed, when Sahlins refers to Hawaiian history or myth, he is often alluding to a specifically Hawaiian representation of the past, thus creating a distinction between a Hawaiian and British notion of temporality. In recognising that history is particular to different cultures, it would appear that his 'theory of history' is accommodating of ethnographic diversity and

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5 Sahlins' synthesis is in some senses a red herring, for if oppositions of structure and practice are inadequate, then their synthesis is one formed on a weak foundation, based on trying to show how the two are joined, when they should never be conceived as 'the two' in the first place. Since the distinction is wrong (Sahlins 1985, p.153), then any theory dependent on the synthesis of the two must also be problematic.

that his understanding of history varies between cultures, "...the precise synthesis of past and present is relative to the cultural order..." (Sahlins 1985, p.153). But it soon becomes clear that in many ways this is only a superficial treatment, since cultural particularities are always reduced to terms designated by his structuralist theory of history. Sahlins' model would be appropriate if we could assume that it was possible to delineate and understand all cultures in terms of structure-practice dialectic, that all understandings of the past could be understood on the basis of his model. This is apparently what Sahlins assumes when he writes that "The heretofore obscure histories of remote islands deserve a place alongside the self-contemplation of the European past...for their own remarkable contributions to an historical understanding. We thus multiply our conceptions of history by the diversity of structures..." (1985, p.72). In this way Sahlins reduces all understandings of the past to a history which has significance as a Western theoretical perspective of structuralism. Indeed it is only because Sahlins' model of history is rooted in a theoretical, structuralist abstraction, that he is able to make the reductionalist generalisation that "History is made the same general way within a given society as it is between societies" (1985, pp.viii-ix).

In short while Sahlins (unlike many anthropological predecessors), recognises the historical nature of societies irrespective of whether they are perceived to be changing or not, the way in which he does this is problematic. For he subsumes all native understandings of the past under the theoretical straight jacket of a history understood as a structure-practice dialectic. In Chapter 6, I take up a specific problem resulting from such a stance: the choice of any one particular 'structure of the conjuncture' in preference to any other, in being attributed particular importance in the historical development of a cultural group. (For example the giving of all importance to the British-Hawaiian clash in understanding the process of the 'destruction' of 'traditional' Hawaiian culture). Since analytically all must hold equal validity, then the raising of one 'structure of the conjuncture' and its emphasis, adds a distorting influence on the procedure. This is an issue connected to the one Marcus brings to attention: namely the difficulty in identifying 'structure' (1982, p.598). The problem arises out of Sahlins' particular view of history.

The two different uses and understandings given to history by Sahlins outlined above – namely common-sensical and theoretical – lead to a rather confused reading of his works, and the attributing of a secondary position to that which many anthropologists would point to as the basis of the discipline: ethnography. Before moving the discussion on to this point, we must first look at Thomas, who puts forward an alternative understanding of history, which provides an insight into a different dimension of a Western, anthropological understanding of the term.

Thomas is concerned with the omission of history from anthropological descriptions and analysis and recognises that: "There is a great deal of work which seems to be animated by the conjunction of history and anthropology, but much of this does not transcend the limitations of earlier a-historical paradigms" (Thomas 1989, p.6). In his words, he is interested in "...the absence of historical time, and with the explicit or implicit negation of the notion that history has any constitutive effect in the social situation under consideration" (1989, p.5). The exclusion of history from descriptions and analysis was, he writes, a necessary facet of the professionalisation of the discipline (1989, p.120), a process which enabled a monopolisation of a form of knowledge specific to anthropology. Significantly, Thomas points out, critiques of the a-temporal nature of anthropology have "...had very little effect upon the core of anthropological discussion – which has continued to be occupied by the analysis of ethnography, that is, by the systematic but non-historical exploration of problems or rituals, economics, kinship, politics and so on..." (1989, p.6). The problem of the denial of history has been perpetrated because the anthropological object of study, namely culture or society – predominantly dependent upon ethnographic fieldwork – is constructed in anthropological discourse as a system or structure "out of time" (Thomas 1989, p.120). By focussing on the 'systematic', on orderly a-temporal systems, Thomas states that anthropologists exclude history by designating it as an "...unstructured, incoherent residue of contingent events" (1989, p.120). Thus the anthropological object is sustained in opposition to history (Thomas 1989, p.95) since the concern is with "...a system at a particular time" (Thomas 1989, p.115). To overcome this problem, we must, he reasons, re-define our object of study; for ethnographic features can be analysed in a variety of ways, but cannot be explained without the consideration of change and developments (1989, p.59).

Thomas addresses the issue of what he means by history, when he writes that "I have refrained from extended definitional discussion of terms such as 'evolution' and 'history' because I take the view that meanings subsist in the uses of concepts in texts, rather than in authorial pronouncements which may bear little relation to the order of a discourse" (1989, p.3). This essentially maintains history as a taken-for-granted notion. It also justifies an investigation of the way he uses history in written context as a means to attaining an insight into his position. However in the same paragraph, Thomas gives the reader some inkling of his usage of history when he implies it is about change and a little more to the point, "...I use history to mean events and social processes rather than the knowledge of such events and processes" (1989, p.4). While such knowledge must be discussed, he claims it remains distinct from the question of historical effect, which is closer to his concern (1989, p.4). This essentially brings to the fore my main problem with Thomas, in

that he advocates a history which is largely detached from meaning; it is treated as an objectified entity which can be studied as distinct from the way it is represented or known. He maintains a sense of historical reality external to such representation (Thomas 1989, p.4). This view allows him to look at history as a pursuit for truth, to attribute to history a status as a 'scientific' entity. We may now look more closely at how this is achieved.

Thomas believes that history and evolution are closely linked phenomena and thus a reinstallation of history within anthropological paradigms depends upon "...a reconstruction of evolutionary notions" (1989, p.7). While Thomas does not reject evolutionism, he believes a classical evolutionary model must be displaced with another longer time-frame, namely "...a systemic history which can integrate structural transformations and events" (1989, p.16). His notion of history "... as a systemic process [which] is circuitously derived from social evolutionary theory..." diverges from evolutionary theory in several crucial ways (1989, p.121) – namely that: "Notions of 'stages' and 'direction' are displaced by transformations which, in regional contexts, are not directional" (1989, p.121). Thus contemporary societies cannot be seen as positively or negatively charged, as more advanced or less advanced versions of each other; to do so, he suggests, is to set up a "master narrative" which presents time in an abstracted manner and thus denies geographical and historical difference (1989, p.49).

Thomas' understanding of evolution – that is, 'long-term change' – can be understood only via a knowledge of history, precisely that which is lacking in an anthropological approach dependent solely upon ethnographic research. Historical events for him are occurrences such as "...shifts in power away from chiefs and towards land-holders or warriors..." (1989, p.94), or disputes in a particular locality (1989, p.67). His most lucid description of the nature of such historical events is as a "...'concatenation of discrete and transitory entities or events, each unique in its particulars'..."(Ingold 1986, pp.74-5, cited in Thomas 1989, p.117). Thus, while Thomas argues that anthropological analysis is derived from general impressions and accounts (1989, p.67); is a "...discourse about procedures and rules..." (1989, p.75); and strips an event of its context by attributing it importance only as an exemplification (so rendering it in the abstract (1989, p.118)), historical descriptions are seen in an opposite light. History looks at particular situations and events (1989, p.75), singularities, observed moments and occurrences which happen only once (1989, p.75). (We note as a side issue that as with Sahlins, history here is also characterised as once only, unique occurrences. See also Thomas (1989, p.81 and p.118)). The way in which such events are connected is through an "...expression or instantiation of systemic transformation" (Thomas 1989, pp.97-98). These events have consequence (Thomas 1989, p.122) – for example, past events created the present conditions in which ethnographic

description takes place (Thomas 1989, p.81 and p.121) – and, it seems, are strung together in a cause-effect way (1989, p.119). That is, the relation between events is such that one brings about the other. History is understanding the causal connection between occurrences: "...events stand as outcomes of contingent causes..." and indeed he often refers to history as a causality (for example 1989, p.120 and p.121).

His "theories of events or history" (1989, p.118), or the inclusion of history in anthropological models, involves not only the recognition of the historic causality of events, but an accounting of the positional or functional significance of systemic elements (1989, p.120); which I understand to mean recognising them in temporal context. Such a contextualisation depends on "ordinary historical analysis" and archaeology (Thomas 1989, p.121). A reliance on these two aspects in constructing the long-term changes, created a notion of evolution not subordinated to the logic of progression or stages, but one which maintained its generalised orientation and its usefulness in providing explanation of particular ethnographic studies. Primarily, Thomas saw a need to incorporate historical publications, documents and other literature not written by anthropologists but by explorers and missionaries, amongst others, who had often arrived at a site well before anthropologists – and in many cases had spent much longer with the people. Such texts, typically rejected by ethnographers, are viewed by Thomas as vitally important. Interestingly, we note again – as with Sahlins – the association made between history and documentation. Further, such historical recordings are explicitly identified with the beginnings of European contact and therefore implicitly associated with the West. Thomas writes in respect to the Andaman Islanders "...the people were encountered for the first time by Europeans a couple of centuries or even just a few decades ago; prior to that, everything is obscure; in effect, there is no history" (1989, p.26). From this we may surmise that 'ordinary historical analysis' was documentation about Others by Westerners.

Where 'ordinary historical analysis' was not possible, archaeological evidence took on considerable importance. Although Thomas noted a number of problems with archaeological evidence (1989, p.66 and p.115), he nevertheless maintained its usefulness in constructing a factual history, a means by which greater historical knowledge could be obtained; indeed he wrote that Sahlins' Hawaiian material would have benefited from the consideration of such material (1989, p.109)[6]. Archaeological evidence was concerned

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6 I disagree with another of Thomas' criticisms regarding the point that Sahlins' prescriptive and performative cultural orders are "...implicit evolutionary terms"; where 'heated' societies characterised by development and change are associated with performative societies and 'cold' societies are linked with a prescriptive order (where repetitive non-changing time is characteristic to primitive societies (1989, p.114)). This is indirectly addressed in my work – Chapters 5 & 6 – where I establish that both

with geographic factors, and gave revealing prehistorical depth to a local site through information about population movements and the spread of religious and trading systems. Such information Thomas believes, which provides a means of understanding long term change and longer term transformation within the one society, is far superior to evolutionary theories dependent on what are essentially temporal metaphors which make classificatory discriminations between 'advanced' and 'primitive' societies that actually exist in the same time (Thomas 1989, p.34 and 66). Archaeology specifies the generation of patterns of long-term change in terms of prehistory rather than in terms of "abstractly imputed" evolutionary theories (1989, p.37; pp.66-67).

It is in the positive value Thomas attributes to archaeological 'evidence' and 'ordinary historical analysis' (depending on documented events related in a causal way), that he grounds history as an objective and factual phenomenon. He refers to his view of history as the 'actual' history in opposition to that portrayed by other understandings. Thus: "Actual history can displace the evolutionary narrative as the necessary chronological structure which encompasses the variety of cases and gives them a more general meaning in our own culture. Where there is no long documentary record, archaeological evidence is a crucial element of this movement of explication, since it pertains to located histories and makes a break from culturally charged evolutionary schema" (1989, p.115). In this statement, we see him upholding the predominant position of recorded history, supported by archaeological 'evidence', as the basis for an 'actual history' which he believes enables a much greater level of accuracy or factuality to be attained than from evolutionary theories which are denoted as merely 'narrative'. The underlying assumption is the existence of a history which is an objective factual entity, needing only to be discovered. It assumes that history is a phenomenon which, through scientific endeavours, attains an indisputable level of accuracy or factuality. "Actual historical developments" become the standard of measure for accuracy and the point from which to judge any alternate temporal representations (see for example Thomas 1989, p.36). Indeed from this perspective, missionary documents attain a higher value of accuracy than informants' interpretations developed years after the event (Thomas 1989, p.21). This approach can be viable only if one assumes, as does Thomas, that documentary recordings made at a given time, provide a greater sense of truth and are therefore of more value than native representations or

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prescriptive and performative configurations exist in the same social setting. Indeed, I believe Sahlins says as much (1985, p.xiii).

understandings constructed about that time[7]. The view is dependent upon distinguishing between an 'actual history' and other temporal orders.

The reformation of the anthropological object to include history thus involves, as far as Thomas is concerned, the movement toward including both interests of the historical discipline and findings of archaeologists. Thus: "A refocussed anthropological vision would often take a greater interest in archaeological evidence... It would also deal much more extensively with historical events and their consequences..." (Thomas 1989, p.122). Further... "So long as ethnographic fieldwork is mandatory and historical work marginal in an anthropological career, attempts to alter understanding are doomed..." (Thomas 1989, p.10). On other occasions, also, he advocates the necessity for anthropologists to show an interest in events typically studied by historians and in the evaluation of documents in a similar manner to those with historical training (Thomas 1989, p.16 and p.121)[8]. In his advocation of both the disciplines of history and archaeology, Thomas attributes to them a high degree of faith; while he admits that the "evolutionary schema" typically used by anthropologists may be "culturally charged" (1989, p.115; quoted in full in the previous paragraph), he obviously believes that neither archaeology nor history are 'culturally charged', as if their data and interpretations remain free from the ethnocentric values to which only anthropology has fallen victim.

The movement toward history and archaeology should be accompanied, Thomas believes, with the allocation of lesser importance on purely ethnographic work, although the pursuit of one endeavour should not be to the exclusion of others. He thus writes that "Fieldwork would be decentred but not displaced..." (1989, p.122) and that what he supports is the "...decentring of ethnographic fieldwork as the source of anthropological knowledge" (1989, p.17). The re-orientation of anthropological practice away from fieldwork and toward other disciplines which are exposed to a relatively lesser degree, if at all, to other belief systems is particularly problematic. For ethnography provides – potentially at least – a valuable means to pursue a critique, a self-conscious reflection on our own discipline and culture through the interactive process it constructs with the Other. Ethnography is the source of a reflexive and critical anthropology: "An ethnographic..... perspective not only

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7 As a cursory note, it may be added that while Thomas admits that archaeological methods involve some degree of speculation, their plausibility and value can be determined only with respect to a particular regional site (1989, p.122), this does not lead him to question his understanding of history. Instead it serves to further legitimate his theory of history as an object to be discovered, as a scientific endeavour involving an investigation of part truth on the path toward attaining greater knowledge.

8 Here we see another facet of the term history as used by Thomas – this time delineating an academic discipline, a professional field of study.

distances us from the immediacy of our own circumstances (both literally and figuratively), involvement in and knowledge of other lifestyles also invite systematic doubt and self-critical assessment" (Scholte 1969, p.447). Indeed the ethnographic encounter is described as an "act of surrendering " (Scholte 1969, p.439) – a particularly apt phrase given the anthropologists' currently understood association with colonisation processes – and as such its undeniable worth as the potential source for recognising the temporality of the Other is suggested. Ethnography is the one occasion when the anthropologist surrenders her/his position of authority to an intersubjective confrontation. Scholte recognises ethnography as 'communicative interaction' to be the necessary precondition to any anthropological knowledge (1969, p.440). Fabian also notes the significance and worth of the ethnographic event as the one occasion when anthropologists meet the Other in the same shared time (for example 1983, p.33 and p.148). Thus to reduce the importance of the ethnographic encounter and at the same time give greater 'voice' to other disciplines, which usually involve less opportunity for self-reflective analysis, is an issue for concern[9]. This is not to say that historical analysis or archaeology may not be useful to anthropological analysis, but their application must be under constant and critical review.

Essentially, Thomas' approach amounts to a reproduction of a Western-anthropological understanding of history, a refinement or at best a simple modification to make it more 'scientific'. Instead of attributing to history a status as a factual, objective phenomenon, it could be more useful to render it as an ethnographic concept and so expose a Western history to a critique indirectly through the granting of greater importance to alternate understandings of the past. From this viewpoint, the anthropological practice of fieldwork is crucially important; it demands that the importance of ethnographic practice as the starting point of any anthropological endeavour should be reasserted. If it is true that what is needed is a critical reassessment of the notion of Western history, then the answer cannot be found by the 'decentring' of ethnographic fieldwork and the instatement of historical, archaeological or for that matter any other Western 'scientific' endeavours.

In this respect Thomas and I are diametrically opposed, for I believe that an understanding of any Western notion of history and the way it is to be used in anthropology can best be achieved by rendering it an ethnographically problematic concept, rather than by reducing the relative importance of ethnographic fieldwork. The basic and underlying discrepancy

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9 There are exceptions to this generalisation; for example there is a sphere of interest in the historical discipline which encourages self-consciousness, where the pursuit of what 'actually happened', that is, of an objective history, is rejected. However, this is not maintained or generally applied throughout the realm of the historical discipline, nor is it identified by Thomas as a particularly relevant or preferable feature.

between us is in Thomas' separation of representations of history from 'real history' – recall the above cited quotation that history is events rather than knowledge about events (Thomas 1989, p.4). This viewpoint is also evident in his comment in respect to Radcliffe-Brown's and Geertz's studies, that "While *concepts* of time may interest both perspectives, historical time has no place in either" (1989, p.26), implying that Western historical time is not also a concept. Rather I take the view that historical documentation and archaeological material are not means toward the production of an 'actual history', as Thomas believes, but representations of the past which in the West are known as history[10].

The advantage of viewing documented works of which Thomas speaks as representations, is that it allows a Western 'scientific' notion of history to be recognised and re-defined as an ethnographic phenomenon, thereby giving greater authority and voice to alternate understandings of temporality. This accordingly deters us from imposing our history onto a 'them'; that is, writing the Other into our history. Thomas' notion of 'actual history' as an objective and factual phenomenon dependent on documented and archaeological records, basically suppresses or reduces any alternate understanding of history and reproduces it as a Western ideological tool. Thomas sets up his own 'master narrative' reliant upon archaeological and historical data; in this sense he maintains the very views he sets out to discredit. His approach to history as a natural scientific phenomenon is one that depoliticises it; the past is closed off as a domain in which the struggle for meaning may occur. This denies the possibility of a multitude of constructed pasts in 'dialogue'; alternative pasts are suppressed when such exclusivity is given to a 'real' history. The possibility of the past as a contentious domain between various interpretations, all vying for authority, is denied.

A discussion of both Sahlins' and Thomas' view of Western history has drawn out some of the implicit understandings associated with a Western – anthropological – notion of history. It is beyond the realms of the work to detail this further, since my central concern is with Bulgarian socialist constructions of the past. This interest does, however, present an opportunity for a comparison between the two, which is the subject of discussion in the conclusion. The point demanding emphasis here is that the Western notion of history encapsulates a whole series of implicit meanings which are rarely verbalised but remain part of the taken-for-granted understandings denoted by the term. In making this point, I

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10 Thomas' critique of Sahlins is based on his belief in a 'real history'. He says that Sahlins "...can therefore deal with some time-scales and with representations of history, but cannot effectively integrate real history. These attempts retain the central notion of system or structure but insist on its grounding in time. This grounding cannot effectively incorporate real history unless 'system' is displaced by 'systemic process' as the object of analysis" (Thomas 1989, p.121).

am also establishing the central issue of this work; that my treatment of history differs from Sahlins' or Thomas' in that history is rendered ethnographically problematical. That is, history is constituted a culturally designated concept which is analysed and developed from meanings attributed to it by Bulgarian villagers.

In spite of the fact that both Sahlins and Thomas recognise a need to incorporate history, the assumed association made between history and objectivity (Thomas), or history as a theoretical concept (Sahlins), defines a sterile understanding of the past where alternate representations are drowned out in the name of scientific factuality or theoretical propriety. While the lack of history in anthropological studies has been shown to be part of the process of Western domination over the Other (Fabian 1983), the inclusion of history in a manner similar to that by Sahlins and Thomas may serve a similar purpose – as a means of denying time to the Other by placing them in our history. This is achieved in the apparently inoffensive presentation of history as being of a non-political nature, on the basis of its either 'scientific' or theoretical validity. History is thus defined as lying beyond or out of reach of the political relations of domination it is known to represent. Therefore both Sahlins' and Thomas' manner of inclusion of history, merely reproduces the problematic and covert relations anthropologists are trying to overcome. It is only when anthropologists draw away from such a Westernised notion of history that a more satisfactory solution may be found. (I return to these points in the concluding chapter).

By focussing on socialist history in the context of its relations with other constructions of the past – folklore and tradition – an attempt is made to move away from the problematic notion of Western history and the way in which it has been commonly incorporated into recent anthropological discourse. My approach is spurred on by recent post-modernist works (for example, Clifford 1988) which, in questioning the authority of the ethnographer – and therefore by implication the relation between the colonising West (that is the anthropologist) and the colonised (the native) – also demand a rethinking of the relationship between history and anthropology; between the a-temporal position attributed to the object of anthropological study and the attributor, the (historicised) Western anthropologist. The postulate that Bulgarian history was constituted in a different way from that of Western history, is the starting point for a critique of the above-discussed works. This implies a potentially diverging way in which the passage of time is socially represented in different societies (Howe 1981, p.223) but nevertheless is compatible with, and does not exclude the condition of shared intersubjective time which, as both Bloch (1977, pp.282-283 and 1979, p.166) and Fabian (1983, p.42) point out, is a necessary condition of communication. To recognise the common intersubjective temporality between cultures and yet accept their potentially differing representations of time, does not

induce a fencing-off of 'cultural gardens' (Fabian 1983, p.47) characteristic of the relativists (including functionalists) who encapsulate time within any given social system (Fabian 1983, p.41), thus disallowing comparative discussion of temporality between cultures.

Another assumption of this work, already implied in the above discussion, is that time is not an objective or absolute social fact in any sense, but an ethnographically constituted phenomenon with fundamental political significance. My ethnographic material focuses on temporal representations of the past as culturally significant constructions specific to the Bulgarian socialist state. In holding this interest in the past and the way it is meaningfully known as history, folklore and tradition, spatial and temporal phenomena are treated not as natural resources, but as ideological instruments (Fabian 1983, p.144). That is, one of the theoretical assumptions I make is that any temporal notion is socially constructed; time is the "carrier of significance", the means by which relations between the Self and Other are defined (Fabian 1983, p.ix). Indeed, Howe contends that it is difficult if not impossible to conceptualise time as an abstracted phenomenon, distinct from the way it is divided, measured and represented. Durkheim (1915) and Hubert and Mauss (1909), as cited by Howe (1981, p.222), also support this view, as does Leach (1961), when he writes "...we *create time* by creating intervals in social life. Until we have done this there is no time to be measured" (cited in Howe (1981, p.222). Again we note the view of time as a condition of intersubjectivity, of communication. My interest is in the metaphorical representation of (socialist) time and the ideological implications associated with the way time is 'divided up';[11] this study deals with the temporal past, that is, with history, folklore and traditions as socialist constructions of the past. (Here I part company with Howe (1981) whose interest in temporal representations is with socially delineated units such as day and night, that is, calendrical units; and with Bourdillon (1978) whose interest is in practical versus sacred concepts of time).

Finally it needs to be pointed out that my interest with temporality differs from Fabian's, for example, in respect to the level at which it is focussed. If we recall that history was a politicised notion of social time which constituted a particular relation between the anthropologist and the Other (Fabian 1983), that is, a temporal relation between 'us' and 'them' which defined Western history as a tool of domination, then socialist history may also be viewed as serving a similar purpose. The perceived domination of the socialists over capitalists, is unsurprising given that a Marxist-Leninist notion of history locates

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11 The problem with the relationship between intersubjective time and the way it is represented is beyond the scope of the present work. This thesis is about representations of time.

socialism as following the capitalist stage of historical development. However my central concern is not on socialist history as establishing a relation between 'us' and 'them', but on socialist history as determining a relation between 'them' and 'them'; I raise temporality as constitutive of relations within Bulgaria, both within the village and between villagers and the state. This is to suggest that temporality is more than an ideological tool between the colonising West and the colonised Other, but temporal constructions may also be used within societies, for similar purposes[12]. Thus, while the political significance of the temporal relation between the anthropologist and the Other has been established by Fabian (1983), my investigation of socialist history focuses on how temporal representations not only define relations between countries, but within them as well. In so doing, I render problematic a number of temporal constructions – history, folklore and tradition – which, when recognised in terms of Fabian's work, extends our insight into some taken-for-granted analytical concepts used by anthropologists. The consideration of history, folklore and tradition as ethnographic concepts, leads firstly to the loss of the position of authority held by Western history, denying it primacy as an objective or theoretically based, absolute concept; secondly it allows consideration of the past as a central domain of negotiation of meaning (which therefore holds political purpose).

The intentions of the study are thus twofold: to contribute material about a site which to date has not been subject to anthropological exploration,[13] and in so doing provide an insight into notions of temporality in Bulgarian socialist society; and to use this information of Bulgarian socialist temporality in order to reflect critically upon, and attain further insight into, the historical relations of domination between anthropologists and their study of the Other – and thus more generally on Western notions of temporality and more specifically on Western history.

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12 Nowotny (1975, p.327) implies that representations of time may be constitutive of relations within as well as between societies, when he acknowledges that differences of time reckoning exist between classes in USA society and that such differences have been found to be embedded in linguistic codes employed by each social class. He does not, however, explicitly look at temporal representations as establishing relations between classes.

13 With one exception (to my knowledge): C. Silverman has spent considerable time travelling through Bulgaria investigating folklore groups and has published two papers on the topic (1983; 1989). As I understand it, she has not – in more typical anthropological fashion – carried out extended fieldwork in the one locality.

Bulgarian Socialist History

According to Fabian, the rise of modern anthropology is inseparable from the transformation of the medieval, sacred Judeo-Christian conception of history into a new secularised form during the Enlightenment. Such a transformation involved: firstly a generalisation of historical time, where its relevancy was extended beyond the locality of the Mediterranean to incorporate the whole world; secondly, this enabled the secularisation of movement in space and thus also the beginnings of the notion of travel as science (of fundamental importance to the rise of anthropology); and thirdly, the naturalisation of time where the concept of history was widened to account for processes of geological history and biological evolution without recourse to supernatural intention. The secularisation process thus created a notion of history which was coextensively temporal and spatial (Fabian 1983, Chapter 1 and pp.146-7).

The secularisation of time was the starting point, Fabian notes, to understanding the rise of evolutionism in the 19th century (1983, p.11). Nevertheless evolutionism rejected some aspects of this newly secularised time: temporality was no longer a variable independent of the events it marked, the meaninglessness of physical duration was rejected and replaced by returning to time the meaningful events of humanity and therefore attributing to it an inner necessity; the characteristic of vastness was not used because the history of mankind occupied a relatively insignificant span on the scale of natural evolution; and instead of a purely abstract chronology, evolutionists were preoccupied "...with stages leading to civilisation, each of them as meaningful as a sentence leading toward the conclusion of a story" (Fabian 1983, pp.14-15). This social evolutionism reintroduced a specificity to time reminiscent of the pre-secularised notion of Judeo-Christian history which was all the more reactionary because it appeared to rest on "...strictly scientific hence universally valid principles. In fact little more had been done than to replace faith in salvation by faith in progress and industry; and the Mediterranean as the hub of history, by Victorian England" (Fabian 1983, p.17). As the science of social evolution, the anthropological discipline arose out of a Western history which espoused a thoroughly spatialised conception of time. "Its manifest concerns were progress and 'history', but its theories and methods ...were taxonomic..." (Fabian 1983, p.147). Thus, Fabian continues "...nineteenth-century anthropology sanctioned an ideological process by which relations between the West and its Other, between anthropology and its object, were conceived not only as difference, but as distance in space *and* time" (1983, p.147). Although explicitly discarded, the temporal conceptions associated with evolutionism, Fabian contends, remain unchanged in anthropological discourse and part of the common epistemological ground of the discipline.

I have summarised this history of the Western Judeo-Christian conception of time and the development of social evolutionism from it, because my focus is on another temporal notion: a Marxist-Leninist history which is both related to and yet divergent from this Western temporality. Marxist-Leninist history and social evolutionism were two socially oriented temporal orders arising from the same source – a Judeo-Christian conception of time.

Thus both social evolutionism and Marxist-Leninist history, restricted time to events they marked, that is, they returned to time the meaningful events of humanity. This gave both a notion of progress which was directional and had a goal; for evolutionism this goal was civilisation, for Marxism-Leninism it was communism. In being concerned with either stages or states respectively, both also involved a taxonomic process, a preoccupation with epochs which it was believed rested on the necessity and operation of laws, that is, on strictly scientific hence universally valid principles.

Despite sharing these characteristics, there were also differences between a Marxist-Leninist history and social evolutionism. Marxism-Leninism distributed humanity in the time-space framework but on a different basis from social evolutionism on which anthropology was based; the difference between denoting the Other as 'feudal' or 'capitalist' rather than as 'primitive', indicates the contrast in frames of reference. While a Western evolutionism reflected a faith in "progress and industry" (Fabian 1983, p.17), a Marxist-Leninist history revealed a faith in modes of production shaped by class struggle. Importantly, class struggle and the progressive movement of a Marxist-Leninist history, was perceived to occur as a dialectical process in which the present and future were understood in terms of the past; which is not to say that social evolution was not bound to the past but it was associated to it in a different way. This resulted in two different spatial maps; in a Marxist-Leninist notion of history, the Other belonged not only to foreign and distant places, as the case with Western social evolution, but existed within the socialist state itself, which permitted the denial of historicity to its own capitalist-fascist past and those contemporary figures who still advocated such an order. (I take up this point again in the concluding chapter). It is with the construction of the Other within the very boundaries of the Marxist-Leninist state, with which this work is concerned[14].

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14 The main point to emphasise is the fact that a Marxist-Leninist history (notably I am not looking at Marx's writings, but at an interpretive application arising from his work) is both similar to and yet different from evolutionism. To speak further of the conditions under which a Marxist-Leninist history arose, is beyond the main scope of this work. The concluding chapter draws some further comparison between a Western (capitalist) and Bulgarian socialist (Eastern European) history.

A Marxist-Leninist history was overtly and explicitly celebrated as the official order of the Bulgarian socialist state (unlike social evolutionism which is openly rejected and yet covertly still thriving in Western anthropological discourse). Below I review my study of a specific interpretative application of this Marxist-Leninist temporality as effected in a Bulgarian village – Talpa.

A Marxist-Leninist history was implicitly at the very basis of the Talpians' description of themselves as 'new Bulgarian villagers'. Chapter 1 introduces the ethnographic material by discussing what Talpians meant when they described themselves in such a way. It was primarily a means to locate themselves and their village in a particular moral, political and historical position in respect to the Bulgarian state through reference to the past – both to their own activities in the past and through the highlighting of specific events in this past as particularly important. Thus in knowing themselves as 'new Bulgarian villagers' they were defining themselves in terms of a distinct temporal and ideological relation; framing their identity in terms of a specific understanding of the past, an understanding founded on the basis of Bulgarian socialist history.

Having established the importance of the past in Talpa, the following three chapters study the particular constructions of the past espoused by Talpians – history, tradition and folklore. I develop these constructions from three different types of celebrations which the villagers themselves distinguished as historical, traditional and folkloric.

Chapter 2 renders history and politics as ethnographically constituted phenomena. By examining a historical celebration in the village, I identify those factors that may be characterised as defining history: its linearity (as non-reversible, chronological, evolutionary and teleological); its textualised form; the fact it is celebrated in public locations and controlled by state officials; and its moral dimension. Further, history was linked with political activity. Historical events were differently evaluated in terms of moral and teleological aspects, with those villagers who could establish their contribution to the advent of the socialist state in 1944, being given privileged political positions. Politics is therefore defined as contemporary relations emerging from villagers' differing relationships to specific morally and teleologically valued historical events.

History was opposed to those practices villagers termed traditional, which are the centre of discussion in Chapter 3. Traditional customs were rooted in religious beliefs; represented a cyclic, unchanging past; were celebrated in private areas outside the state domain and were not publicly practised by state officials. Such a traditional delineation of the past was conceptually opposed to history; it distinguished and unified humanness in terms which

undermined a historically supported notion of humanity. State officials recognised traditional practices as a potential expression of resistance to state advocated history.

In Chapter 4 the third construction of the past, folklore, is explored. Folklore represented the way in which the state appropriated tradition for its own hegemonic purposes. Its mediatory position is evident in the characteristics which defined it: emphasising certain aspects of traditional customs (such as those based on appearance) and rejecting others (for example those based on religion) while incorporating them within state organised events; being performed in both the public and private domain by all villagers irrespective of their Party status; and displaying both linear and cyclic qualities. In maintaining qualities of both history and tradition but being like neither, folklore held wide relevancy and functioned to unify all villagers in terms of a Bulgarian identity. The transformational process by which tradition was claimed by the state and exhibited as folklore, I term re-contextualisation. Importantly, this process attributed a time-less or a-temporal nature to folklore, which represented 'another time', so separating the past from either the present or future. Folklore was thus a state authorised means of restructuring the people's perception of the traditional past. Further, it neutralised the relevancy of traditions through creating a temporal disclocation of the traditional past from history.

Having discussed history, tradition and folklore and how they were conceptually related, I then explore how *Talpians* determined the relationship between these three constructions of the past.

Chapter 5 examines the state-prescribed relations between history, folklore and tradition through a discussion of the 'model village' event. This event was a state run, national, annual competition in which the village successfully participated. In portraying themselves to be working in a harmonious and united way to realise the goals of the state, Talpians displayed their acquiescence to state ideology through espousing a particular understanding of the past which gave pre-eminence to history and consequently to the rejection of tradition, while subsuming folklore under state historical goals. This was the particular configuration of the past which conformed with what the villagers believed the state viewed as an exemplary socialist village; it was founded on expressing support for a monolithic and uncontentious state-determined historical past.

The final ethnographic chapter is also concerned with the relation between the three constructions of the past, this time studying a situation which contrasted with state ideology. The discussion considers the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration (the *Chitalishte* was an institution in which most village political, cultural and social gatherings occurred),

with regard to an issue which was not part of the officials' planning for the event – the selection of award recipients. The varying significance attributed to the awards and indeed to the historical event by different state officials, represented their conflicting interests in respect to history – as either political, cultural or material in nature. Political figures advocated 1944 as the most relevant period in the pursuit of historical goals; culturally active villagers gave equal importance to all events in the past and present; while a material relationship to history advocated a present orientation to historical goals. These three relations defined history in a conflicting way to the unified way it was presented in the 'model village' event; instead of unanimity, history took on a multi-faceted nature, which rendered the past contestable. At issue was the significance of state ideology; while the past was central to the way in which Talpians negotiated their meaningful reality as distinctly socialist, it was not always ordered in the monolithic form presented by state ideology.

The past, as set up in folkloric, historical and traditional celebrations, was thus a central site of contention in the Bulgarian socialist village; between the prescriptive configuration of the past advocated by state officials and the way the past was realised on other occasions by villagers in their pursuit of individual interests. Notably, the issue of contention was not over whether the past was significant, but as to how it was significant. The importance historic, folkloric and traditional celebrations held in establishing the past as a focal point of concern and the continuous process of negotiation associated with these differing constructions of the past in the village, defined the particularly socialist nature of the village. It emphasised the prominent position of the past as the central locus of meaning in Talpian socialist village life. In this way also, the past was denoted as the fundamental arena through which state ideology was established, reproduced and debated in Talpa.

Fieldwork for this project was carried out during an 18 month period, from August 1986 to January 1988 (inclusive). The first four months were spent in Sofia at summer school improving my reading and writing skills. Also in this period I travelled extensively throughout Bulgaria, searching for a village appropriate for my work; and eventually settled in Talpa in December 1986.

Talpa was a well laid out, relatively wealthy village, located in the region which Bulgarians identified as most purely 'Bulgarian'. These factors contributed to the choice of this site in which to carry out fieldwork. The village was the birth-place and home of my grandmother, until her emigration to Australia in the 1920's. The point is noted because it

was an important factor in determining the nature of the material I collected in the ensuing 14 months. The advantages of having relatives in the village was that the Talpians responded to me in terms of my being the grand-daughter of a particular villager; indeed when my grandmother died (in Australia) two months after my arrival in Talpa, the loss I felt was one shared, and formally acknowledged in a ceremony, by a number of other villagers, including her only remaining brother. In short, the importance of my kinship relations was that it provided Talpians with an immediate conception of 'who I was'. In this sense, my position in the village was established for me well before my actual arrival. Two brief trips I had made to Bulgaria in 1972 (at the age of 10 years) and again in 1985 (when there was no time to visit anyone in Talpa) also provided me and my Bulgarian relatives with an opportunity to become acquainted The fact that I spoke the same Bulgarian dialect – a 'dialect' recognised as the 'purest' and closest to literary Bulgarian – and shared with the Talpians a knowledge of people outside the village (such as my grandmother and other relatives), made my task to 'be accepted' on the basis of kinship relatively easy. It meant that from the beginning, a network of contacts existed which provided and demanded an instant and assumed degree of trust and loyalty.

The ties of kinship also played a part in determining with whom I lived in Talpa and the people with whom I spent the most time. I resided with Mara Boteva, a widow in her early 50's, a village school teacher and my mother's second cousin[15]. Boteva was an active member of the Communist Party and this, combined with her dislike of the head of the village Agricultural Cooperative (for reasons discussed in the following chapters), was an important factor in determining the nature of the material collected. In particular, the head of the Agricultural Cooperative was the one public village figure with whom I did not became personally close. This is a significant fact to recall when reading this work (especially Chapter 6) and exemplifies a situation where my kinship relationships proved disadvantageous, where family allegiances constrained my freedom in gathering data.

Again the fact that I was perceived as of Bulgarian rather than Turkish or Gypsy descent, meant that I had little opportunity to form close relationships with either minority group, especially the Gypsies (who were less accepted within the village). Indeed soon after my arrival, a number of villagers expressed concern that I was socialising with the gypsies and

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15 Because of the politically sensitive nature of some of the material provided in this work and because of the recent changes which have occurred in Bulgaria, leading to greater political instability in the country, the names of all people (except of the head of the Bulgarian state at the time of fieldwork, Zhivkov and his wife) have been fictionalised. 'Talpa' is not the true name of the village and the names of the district capitals and neighbouring villages have also been changed. The name of the regional capital and the general location of the village, remain true.

warned me to take care since most of the gypsies had criminal records. Boteva advised me to visit the gypsies only with 'empty pockets' (gypsies having notorious reputations as pick-pockets). Because many of the villagers appeared concerned that I was developing such acquaintanceships, I decided not to pursue any close relationships with them.

To conclude the introduction, I describe my arrival in Bulgaria and the first night spent in Sofia. It was a memorable event because the cultural 'shock' I experienced was the reverse of what had been anticipated, on the basis of images largely anthropological (and Western) in origin.

In preparation for my fieldwork, I had read E. Bowen's (1964) book *Return to Laughter* and recalled how she had spent the first night in the field, dressed in a long cocktail dress sipping a martini, while waiting for her cook to serve dinner. It was the ultimate image of an anthropologist maintaining a Western, civilised front, even in the middle of the jungle, amongst primitive people who had rarely seen a white person before. Caught up in such a 'romantic' coloniser's image, I envisaged doing a similar thing on my first night in Bulgaria, a little luxury with which to begin the fieldwork adventure so far away from the Western, civilised world.

Events however took an unexpected turn. I arrived in Sofia after a 3-day, 2-night train trip from London and was tired, dirty and had neither eaten nor drunk much during the entire trip (not knowing there would be no food or drinks available on the train, I was ill prepared for the journey). As a result of a complicated set of circumstances, I was met at the station by a well dressed, middle aged man who was the head of the Bulgarian Geologists' Union and a high level Party official in the National Assembly. He presented me with a bouquet of flowers and loaded my bags into the government-owned black Mercedes (explaining that his chauffeur was off duty). He apologised that there would be no time to change or wash, for we were already late for a dinner engagement to which I was invited. That night we dined at a restaurant with 12 of the leading geologists from various European countries who formed the main body of the newly created International Geologists' Union. The embarrassment I felt over my rugged appearance was exceeded only by my feelings of inadequacy in being competent in only two languages. Each of the glamorously dressed men and women present seemed to speak at least 3-4 languages; at any one time there were several conversations being conducted in different languages across the table – in Russian, Bulgarian, French, Spanish and English. To make matters worse, on our arrival my host had explained my presence by introducing me as a geology student from Australia! Not sure of whether I should deny this or play along, I said nothing and spent the evening

trying to appear knowledgeable and parry questions about a discipline of which I knew almost nothing.

This first experience of socialist life forced me to question many of the Western (and anthropological) images I held of my position as a student anthropologist 'studying' a foreign culture. The 'natives' were obviously highly educated and sophisticated people; in comparison, I took on the role of 'primitive', the one who lacked civilisation and sophistication. This inversion – the primitive Westerner and civilised native – provided a fitting introduction to the rest of my time in socialist Bulgaria. If my image of the Other required any more 'shattering', it occurred soon after my arrival in Talpa. From the literature I had read on the 'peasantry' of Eastern Europe, I expected to see the 'peasants' out in their small plots of land ploughing in the old-fashioned way, using horse power. It was not, however, the use of modern combine harvesters at the vast lands of the Agricultural Cooperative that destroyed this image, so much as one of the first questions I was asked after my arrival in the village (one which was asked on a number of occasions) – "So", one elderly villager questioned, "what is the present situation of aborigines in Australia?".

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Chapter 1 Talpa - A 'New Bulgarian Village'

Talpa is a 'new Bulgarian village'. This was a description used by Talpians themselves and was often one of the first things they brought to the attention of an outsider who showed interest in the village. While closely interrelated, each one of these terms – 'new', 'Bulgarian' and 'village' – establishes a set of specific meanings which grant, as a whole, an insight into Talpa as a social entity. The chapter focuses on the significance of this description, by dealing with each of the three terms in turn. In so doing I hope to fulfil two purposes: firstly to provide a general overview of the village and secondly to isolate those aspects which I understand Talpians considered to be fundamentally important in the way they knew and located themselves in terms of the Bulgarian socialist state. Both aims will serve to underline the central importance of notions of temporality; more specifically the significance of the past and how Talpians, through describing themselves as 'new Bulgarian villagers', rendered the past as an issue for concern.

In exploring this description of Talpa as a 'new Bulgarian village', I rely heavily on material provided by Georgi Naymov. At the time of my fieldwork, Naymov was an elderly villager who, some 20 years earlier, had written a work presenting "Historical materials of the *Chitalishte*, the school and church of village Talpa, Veliko Turnovo region"; that is, "*Istoricheski materiali za chitalishtito, ochelishteto, cherkovata na selo Talpa, Veliko Turnovosko*" (Naymov 1969). The opening line of his work began precisely with the statement that "Talpa is a 'new Bulgarian village'" (1969, p.1). Although never discussed in any explicit way, his first line – in a work which provides in well-researched detail the village's history[1] – was clearly a way of identifying the terms' association with, and reference to, a particular past. In this history, two past events seemed crucial: the freedom of the Bulgarians from the Turks in 1878 and their freedom from fascist forces in 1944. The 'new Bulgarian village' was therefore a temporal reference which gave two incidents in the past special prominence in the contemporary view Talpians held of themselves. That is, the description of their village as a 'new Bulgarian village' was the

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1 The terms *history*, *folklore*, *tradition* and *politics* are concepts which I treat as ethnographically problematic and they are the subject of further discussion in the following chapters. For the purposes of this first ethnographic chapter – where I begin to develop the concepts – the terms are understood as within the bounds of Bulgarian ethnographic sense elaborated in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. They therefore remain unmarked.

specific way Talpians understood their present in terms of the past. Indeed it was a means by which the villagers endowed the past with a significance which was, I suggest later, distinctly Bulgarian and socialist in nature and was thus bound up with notions of Bulgarian identity and political attitudes.

Naymov's work was not a published manuscript nor was it accepted by village state officials as *the* history of the village. While the village had no officially approved publication about its past, unlike many other Bulgarian villages – for reasons discussed in Chapter 2 – his writing was used by leading Talpian figures and others alike as an authoritative work. Naymov was a pensioner, ex-school principal and ex-head of the *Chitalishte*. As an elderly and educated man, he was viewed as a knowledgeable figure on this topic. Many of the aspects about which he had written and which he discussed with me, were reinforced by other villagers, but this is not to say that I consider his or any other villager's work to be an 'objective' account. The 'new Bulgarian village' was one rendition of the villagers' contemporary understanding of their village based on what was a publicly acceptable interpretation of their past. In this chapter I am concerned with the specific understanding of the past espoused through the description of Talpa as a 'new Bulgarian village'. Therefore, selected for discussion are those aspects of Naymov's material recognised as fundamental to a Talpian understanding of their village, serving to provide an introduction to the general terms in which Talpians referred to the past. Subsequent chapters explore in more detail a number of cultural constructions of the past, both sympathetic and unsympathetic to that espoused by the 'new Bulgarian villagers'.

'New.....'

Talpa is 'new' not because it has not existed as a village for a long period of time. Quite the opposite, for the first written documentation mentioning the existence of village Talpa dates back to 1618. In a Turkish book (now in the Sofia archives) it was recorded that in 1618, village Talpa comprised 57 houses which paid due taxes to the Turkish authorities. As Naymov reasons, the village must thus be older because a settlement of 57 houses would not have been built in one year. (Others speculate that the village has existed since the 14th century (Naymov 1969, p.2)). At that stage, when Bulgaria had already been under Turkish rule for 222 years, Talpa was thought to be a 'pure' Bulgarian village. However, later documents reveal the gradual increase in a Turkish population, so that by 1878, when a combined Russian and Bulgarian force overthrew Turkish rule after almost 500 years of domination, Talpa was inhabited by Turks only. These inhabitants fled Talpa,

returning briefly after their outright defeat, to sell their properties to Bulgarian families who, attracted by the fertile lands, re-settled the area.

It is the defeat of the Turks and the immigration of Bulgarians into Talpa that marked the origin of the 'NEW Bulgarian village'. Naymov (1969, p.45) writes that the "...new Bulgarian village's existence has not spanned even one century. The village is as old as the freedom of Bulgaria in 1878"[2]. Thus clearly the specification of Talpa as a 'NEW Bulgarian village' was a reference to its resettlement after the departure of the Turks in 1878. When Talpians referred to their village as 'new', they were identifying a specific point in time from which the site gained relevancy for them; previous events served only as a contrast to that which was established since the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish rule. From the particular type of settler who moved into Talpa, we can establish more about the significance of 'new'. First and foremost, the inhabitants were 'Bulgarians' as opposed to Turks. This aspect is considered in the next section. Apart from being 'Bulgarian', the settlers were also portrayed as progressive, forward thinking people who embraced social change; this is now discussed.

The institution termed a *'Chitalishte'* played a crucial and central role in bringing about the freedom of Bulgaria. The *Chitalishte* (from the verb *'chete'* = to read) which had first arisen in Bulgaria in 1856, was a cultural-political organisation which, through various educative activities, worked for the 'awakening' of the Bulgarian people. The *Chitalishtes* soon turned into revolutionary bases, organisational centres from where anti-Turkish newspapers, journals and books were produced and distributed, under the guise of the *Chitalishte's* inoffensive and obvious role as a centre for cultural practices. With the overthrow of the Turks, these centres flourished throughout Bulgaria. One of Talpa's earliest inhabitants after liberation – Priest Peter Draganov – was responsible for the foundation of the village *Chitalishte*. He settled in Talpa in 1880 and was a priest in the village until 1911. As a regional hero involved in uprisings against the Turks, he was a well known and an influential figure in national rights issues. With the support of the village teachers and public servants (including the mayor), the priest organised a meeting which decided to establish a *Chitalishte* in Talpa. At the meeting, Draganov spoke of the past war against the Turks, of their Russian liberators, and about freedom. He also talked of one more form of slavery against which a war must be fought – ignorance. He expressed his support for a 'second' school for the older villagers, those who during the Turkish period of domination had had no opportunity to learn to read and write. The

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2 All quotes from Naymov's work are my translation.

Chitalishte in Talpa was accordingly founded in 1887 (a public building program had already led to the construction of both a school and church by 1882).

The village *Chitalishte* was given the name *'Napredak'*, that is, 'Progress', which was intended to say much about the cultural, agricultural and political goals of the institution. The aim of the *Chitalishte* as noted in its constitution written in 1887 was to 'better' the members and the villagers. As such it advocated the ever increasing improvement of the villagers through education. On evaluation, this aim also implied a moral undertone which was indicated in the rules and conditions of the *Chitalishte* under 'Composition of the *Chitalishte*', where it was stated that membership was open to anyone who lived permanently or temporarily in the village, irrespective of beliefs or nationality, after a fee of two *leva* (or the equivalent in goods) had been paid. The rules also stated that '...we do not accept those people as true members who are of bad character...or permanent alcoholics...' (Naymov 1969, p.8). Thus a morality was attached to its activities through a membership restricted to those viewed as desirable in character – those committed to better themselves through education.

An invitation to Talpians to educate themselves using *Chitalishte* facilities was sent out on its 10th anniversary in 1897 (Naymov 1969, p.16). I record the invitation because it indicates the issues of importance when considering what Talpians meant by 'progressive'.

> 11.1.1897: Dear Villagers,
>
> The situation in which we find ourselves, we villagers, is grim. Not only grim but also ugly. Everyone of you now understands, sees or at least feels the inequalities which have returned to our region. Everyone sees how the rich and more powerful individuals unlawfully crush the rights of the weak ordinary people and how they play with the fate of the poor villager...No one is interested in our lost rights. And why is this so? Why is everything bad for him? Is he not a human being? Does he not have rights? Yes he has as many as the important people. In front of the law all are equal. Well why do these big differences exist between uneducated and educated, between poor and rich. Why? Should I tell you? Because we are poor villagers, uneducated, stupid. We do not understand, not about rights or anything. And why don't we know these things? We cannot protect ourselves. We get in their way, a toy in the game of some crooks who find us and inevitably cheat us. Since it is so, then we must learn, we must start to understand these things and learn not to take our hats off to the important people. Where can we learn this? We'll tell you. Nowhere else except in the *Chitalishte*. There we will learn this, there we will hear about our federal representatives, for which class they are fighting, what is occurring in federal parliamentary meetings. And many other things we will learn in the *Chitalishte*, troubles of which we have never even heard. Villagers, do not waste the 12th of this month. After the church service there will be a meeting. This meeting will give an account of the activities of the *Chitalishte* from last year and plan the next year, also a new

> administration will be chosen...And now is the time. More speed sooner, everyone must give as much support as they can to the *Chitalishte* which is the real source of self- education.
>
> signed by *Chitalishte* administration.

The invitation quite clearly identifies the disadvantageous position the villagers perceived themselves to be in, a weakened position in respect to the educated and rich. Such powerful people were viewed to be acting unlawfully; they abused their powers. The only saviour, according to their *Chitalishte* administration, was through self education, through being aware of their rights, aware of the oppressed situation in which they existed. This indicates the very characteristics which appear fundamental to any understanding of Talpa as 'progressive'; namely the villagers concern with social inequalities and their intentions to turn around their own oppressed position through education. Education was viewed as the means by which villagers could secure their rights and freedom from their wealthy, powerful oppressors and at the same time elevate themselves from their own impoverished position.

Education in political affairs was put forward as an important function of the *Chitalishte*. The references in the invitation to 'class' representatives and to the plight of the poor villager, were hardly accidental. The call for greater knowledge by those involved in national politics (their federal representatives), denoted the importance in the belief of political awareness. Indeed in the first years after freedom from the Turks, two parties were established in Talpa, a conservative and a liberal party. Priest Draganov became a candidate for the liberal party and was chosen with a large majority. However, when this party became affiliated with businessmen and industrialists, Draganov changed his support to the Bulgarian Socialist Democratic Party which served the interests of villagers and small businessmen. In 1896 Priest Draganov was instrumental in founding the first socialist group in the village. Inspired by a lawyer from Veliko Turnovo who spoke at the *Chitalishte* about "...freedom, equality, brotherhood, about new times, new ideas and socialism..." (Naymov 1969, p.16), the Talpians that same night decided to form a socialist group. We have then, an explicit association between 'new' and a particular, political outlook – socialism – where socialism represented a new age in which the down-trodden, poor villager was freed from her/his oppressive position. Such knowledge was considered fundamental to villagers' progressive characteristics. As 'progressive', Talpians were actively involved in the realisation of the 'new' age through their socialist concerns. Hand in hand with this, came the belief that such 'new times' could be realised only through education.

The *Chitalishte* was put forward as the centre of educational activities from which villagers could overcome their oppressive situation in life. Even in its earliest period, the *Chitalishte* carried on a variety of activities which reflected its fundamental role to educate, both through its ever growing library and various cultural practices. Its librarian (also a founder of the village socialist group) who was the head teacher at the school, collected books on a wide range of topics – literature, politics, agriculture. Not surprisingly perhaps, the village library quickly accumulated a wealth of socialist literature. As the *Chitalishte* library grew, so did its entertainment engagements. The first play, performed in 1893, was written by a Bulgarian hero who fought against the Turks. Naymov (1969, p.20) wrote that "...from the performance of plays, the villagers learnt about the hardships of the Bulgarians under the Turks, about the Bulgarian kings and spiritual leaders, about the wars, about events close and far away." In this manner the theatre was seen, as it was during Turkish times, to have a strong educational orientation. It was a bias which continued in the political turmoil of the 1920's-40's when plays with an anti-fascist flavour were performed.

Opposition to their oppressors also took on other forms. A cash fund was established by the *Chitalishte* members during the late 1800's and early 1900's, the purpose of which was to give loans to villagers to save them from liquidators. Of this period, Naymov notes that it was the time that capitalism arose in the villages and cities alike (1969, p.21). The position of the poor villagers was desperate. The cash fund was reorganised in 1916 as a village co-operative – the first established in the district – totally controlled and run by the villagers. The co-operative, like a bank, allowed villagers to deposit, save, withdraw money and take out loans. It was widely used by impoverished villagers who were thus able to attain a degree of protection from their financially strong oppressors. During World War II the co-operative gave financial help to the partisans, thereby demonstrating the socialist concerns of its members.

The specific nature of the 'socialism' adopted by the villagers was evident as early as 1897, when portraits of Marx and Engels were hung in the *Chitalishte*. All members and leaders from the *Chitalishte's* earliest period were said to have accepted the ideas of Marx and Engels. In fact such a political leaning was displayed in the town council elections of 1901, when 170 Talpians voted for the candidate of the Bulgarian Workers Social Democratic Party, while 80 votes were counted for all other candidates (Naymov 1969, p.20). This was despite the Veliko Turnovo region's bourgeois government. The political interests and activities of the Talpians involved not only their local but also national interests. In 1914, Talpians sent a protest to the Bulgarian monarchy and the Bourgeois Party against the involvement of Bulgarians in the first World War.

Talpians' interest extended to include international affairs, in which they expressed a concern for those in a similar position to themselves, as 'oppressed'. In 1937 the village youths formed a *Chitalishte* group and one of their first tasks was to collect funds and other support for the people's civil revolution in Spain. Such interest in world affairs was an important aspect of the educating role of the *Chitalishte* and in their internationalist spirit. The same youth group (of which T. Pashev, the present head of the village Communist Party, was a member) also took the initiative and organised a course to learn Esperanto. This was in addition to the night classes in basic subjects which had been run since the foundation of the *Chitalishte*. The first librarian in the *Chitalishte* was well educated and could read French and Russian. Existing documents showed him to have corresponded with an editorial office for a journal in Brussels. The hard economic conditions during the early years of the 20th century created an exodus of people from Talpa to try their luck in foreign countries, mainly in America. Foreign agencies recruited these people by holding lectures in the *Chitalishte*. However, the 1912 Balkan War and World War 1 reversed this process. Villagers returned, bringing with them an awareness of international affairs and interests.

Thus in describing themselves as 'new', Talpians emphasised their progressive nature through showing an interest in socialist concerns and actively involving themselves in national and international political issues. If in many ways this was maintained as a display for a general concern with the plight of the villager against an 'oppressor' who was viewed as educated, rich, powerful and unlawful, then it gained a more definite focus in the 1920's with the increasing movement in Bulgaria towards fascist dictatorship, which was imposed in 1923.

The period of fascist rule in Bulgaria and the opposition Talpians displayed to it was vital in their understanding of themselves as 'NEW Bulgarian villagers'. While the beginning of the 'new age' in Talpian settlement began with the overthrow of the Turks, it came to fruition with the crushing of fascism. Apart from 50 or so individuals who became partisans, political prisoners and anti-fascist fighters during the World War II period, there were several confrontations prior to this during the almost two decade rule of the fascist government. The worst was in 1925. Arian Pashev, the head of the *Chitalishte* at that time, recalls "...on the 3rd of May 1925 the village was surrounded by the army and police. At the head of the operation was the well known sadist Captain Lazarov. After they searched a lot of houses, they arrested worthy communists, members of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and anarchist-communists. They then ransacked the *Chitalishte*, ruined the whole library and confiscated 302 books, one section of which they burnt before our eyes, the other they took along with the arrested, to Turnovo..." (cited in Naymov 1969,

p.26). At the Veliko Turnovo (a nearby city) army camp the prisoners were interrogated and as a consequence of this, the secretary of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union died a few years later[3]. Destroyed during the village confrontation were books by Lenin, Gorky and the two most influential figures of the Bulgarian Communist Party – its founder Blagoev and the man who was the first leader of the socialist state, Dimitrov. In spite of the restrictions placed on socialist literature by the fascist government, the village library managed to re-stock its collection and protect it from further destruction in 1939, when the government again ordered the destruction of all books with socialist content. At this time, Naymov was the *Chitalishte* head. He reports that the *Chitalishte* administration was able, on this occasion, to hide the books while informing regional officials that their directives had been carried out (Naymov 1969, p.33).

If the library collection represented so much of what the 'new' village stood for – self advancement through education, the concern for social(ist) issues within the country and at the international level – then the destruction of such 'progressive' literature in the library by the fascists was viewed as a threat to the 'new Bulgarian village' and the spirit in which the *Chitalishte* had been founded in 1887. The books and library were important because they indicated in a concrete material way the educational progressiveness of the villagers. To destroy them was to destroy one means through which Talpians could elevate their social situation. Thus the fascist government, which authorised such actions, represented a return to the dark, uncultured days, against which the progressive villagers were opposed. Fascism became the new source of villagers' oppression.

During this period the *Chitalishte* became the unofficial club for the village political parties. The Talpa *Chitalishte*, as in the Turkish times for other Bulgarian *Chitalishtes*, provided a concealed way to resist the oppressors. The educating, anti-fascist role endorsed by the *Chitalishte* library was supported in a number of other ways. Revolutionary plays throughout the 1930's, such as 'The Red Priest', were performed in the *Chitalishte*. After one such performance in 1932, the participating youths were detained by the police for 24 hours. They were beaten and the money earned at the performance, which was to have gone to *Chitalishte* funds (much of which were channelled into the illegal partisan movement), was confiscated.

In this period, Todorov Zhivkov, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) since 1954 and head of the Ministers' Cabinet of the

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3 The Bulgarian Agrarian Union was a political party. It is given greater consideration later in this chapter.

Peoples Republic of Bulgaria since 1962 (positions he held until 1989), resided in Talpa. His fiance was the village doctor and she and the villagers had given him sanctuary from the fascists. During his two years in Talpa, Zhivkov participated in a number of village plays put on by the *Chitalishte* theatre group. He also represented the *Chitalishte* as its delegate in 1939 at the 19th Congress of the Union of *Chitalishtes*. The period Zhivkov spent in the village – the shared past between him and the Talpians – was presented as an important part of Talpa's history and is discussed on a number of occasions in this thesis. The importance of Zhivkov's past association with the village was memorialised in the restoration of a village cottage into a museum. This cottage was the site in which Mara Marlaueva, the late wife of Zhivkov, worked as a medical practitioner. Her surgery and living quarters were restored to their original state as existed during her stay in Talpa in the late 1930's, while the waiting room portrayed her life through a photographic exhibition.

The two decades of fascist government in Bulgaria, leading to the advent of the socialist state on 9th September 1944, were of central concern in Talpa's past, especially because the village could not boast of any collective anti-Turkish operations. Thus perhaps in Talpa more than in many other places, the villagers' anti-fascist activities (many of which were coordinated in the *Chitalishte*) were established as fundamental to the description of themselves as 'NEW Bulgarian villagers'. Their *Chitalishte*, as with the earliest Bulgarian *Chitalishtes* in the 1850's, became a revolutionary centre, a focal point of Talpian participation in cultural-political actions resistant to the fascist state. Their relatively progressive character can best be emphasised through a historical fact which many Talpians themselves proudly brought to my attention: in Talpa, the capitalist-fascist forces were overthrown on the 8th September, a day before the officially recognised date for the rest of Bulgaria. The socialist order, for which Talpians had been striving since the foundation of the village, was installed in the 'NEW Bulgarian village' before its official onset throughout the country. 'New', in this way, demarcated or created a boundary between the contemporary, socialist order, a system in which individuals had the freedom to develop and educate themselves by various progressive means (through literature, artistic performances and the like), against the old, oppressive fascist past.

Nineteen-forty-four represented the 'new age' when the socialist pursuit of education and ultimately of equality and freedom, advanced unhindered by its fascist enemy. The advent of the socialist state represented the victory of the progressive aims of the *Chitalishte*. Since 1944 its role has continued without hindrance. Of this socialist period, Naymov writes "...we live in a new time where the book is necessary for every person. The work of the library is ever increasing..." (1969, p.44). During my stay in the village, the *Chitalishte* library contained over 10 000 books. At village meetings, Talpians often exhibited with

pride their progressiveness by stating the current number of books in the *Chitalishte* library and how these had increased from previous years. Cultural activities which played an important role of the *Chitalishte's* past, were also continued in contemporary times. A vocal group was formed in 1987, led by Andre Pashev, whose talents were apparently uncovered as a youth at the village *Chitalishte* in the 1920's, during which time the *Chitalishte* boasted both an amateur choir and orchestra. Andre Pashev (brother of the above-mentioned T. Pashev and nephew of Arian Pashev) went on to attend the musical academy in Sofia. He has worked with orchestras in other countries and had, at the time of my fieldwork, only recently returned to retire in Talpa.

In defining the village as a 'NEW Bulgarian village', Talpians indicated their victorious struggle over the old – both Turkish and fascist – oppression. The 'new times' towards which the *Chitalishte* activists in Talpa had been working since the re-settlement of Talpa in 1878, had become the legitimate national goal of the newly formed Marxist-Leninist Bulgarian state.

'.....Bulgarian.....'

As suggested above, a 'new' village was also one constituted as 'purely Bulgarian', one which was set in opposition not only to fascism in the early-mid 20th century, but also in the first instance in opposition to the Turks. Any conception of 'Bulgarian' was inseparable from the high value placed on education and learning. Education was a means to achieve freedom from an oppressive situation, both from political oppression and from foreign domination. The former was considered in the previous section; the latter is discussed below.

The 'progressive' nature of Talpa was an aspect not only of the villagers' socialist character but also of their 'Bulgarianness'. In 1878 a large proportion of the new settlers had come from far off mountain villages, areas relatively inaccessible and therefore less oppressed by the Turks. Unlike those in areas more influenced by the Turks, the mountain villagers were able to maintain some Bulgarian schools which had been set up to teach Bulgarian culture, reading and writing. In short, the greater the form of direct oppression by the Turks, the more backward the oppressed were seen to be in respect to level of education or cultural awareness. The fact that the migrating villagers were not 'polluted' by Turkish oppressive forces, signified their true Bulgarianness. As if to spatially assert this separation between themselves and the Turks, when the Bulgarians moved into Talpa, they are said to have flattened all Turkish buildings and begun building again from the ground

up. They were later aided in their task by an engineer from Veliko Turnovo who surveyed and planned the village in 1911. He died in the Balkan war, his plan incomplete and another was begun and followed through after World War I. The concern to establish the village as Bulgarian rather than Turkish was also evident in the pre-occupation of villagers over the origin of the name of *'Talpa'*. The debate focussed on whether Talpa was a Bulgarian or Turkish settlement in 1618. That is, the purity of the Talpians as Bulgarians rather than Turks was discussed in terms of the villagers' ethnic origins. Talpians emphasised the fact that the village was most likely to be of Bulgarian origin, the evidence provided being the fact that *'Talpa'* was a Bulgarian rather than Turkish word[4].

In the pre-1878 period, cultural activities in Bulgarian *Chitalishtes* provided a means by which to fight Turkish domination. The *Chitalishte* was a centre where, through cultural and educational practices, the oppressed could gain some awareness of themselves as Bulgarian and therefore resist pressures from Turkish forces, which discouraged any notion of a Bulgarian identity. 'Bulgarianness' involved the pursuit of freedom from the Turks through the support of specifically Bulgarian activities. After liberation from the Turks, the *Chitalishtes* still served a similar role, in educating and creating an awareness of cultural practices recognised as specifically 'Bulgarian'. A founding member of the Talpian *Chitalishte* (who died in 1944) was quoted by Naymov (1969, p.13) as saying "...the priest and the teachers encouraged us with their words, made us believe that if we wanted to have the freedom which we earned through so much bloodshed, dark, uncultured times, it must be through the *Chitalishte* and education....So that we can become good citizens and patriots." The 'patriotic' concern was a reference to the Turks who, as rulers, attempted to crush any expressions of Bulgarian national unity. These 'dark, uncultured times' associated with Turkish oppression, were overcome only through *Chitalishte* educational activities from which Bulgarians were able to develop a sense of national identity. Freedom from the Turks made possible the furthering of a Bulgarian education and the celebration of a Bulgarian culture.

'Bulgarianness' thus provided a unifying identity amongst the Talpians themselves. A consequence of the fact that Talpa was a relatively newly-settled village (its inhabitants included immigrants from over 20 different villages) was that it lacked long-established traditions commonly shared between villagers. The great variety of customs and other observances introduced by the different settlers meant that there were no deeply embedded

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4 There are two interpretations regarding where the name Talpa may have originated. Talpa = plank, therefore: a) it was thought that the village was named after a centuries-old forest of oaks and linden trees which was the source of timber for a mill in a neighbouring village. b) close to the village was a quarry where stones - flat like planks - were mined, and sold.

traditions viewed as typically Talpian. Indeed I was told by Naymov that for a number of years after Talpa was first settled, social events, village dances and even marriages were performed separately by the two main groups of settlers – one group which had come from villages in the mountains, the other from the areas surrounding Veliko Turnovo. In describing themselves as 'new BULGARIAN villagers', Talpians overcame such antagonisms; they framed their unity on the basis of a culture which was Bulgarian, that is one lacking in local, specific features and instead having a more external, progressive nature. 'Bulgarianness' indicated a Talpian identity focussed on the national rather than regional or local level.

This identity, which referred Talpians to their 'Bulgarianness', also gave privileged status to a 'foreign' power – Russia. The relationship between Bulgaria and Russia throughout the socialist period (and indeed well before) had been less antagonistic than that of any other in Eastern Europe. Rather the opposite, for not only were they linguistically and culturally very close, but many Talpians held the view that their shared history and the sacrifice many Russians had made with their lives in order to free the Bulgarians from the Turks, was a vital element of the closeness between the two countries[5]. The Russians were also involved in freeing Bulgaria from the fascists in 1944, a 'battle' which was won without any shots being fired. References to the Russians as their liberators, from Priest Draganov onwards, were common. Any reference to 'new' and 'Bulgarian' thus also implicated the closeness of Bulgarians to the Russians, giving them a privileged position in Talpa's past.

While a reference to a 'new BULGARIAN village' established Talpa's alliance to the Russians, who played an important role in helping the Bulgarians achieve their freedom from foreign and political oppressors, it also excluded the contemporary Turkish and Gypsy village population. In the last 15 years, a number of Turkish and Gypsy families had settled in Talpa. Of the 444 houses in the village, 20 households were occupied by mostly young Turkish families and 6 by gypsies. Unlike either of these groups, the remaining Bulgarian households were either empty or comprised 1 or 2 elderly people. The Turks were immigrants from Turkey who lived and worked in Bulgaria (as opposed to Bulgarians converted to the Islamic religion during Turkish rule, who were usually found in southern Bulgaria). They had moved to Talpa to escape the harsher effects of the Bulgarian assimilation program which was carried out more effectively in the areas of

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5 The close political, economic, historical and linguistic ties between the two countries is a reason, I believe, this study on Bulgaria may contribute a greater insight into aspects of socialist Russia, more so than to any other Eastern European socialist country.

concentrated Turkish population in a number of Bulgarian cities[6]. Most of the gypsy families were in Talpa as a way of escaping the police in other Bulgarian regions (at least one of the families had been involved in illegal gold trading). Any conception of Talpa as a 'new BULGARIAN village' automatically identified these recently arrived groups as foreigners and outsiders, despite their physical presence in the village.

The difference between the Turks and Bulgarians was also one between different religious faiths. A number of Talpians told me how a small number of Turks who had not wanted to leave Talpa in 1878, were forced to flee by some Talpians who had placed pig fat in the village water supply. This polluted the water for the Moslem Turks who were thus outwitted by the Bulgarians and forced to move out of the area. The perceived backwardness and stupidity of the Turks was therefore linked to their religious beliefs,[7] a 'weakness' of which Talpians took advantage.

This not only implied an association between ignorance and religion, but emphasised an important difference between Bulgarians and Turks – religion. Religion was constituted in an ambiguous way in the 'new Bulgarian village'. During the time of Turkish oppression, the Bulgarian Orthodox church played an important role in maintaining Bulgarian culture – in monasteries, monks hid Bulgarian treasures and it was here that Bulgarian literature was preserved and nurtured. Priest Draganov's involvement in revolutionary acts against the Turks (including participation in the uprising in the Dragonovski Monastery which held regional importance) attests to the church's active involvement in upholding a notion of 'Bulgarianness'. Importantly, these events occurred in the 'old' days (pre-1878) when religion and progress did not apparently conflict with each other. Priest Draganov, as a Christian and fighter for Bulgarian freedom, espoused the progressive nature of Bulgarian Christianity, at least in comparison with the more 'backward' Turkish Islamic faith. However, since the 'new BULGARIAN village' referred to an identity established only on the basis of freedom from the Turks, the connection between progressiveness and religion was one largely located in the time before 1878. That is, while recognising the huge role played by the Bulgarian Orthodox church in preserving Bulgarian culture through 500 years of Turkish domination, this was construed as part of the past, out of which the 'new BULGARIAN village' had arisen.

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6 See Amnesty International (1986) for effects and problems of this policy.

7 This view of the Turks appears similar in many respects to that held by the Greeks, as described by Herzfeld (1987).

The contemporary (post-1944) separation between religion and the progressive socialist state was reflected in the Talpian view of the preference for education over religion. There was a story related to me on a number of occasions about one village priest, sought out by a mother who wanted help for her sick child. He told her that 'I can't help you', so admitting that prayer would not help, and instead sent her to a doctor in the neighbouring township of Nekilva. The priest thus acknowledged, according to a villager's interpretation, his faith to be in modern science (and education) and recognised the restricted usefulness of religion. The lack of interest in and denial of religion, and its separation from a sense of Bulgarianness that was closely linked to the upholding of knowledge and education, was also evident from the *Chitalishte* invitation quoted in the previous section. In it the *Chitalishte* administration put its faith in education – not in God or the Church – as the way for villagers to overcome their oppressive situation. This was also evident in the 'new Bulgarian village' in the separation of educational activities located in the school and *Chitalishte*, from religion in the church. The disuse of the latter was an important part of the contemporary Talpian's rejection of religion. Built from the dis-assembled Turkish mosque, the church stood at the southern end of the central village plaza in the grounds next to the school. Since the late 1940's it had been used only for occasional services a few times a year. This totally ceased in the 1970's with the death of the village priest. For the last 10-15 years the church had been completely abandoned except when the church bell was rung to notify the death of a villager or to announce a holiday.

As the centre in which villagers were educated in matters Bulgarian, the *Chitalishte* stood as an appropriate symbol of the Talpian's unification as 'Bulgarian'. The *Chitalishte* appealed to a Bulgarian identity which, while specifically opposed to Turkish and fascist ideals, focussed on a body of knowledge – Bulgarian, socialist education – which unified all villagers and focussed their interests at the national and international levels. 'Bulgarianness' as supported, encouraged and maintained via *Chitalishte* activities, was a term which held both anti-Turkish and anti-fascist significance. As Petrova, a teacher at the village school described it, the national *Chitalishte* was founded by "...patriotic Bulgarians who sacrificed their lives..." This act, she continued, established "...the precious Bulgarian heart," which was the *Chitalishte* (Naymov 1969, p.39). The *Chitalishte* thus represented the very core of a 'Bulgarian' identity as a struggle against both Turkish and fascist forces in the past; the 'NEW BULGARIAN village' manifested a victory over both. As such, the *Chitalishte* reflected the interdependent nature of the description 'new Bulgarian village', where both 'new' and 'Bulgarian' referred to freedom from Turkish or fascist forces. It was a dynamic ambiguity Talpians themselves

encouraged when they spoke of the anti-fascist fighters (many of whom were *Chitalishte* members) and indeed of the whole war against fascism and capitalism as a period which "...lived with the ideals of the national revival fighters" (Naymov 1969, p.33). For the latter was a term also used in reference to Bulgarian heroes who fought to free the country from the Turks. The *Chitalishte* thus embodied a particular cultural and political flavour which drew on Bulgarian, socialist notions of unification and which ultimately unified its inhabitants into a 'village'.

'.....Village'.

To a large degree, 'new' and 'Bulgarian' qualify the nature of 'village' as existing within a Bulgarian, socialist system. However when discussing the third term, 'village', we move into an area which is not only of a meaningful and reflective nature (as in the case of the previous two sections) but one which incorporates the 'village' within a definite state organised structure. That is, 'the village' is a territorial boundary set by the state, which is an important aspect of the manner in which it is meaningfully reflected upon by Talpians. In dealing with the character of the 'village', I therefore consider two main elements which contribute to an understanding of this term – the administrative-party structure and its agricultural basis[8].

At the time of my fieldwork, Bulgaria was divided into 28 administrative regional areas – each with a capital[9]. One such region was Veliko Turnovo in central-northern Bulgaria, with the city of Veliko Turnovo (population approx. 80 000) as its capital[10]. This region was considered to be one of the wealthiest agricultural areas in Bulgaria, being located in the fertile lands near the Danube river. In part because the ancient city of Veliko Turnovo was at the heart of the pre-Turkish Bulgarian kingdom and the capital of the second Bulgarian empire (1185-1396) it was also the region viewed as the most 'purely' Bulgarian. (This aspect relates back to the previous section, geographically justifying the purely

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8 I use the term 'villagers' throughout this thesis rather than 'peasants' for two reasons. Firstly, because 'villagers' is the way Talpians described themselves. There is no Bulgarian word equivalent to 'peasant'. Secondly, 'peasants' is a term embedded in notions of a 'traditional' western past. As far as implicit western notions of temporality are concerned, 'villagers' seems to be less offensive, although still problematic to a lesser degree.

9 These territorial boundaries were totally reorganised at the end of 1987 as part of the *preustroistvo* (the Bulgarian word for the Russian *perestroika*) program. However, since the majority of my fieldwork period was spent under the former organisational system, it is this which I describe.

10 Following Bulgarian practice, I often use the shortened term for 'Veliko Turnovo', that is, 'Turnovo'.

Bulgarian nature of Talpa as a village within the Veliko Turnovo region). Each region was further broken up into a number of district centres. Nekilva was the capital of one such district of the Turnovo region and had under its jurisdiction seven villages, Talpa being one of these. In turn each village served as a centre for the Agricultural Cooperative which was responsible for the farming of the lands surrounding the village; the area of these lands varied between and within districts.

The administrative structure of the Bulgarian socialist state was founded on a centrally organised, hierarchical framework. Because each village supported the same state organisations (the most important are noted below) as those existing at the higher levels – district, regional and national – the village appeared as a microcosm of that existing in the higher orders. This structure established the village as both reasonably autonomous at one level and yet very much interwoven within the external framework. Diagram 1 has been included firstly to show that the most important national state organisations – the Communist Party, National Assembly and Fatherland Front – reflected those at the village level, elaborated in Diagram 2; and secondly to note that the village existed at the very base of the hierarchy – it was a 'primary unit' of the socialist system. Both diagrams are constructed on the formally acknowledged structure of the administrative-party system. In later chapters it becomes clear that this structure is not always strictly adhered to. I discuss this village organisation in more detail below.

The Bulgarian Communist Party (as with other East European Communist Parties) assumed the 'leading role' in socialist society and was imbued with ultimate power because, as representative of the working class, it "...knows the laws of social development and understands the historical mission of the working class" (Kolakowski 1978, Vol.2, p.391)[11]. The Party thus had the deciding word in all important matters. In Talpa, the Party was involved in directing a wide-ranging set of activities. The village Party was responsible for the planning and (at the village level), of socio-economic objectives according to central Bulgarian Communist Party policies. Until 1988, when political procedures were changed as part of the *preustroistvo* program, all candidates in elections were nominated and supported by the Party. Its powers were extensive – from making political and economic decisions about the village, to finding employment for villagers and organising voluntary help for the agricultural cooperative during peak season.

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11 Kolakowski (1978) wrote in relation to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but his comment, in view of the close ties between the Bulgarian and Soviet Communist Parties, had generally some relevance to Bulgaria.

Diagram 1 - Federal Level

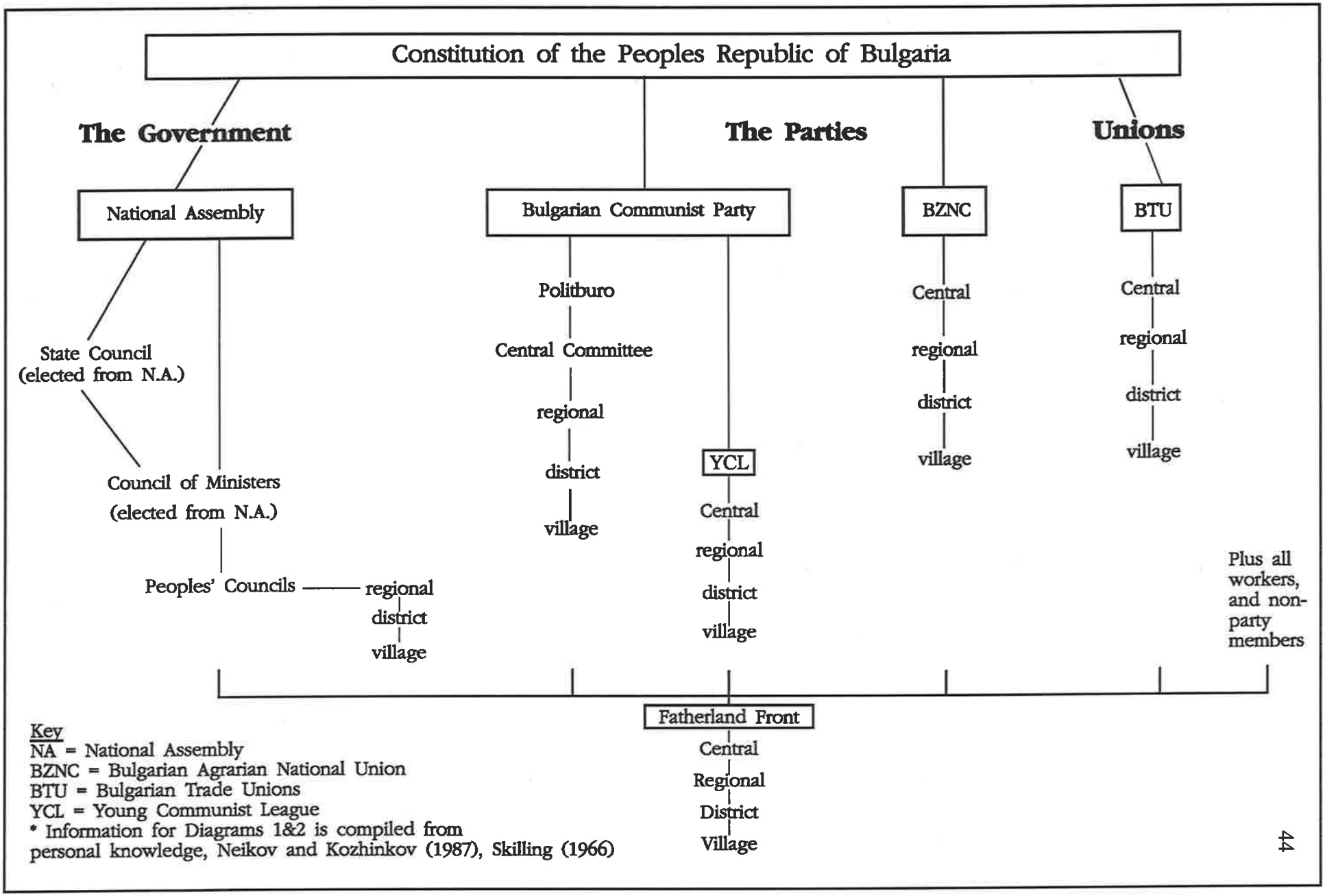
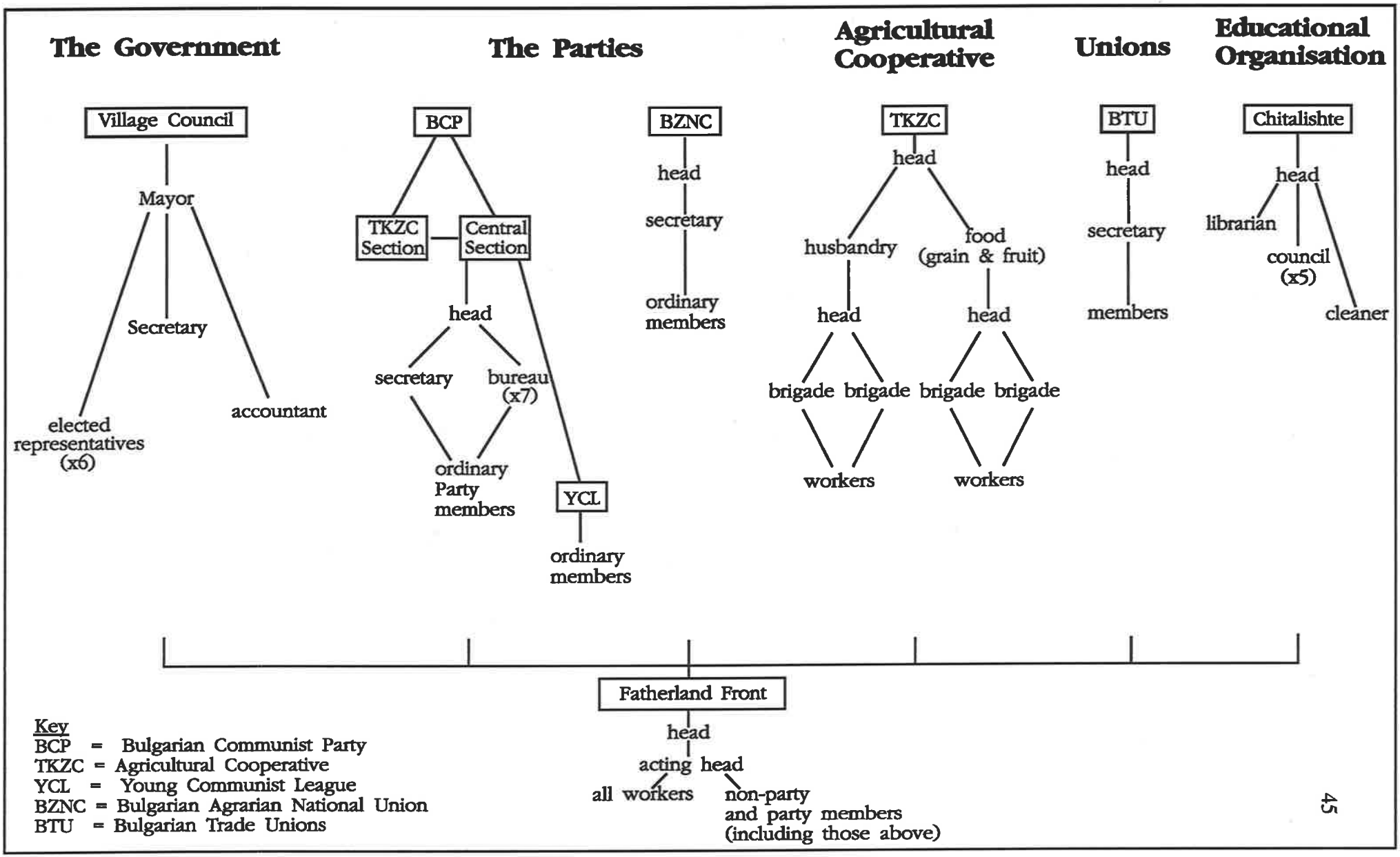


Diagram 2 - Village Level



Key
BCP = Bulgarian Communist Party
TKZC = Agricultural Cooperative
YCL = Young Communist League
BZNC = Bulgarian Agrarian National Union
BTU = Bulgarian Trade Unions

Keeping in mind the strong socialist tendencies of the villagers from the earliest beginnings (see section on 'New...'), it is hardly surprising that Communist Party members in Talpa comprised an uncharacteristically high proportion of the population – approximately one-seventh. Party membership was gained through a procedure which permitted only those deemed as worthy in character, to be selected. The Talpa Communist Party was organised in two branches, in part reflecting the administrative structure of village life. One section was associated with the cooperative farm (approx. 40 members), the other with general village issues (approx. 60 members). They held their meetings separately, although often discussing the same issues and jointly deciding matters of importance to the village.

The central Party branch with which I am most acquainted and on which fieldwork research was focussed, was concerned with all general village issues. It met once a month in the *Chitalishte*, its members comprising those who worked in areas other than the agricultural cooperative – that is, the school, village administration and pensioners. Party meetings were usually closed, accessible to members only, although on rare occasions open Party meetings were held. The Party leader in Talpa was a 73 year old man, Tsonu Pashev. His official title of 'active fighter against fascism' was an honour marking his bravery in resisting the fascist regime before 1944. Since then he had held diplomatic posts in Algeria and high level government posts in Veliko Turnovo and Nekilva, as head of the Fatherland Front and as head of the district Agricultural Cooperative respectively. At the time of his retirement, Pashev returned to Talpa from Veliko Turnovo and took on the position of head of the Party. The Party secretary, Tzela, a Talpian school teacher, performed any administrative tasks which arose in the course of the running of the Party. There was also a bureau of seven which acted as an executive committee, meeting at times between the monthly Party gatherings, when necessary. Apart from these posts, the Party existed as a body through its ordinary membership.

There was also a second socialist party, the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (abbreviated to BZNC,[12]). It was seen to work in a 'harmonious' way with the Communist Party; both shared Marxist-Leninist ideals and strove to achieve the goal of communism. This Party however, was viewed as representing more specifically the interests of the cooperative farmers rather than of the working class. As such, the BZNC was most closely aligned with the Agricultural Cooperative and its membership of 40 was almost exclusively employed in this organisation. The Bulgarian Agrarian Union had a similar

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12 BZNC = *Bulgarski Zemedelski Naroden Soyuz* or Bulgarian Agrarian National Union; for convenience this is designated the Bulgarian Agrarian Union.

organisational structure to the Communist Party. As supportive of the Communist Party, it was much less powerful than the former and held a secondary position to it in the village. This can be witnessed in the role of its members in public life; except for its leader, Staneva (who taught at the village kindergarten), Rakov (who was politically conscientious in attending and participating in village meetings) and Todorov (who was the mayor's secretary), the BZNC had few other prominent village public figures.

In spite of its wide ranging activities, the Communist Party (as the Bulgarian Agrarian Union) was theoretically separate from the government, whose task it was to administer and follow through Party directives. The two most important organisations involved in village administration were the Village Council and Fatherland Front.

The mayor, I. Ivanov who headed the Village Council, was aided by a secretary and six advisers elected from the village constituency. At the time of my fieldwork, Ivanov was a 'young man' (as termed by the villagers) of about 35 years, who had been brought up in Talpa (the home of his parents), but lived in the township of Nekilva, eight kilometres away. Before being elected mayor, he had worked in the village gramophone assembly plant. Although not compulsory, it was highly regular for the mayor to be a member of the Communist Party. The role of the Village Council was to conduct the general administration of the village, to ensure the village electricity and water supply, to keep an account of the financial side of village affairs, maintenance of the village buildings and its roads, and to make sure that those in need of welfare received it.

The Fatherland Front was founded in 1942 at the initiative of Georgi Dimitrov (the first leader of the Bulgarian Socialist state) as an organisation combining the forces of all those interested in resisting the Nazi military presence in Bulgaria and the local monarcho-fascist regime. Since 1944, its role had been to involve the populace in the building of the socialist state. Thus its general membership included most villagers (irrespective of whether they had Party membership or not) and was active in operations which were usually too large for the village council or the two parties to complete on their own – in such cases the Fatherland Front was called in to aid village projects, through supplying voluntary labour. Under its head, Novikov, who was the school principal, and deputy head, M. Boteva (a school teacher), the Fatherland Front performed a number of tasks. For example it mobilised villagers to help clean up the village in preparation for the 'model village' competition (Chapter 5) and the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration (Chapters 4 and 6).

The Parties, Village Council and Fatherland Front were the three main organisations involved in the administrative running of the village. There were also several other less important organisations which contributed to defining the village in an administrative-party sense, which I mention only briefly. These included a Young Communist League – to which all youth between the ages of 14-30 belonged – and the Bulgarian Trade Unions, which represented the interests of the workers. I have already considered the vital role played by the *Chitalishte* in the village (justifying its inclusion in the administrative-party diagram) and now note its organisational make-up. The head of the *Chitalishte*, who took over from Georgi Naymov in the 1970's, was an elderly gentleman, Todor Matov. Matov was a respected member of the Communist Party, having spent a total of 10 years in gaol for his anti-fascist activities before and during World War II. He was concerned with everything relating to the *Chitalishte* – from ensuring its maintenance, to the organisation of entertainment; also under his jurisdiction was the village museum. To help him in his tasks was a *Chitalishte* council of five (including Boteva and Rakov) and a full-time librarian – Rusev. There was also a cleaner (a gypsy) for the two storey building, which comprised the library and a number of meeting rooms (upstairs), a main hall and the theatre seating 400 (downstairs). The *Chitalishte* was the home of the village vocal group conducted by Andre Pashev.

Any understanding of the term 'village' must also be associated with the nature of the predominant occupation of the villagers; that is, agriculture. All villagers were occupied with agricultural-based activities. In fact the translation of the Bulgarian word '*selo*' – that is, 'village' – as a 'rural population', indicates its inherently agricultural orientation. While agricultural activity has always been fundamental to any conception of 'village', the cooperative form of organisation was an important part of the Talpian understanding of the agricultural nature of the 'NEW Bulgarian VILLAGE'. The establishment of the Agricultural Cooperatives in the mid-late 1940's resulted in the collectivisation of Bulgarian lands. Over one million individual farms each consisting on average of between 0.4 and 0.5 hectares of arable land (Neikov and Kozhinkov 1987, p.40) were reorganised into large-scale mechanised farms. There were 315 such agro-industrial complexes in Bulgaria in 1986, the average area in hectares being around 13 000, but up to 36 000 hectares in some cases (Neikov and Kozhinkov 1987, p.42), which constituted some of the largest farming units in Europe (Crampton 1987, p.182; pp.194-195).

Started in 1947, the state-owned Talpian agricultural cooperative (abbreviated to TKZC)[13] gradually gained the acceptance of villagers who voluntarily gave up their individual plots

13 TKZC = *Trudovo-Kooperativno Zemedelsko Stopanstvo* – Labour-cooperative farm economy.

of land and animals to join it. By 1950, when mechanisation was introduced into the complex, the majority of the villagers were members. The TKZC was the main employer of villagers with over 300 Talpians working there, ranging from administrative posts, agriculturalists, accountants and veterinary surgeons, to tractor drivers, cow and sheep milkers and others. Fifteen years ago, 'specialisation' was introduced into the village cooperative. This meant that in the district of Nekilva, with Nekilva as the administrative capital, each of its 7 villages was assigned certain areas in which to 'specialise', with the aim of making the district as a whole as self-sufficient as possible in agricultural produce, and achieve an economy of scale for individual products. Thus while previously the Talpian cooperative had kept a variety of animals, it instead concentrated its husbandry interests on dairy cows, 2000 calves and 1000 sheep (no chickens and an inconsequential number of pigs – only about 100). The non-animal produce was primarily wine grapes, peaches and to a lesser extent cherries, walnuts and apples.

The administration of each of the village agricultural cooperatives was similar, having at the district level, a 'brigade' in Nekilva. The Talpian brigade, together with the brigades from the other six villages, made up the administrative sector of the district cooperative. Administratively, the village agricultural cooperative remained distinct from the village; instead, working closely with Nekilva district administrators. The head of the Talpian brigade in the district headquarters in Nekilva was a Talpian re-settled in Nekilva. Heading the Talpian cooperative within Talpa itself was Ivo Gradenarov, a man who had a tertiary degree in agricultural studies and was a member of the Communist Party. His job, in general terms, was to ensure that the TKZC actualised Bulgarian Communist Party agricultural policy; more specifically, he decided exactly what would be sown, how and when. Ivo Gradenarov was a Talpian and had occupied agricultural-administrative posts in Nekilva and Pleven before taking up his position in Talpa. He was held responsible for the success of production and output and answered directly to the district heads in Nekilva rather than to anyone in Talpa.

Irrespective of whether Talpians were employed at the cooperative or not, all worked their own lands. Individual (family) village houses were normally situated on 1-4 decares of land – government restrictions ensured that there was no large discrepancy between villagers. The Talpians had mixed private farming interests, combining animal raising with the growing of plants. Included in the former concern, was usually the ownership of a pig or two, a few sheep, either a work horse or donkey (the relatively small household plots of land made mechanised ploughing often impractical) as well as some chickens, geese and/or turkeys. As with the animals, each household determined its own needs in respect to which plants were grown. In part, this was defined by the availability of labour

in every home. All households, however, grew animal fodder and combined the tending of fruit trees and vegetables with the caring of decorative plants. Most villagers were almost self-sufficient in terms of meat, fruit and vegetables, although not in other household basic requirements such as flour.

Any excess produce – animal or plant – was sold either to the village cooperative or to private buyers. Some villagers sold their surplus at the private markets in Nekilva (anyone could set up a stall). Sometimes they travelled to more distant markets, especially if it was learned through word-of-mouth, that a certain product was in demand or deficit in a particular area.

However, the villagers' main private agricultural preoccupation, the one from which most income was gained, involved the cultivation of roses. Rose growing was a relatively recent interest, begun by a Talpian who spent 10 years in France and returned to Talpa with a suitcase of rose cuttings and along with it the knowledge and skills associated with rose propagation. At the beginning, this was carried out only by the TKZC, but 10-15 years ago private households took over this area, while the cooperative phased out its operations. Since then Talpians had branched out into cultivating other decorative plants, although roses still remained the most popular. It was a business which was so successful that Bulgaria had became an exporter of rose plants – grown in Talpa and the neighbouring area – to France, Russia and other countries, where they were used to beautify parks and gardens. This contributed to the Talpian conception of themselves as 'internationalists', since it allowed them to locate their internationally-acquired agricultural skills to the purpose of producing a good which was bound for export.

The market buyer for roses and other plants was ultimately always the government organisation 'Bulgar-flowers', the district branch being located in Nekilva. Villagers were paid per plant, the price depending on the quality. The rose market was well established and secure and so the villagers dealt directly with the organisation in Nekilva. However, for other decorative plants the market was less certain and demand irregular; it was much harder to sell directly to the government organisation and thus villagers usually traded through (illegal) middle-men, people with connections in the government organisations throughout Bulgaria. These 'middle-men' provided a degree of security for the sale of plants to the government; for their services, a villager was charged commission.

Occupational opportunities in Talpa were expanded somewhat after 1944 into areas less typical of the pre-socialist village. One such example was the gramophone assembly plant situated on the main road linking Talpa to Nekilva and neighbouring villages, in which

radio and stereo equipment was assembled. This plant was built in the 1960's, some villagers say at the directive of T. Zhivkov, as an attempt to halt the outmigration of villagers – especially youth – to the cities. Twenty years later, with a work force of approximately 100, a relatively small proportion of the workers were from Talpa, the rest were bussed in daily from Nekilva and Veliko Turnovo.

The gramophone plant was not under the authority of village administrators, but was linked directly to Veliko Turnovo, which dealt with the plant's finances and organisation. However, although Talpians were not involved in the management of the plant, they did reap benefits from it, for not only did it employ a number of Talpians, but part of its profits was fed into the development of the village. For example, this industrial corporation gave financial aid to the villagers' improvement program for preparation for the 'model village' competition. Also in times of agricultural pressure, such as the peach and grape picking season when there was always a deficit of helpers, workers from the plant were released to assist with the picking – along with the many others brought in from neighbouring towns and cities.

Other non-agricultural village occupations revolved around the services located in the central plaza. Most food supplies came from within the region. The village bakery, which stopped its own production 3 years earlier, had since sold bread baked in and delivered daily from Nekilva. There were four other shops: a haberdashery, hardware store, delicatessen and grocery store (the stocks in the latter two were not always reliable). Next to the grocery store was the village restaurant-tavern. These services were all manned by Talpians. The restaurant operated only when villagers assembled together for some festivity, at which time its facilities were used to cater for the large gatherings. The tavern, open nightly, was a regular meeting ground for the village men and, during school holidays, for the younger people. The post-office, which employed four workers, all of whom lived in Talpa (one being a 'Turk'), was responsible for mail, newspaper and pension deliveries. In addition, the central plaza was the location of the police station, mayor's office, a barber who worked twice a week, a medical centre with a full time doctor and nurse, and a casual dentist who came to the village once a fortnight. The *Chitalishte* was also located in the central plaza and provided most village entertainment and social events; at various times in the year, youth discos and film nights were organised as well as meetings, lectures and various festivities and celebrations.

The school provided the only other opportunity for non-agricultural work in the village. During the 1986-7 academic year, there were 60 school children between the ages of 6 to 16 – a combined force of Talpian children, plus those from the neighbouring village of

Tevelak. The 60 children were taught by 9 teachers (the majority of whom travelled from Nekilva and Veliko Turnovo). There was also a cleaning and cooking staff of four.

The small student population reflected more generally the decline in the village's settlement. Talpa's population had gradually risen from 600 in 1880, reaching a peak in 1939 of 2200. However, from the late 1940's its population had been steadily decreasing. At the time of my fieldwork, the population was 760, of which 484, that is, two-thirds of the villagers, were pensioners. (In Bulgaria, retirement age was 55 for women and 60 years for men. Retirement rarely signified the end of a person's economically active life, for villagers usually returned to work part-time at the TKZC, collecting both a pension and a salary). Perhaps the best indication of the predominantly ageing village population was the way villagers spoke of their mayor as 'the young man'. He was noticeably one of the small number of adults of non-pension age working in Talpa. School holidays, especially the long summer vacation, was the only time when the village was filled with younger people – (city) school children – spending their holidays with their grandparents. Reciprocally, some elderly villagers, especially widows or widowers, would spend the hard winter months in the cities with families, returning to the village in spring.

The exodus of youth from Talpa since 1944, which had affected most households and was commented upon by all Talpians with whom I spoke, was characteristic of a much larger movement in other Bulgarian regions, due to the industrialisation policies which drew villagers, especially the youth, to the cities. This was important in the consideration of Talpa as a 'village'. As already noted, the gramophone assembly plant was viewed by villagers as an attempt to keep the young in Talpa. Built in 1965 it was seen, or so M. Boteva told me, as a rather belated attempt to hold back the emigration of Talpian youth, by offering them non-agricultural employment (belated because by this time many had already left). The same villager estimated that should all young Talpians return, the village would have a population of about 3000. As it was, most Talpian families, children and grandchildren, lived outside Talpa in towns and cities, notably in the most wealthy areas of Bulgaria, such as the sea resort of Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Gabrovo and Sofia.

These relatives visited Talpa regularly, providing an important source of labour within the domestic household lands. Those living in Veliko Turnovo – only 35 kilometres from Talpa – would come almost every weekend, especially in the warmer months, when there was much work to be done in the garden. At the very least, they would be called upon a few times in the year when the garden work reached a peak and required a number of helpers to work intensively for a short period of time; for example when the roses had to be taken out, sorted, bundled and driven to 'Bulgar-flowers' in Nekilva, all in a matter of a few

days. In return, the villagers provided their city families with fresh foods, home-made preserves and monetary aid. Indeed, much of the back-breaking physical garden work in the private lands was not carried out for the villagers' own needs (these being quite modest and usually met by their own salaries or pension) but in order to help out the younger family members in the town or city. The villagers' household financial earnings were fed directly into the 'improvement' of the youth's lifestyle, finances with which to buy an apartment, a car, or build a house. Thus a huge part of village household earnings was siphoned off into the towns and cities. This formed an important economic relationship between the elderly villagers and the youth in the cities. Such relations reinforced the agricultural nature of the village in respect to the non-agricultural based cities and towns.

Talpa as a 'village' was defined largely in terms of the nature of its administrative-party (including agricultural) structure discussed above. The relative importance of village organisations in respect to each other and their positioning in terms of the state structure (at the bottom of the hierarchy), identified Talpa's significance as a 'village' in a way which was specifically socialist. As such, an understanding of 'village' was closely connected with the advent of the socialist state in 1944, since the present structure was put in place only after that date. The transformation in lifestyle that followed this date was, for the Talpians', fundamental to their contemporary understanding of 'village'. The advent of the socialist state signified fundamental and 'new' changes to the relationship of the villagers to their land. Not only were there basic re-organisations of land distribution, cooperatives formed and limits set for private land ownership, but also the nature of production changed. Nineteen-forty-four represented the point at which the socialist village became an individualised, mechanised agricultural community. With these processes came the outmigration of villagers – mainly youth – to the cities and towns, which grew at the expense of the village population. The transformation from subsistence crops to cash crops (decorative plants), reflected a more general transformation in the economic structure of village life, accompanied by the general increase in standards of living. In fact when Talpians talked about their 'village' with respect to its socialist character, it was most often within these terms. That is, socialism signified for them an increased standard of living, the socialist village meant that they viewed themselves to be better off in the material sense. As one villager said of these new socialist times, "no-one is close any more to starvation, everyone has electricity, roads and running water." Further, villagers were offered opportunities for non-agricultural employment and Talpa became well serviced, having many of the medical, social, educational and technological facilities of a town. Modern communication equipment connected the village to the rest of the country. Telephones, radios and television (all channels state run) were owned by most

householders, while asphalted roads connected the village to the surrounding district. The dramatic improvement to the villagers' standard of living was significant for them and the description they had of themselves as 'new Bulgarian VILLAGERS'. It reflected in a concrete way their progressive, socialist nature.

This also meant that despite its well serviced and facilitated character, or perhaps because of it, Talpa possessed a great variety of contacts outside its boundaries. That is, the 'village' was not an autonomous entity but was incorporated within the socialist state system in a number of ways – as a result of the particular administrative-party structure which set up the village (along with the factories) as the foundation unit of the socialist system; and through its cooperative agricultural organisation which typified a socialist rural settlement. Its organisational form thus also reflected the progressive nature of the 'village'. Close kinship ties with the towns – often evident as an economic network between a labour-starved village and the financial and material needs of city life – and cultural activities at the *Chitalishte*, which hosted outside entertainers (and in turn was the home of the village vocal group which made its first appearance outside Talpa in a neighbouring village in 1987), further contributed to the high quantity of exchange between the 'new Bulgarian village' and its urban counterpart. The apparently self-sufficient body defined as 'village', was thus very much an interdependent unit of the socialist system and the many relations through which it was constituted. This was a vital element in the understanding of Talpa as a 'new Bulgarian VILLAGE'.

Significance of the Past in the 'new Bulgarian village'

The 'new Bulgarian village' was a temporal referent which raised the past as fundamentally important in the way Talpians constructed their contemporary identity, in understanding their present situation as Bulgarian villagers located within the socialist state.

The 'new Bulgarian village', was a description which attributed relevancy to a time scale that had as its delineating point, 1878, when Bulgarians attained their freedom from the Turks. At this time, Talpa was regained as a BULGARIAN village. In many senses the conflict against the fascist regime by anti-fascist heroes who eventually succeeded in bringing about the socialist state in 1944, represented the successful turning point in the struggle against all that the villagers had inherited unwantingly from the Turks – ignorance, cultural and material poverty. Nineteen forty-four marked the freedom to pursue socialist goals without hindrance. The 'new' lifestyle – the increased living standards, the contemporary administrative-party and agricultural organisational structures

which provided the framework of current socialist village life – bore witness to the villagers' successful struggle over the 'old'. If the 'new Bulgarian village' was a reference to the 'new' age initiated by the Bulgarian's overthrow of the Turks, it was an epoch which blossomed after World War II with the advent of the socialist state.

The past, as constituted by the 'new Bulgarian villagers', could not be taken to be a passive entity. Rather, as the very basis of the contemporary understanding Talpians held about themselves, the past was rendered as a social resource of crucial importance. Any understanding of the 'village' as 'Bulgarian' or 'socialist', cannot be achieved except in terms of the significance attributed to the past. For the past provided the means by which Talpians negotiated their present identity and therefore their orientation within the Bulgarian socialist state.

However, the 'new Bulgarian village' was not only a way in which Talpians rendered the past as centrally important, but it also represented a specific way of understanding that past. It could be known only with respect to that with which it was contrasted, an old repressive existence from which the 'new Bulgarian village' was defined. The 'new Bulgarian village' was a way of making irrelevant (or at least distinguishing between) the old oppressive past from that which was their present reality. The contemporary understanding which provided a distinctly Bulgarian and socialist viewpoint, had arisen out of a struggle for freedom and equality. It was a distinct world view which oriented the villagers' national identity and political attitudes and perceptions in a way that was unsympathetic to either a Turkish or fascist perspective. The struggle for freedom was waged through political and cultural proceedings carried out in the *Chitalishte*; that is, through the availability of literature, theatrical performances or political meetings, organised and held in the *Chitalishte*. This suggests that it is not only activities and events, but particular locations which were associated with the specific past espoused by the 'new Bulgarian villagers'. Further, it indicates that there may be differing ways of relating to this past, in terms of giving emphasis to 'new', 'Bulgarian', or 'village' aspects of history – that is, in giving primary significance to events associated with 1944, or to a Bulgarian identity or to the village's agricultural basis respectively. (This delineation is analytical only, since as stated earlier, there is considerable overlap between 'new', 'Bulgarian' and 'villagers', as a meaningful description). Another way of saying this is that villagers drew upon various events in the past of the 'new Bulgarian village', giving them a different significance and using them in different contexts. In Chapter 6 we note that these differing ways of relating to the 'new Bulgarian village', constituted part of the multi-dimensionality of history.

The specific nature of the past raised through the term 'new Bulgarian village' was, in Naymov's terms, a history. As discussed later, however, the past may be determined as meaningful in ways different from a historical construction. I look at two other publicly practised ways in which the past was attributed contemporary significance; as folklore and tradition. The assumption behind this approach is that the temporal order is inchoate, and that social activity attributes meaning to the past. That is, a cultural construction places meaning on an otherwise valueless and undelineated past. This raises a fundamental theme of this study, which focuses on taken-for-granted temporal concepts of the past – history, tradition and folklore – rendering them ethnographically problematic. In the following chapter I explore the first of these three social constructions – history.

Chapter 2 History

The importance of the past in the Talpian understanding of themselves as 'new Bulgarian villagers' was discussed in Chapter 1. Here, more-detailed attention is given to history as one social construction of the past, through an exploration of what Talpians understood to be historical[1]. History is thus rendered as a specific ethnographically-constructed entity, a meaningful Talpian phenomenon.

In order to explore history as a Talpian social construction of the past, I introduce a Bulgarian understanding of Marxist-Leninist history, using material by T. Zhivkov as the main source. Zhivkov was the long serving leader of the Bulgarian socialist state who, in the almost 30 years of his leadership, had published hundreds of his speeches and other writings on Bulgarian socialism. His works served throughout this period as the fundamental guideline for all Bulgarian state policy, steering its socialist path in a peculiarly Bulgarian form of Marxism-Leninism. The presentation of this Bulgarian view of a Marxist-Leninist history, allows an examination of the fundamental aspects of Bulgarian history, its perceived association with Russian history and its evolutionary and progressive nature which cannot be understood except in terms of its ultimate goal of communism. This goal provided a moral dimension to history. It also set the terms for socialist state policy, a policy which strove to achieve changes in the consciousness of the people through both education and an advanced technology, to sustain a socialist material existence.

Such an understanding of Bulgarian history is detailed in the following section where an important historical event – the 9th September, the anniversary of the foundation of the socialist state, as celebrated in Talpa – is examined. I draw out the nature of history as a specific way of constructing the past by examining both the content and the contextual structure of the material presented, focussing on the main speech of the event. The past was established as historically significant when it was presented in linear, usually textualised form, had the support of state officials and was celebrated in public locations –

1 Throughout this thesis, *history* is rarely used with the academic and/or Western meanings usually attributed to it in anthropological works, but instead refers to a Talpian-Bulgarian understanding of history. On the occasions when I wish to use *history* in the Western/academic sense (within the ethnographic chapters) I place the term in quotation marks. The same is true for politics, folklore and tradition, all of which are rendered as ethnographic concepts.

usually the *Chitalishte*. The latter two characteristics attributed a national significance to the historical past.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of history, however, was its association with village political activity. Moral and teleological elements of history served to differentially evaluate historical events; those associated with the advent of the socialist state in 1944 were given privileged position. When individuals linked themselves to this historical period, they were acting politically. Focussing on various village political figures who represented their respective organisations in the 9th September celebration, becomes a starting point for an examination of the political dimension of history. In identifying the different roles attributed to the various political organisations in the development of the socialist state, village political leaders' positions of authority were located in terms of their established relation to 1944 activities. This point is pursued further through a historical work which mentioned the head of the Talpian Communist Party in an unfavourable light and the incidents which occurred in response to it. It allows examination of the different relationships villagers established with the historical past and how changes in relationship led to leaders' movement in the political hierarchy. Not equally accessible to all, history was a resource by means of which the legitimate socialist form of political activity was constructed. In defining politics as the contemporary relations emerging from villagers' differing relationships to specific morality and teleologically valued events, political activity was constituted as the contentious domain of history. Put otherwise, the continual negotiation and re-negotiation of history defined the political terms of village life.

In the final section of the chapter, I consider the moral dimension of political-historical activities. Morality was associated with socialist notions of humanness. Any delineation of that which defined humanness was directly related to an individual's involvement in political-historical activities; that is, to the particular nature of an individual's relationship to history. Those who were active in the historical development of the state, established through their role in significant historical events and who therefore held higher positions in the political hierarchy, were also the ones viewed with greater respect by the villagers; they were figures of moral authority.

In this chapter I raise politics – alongside history – as an ethnographically constituted phenomenon. Politics, along with history, had a particular significance in Talpa. It involved more than just formal institutions and activities related to the domain of these institutions. Instead, politics can more satisfactorily be understood in terms of its associations with a Bulgarian, Marxist-Leninist history; it was historically directioned

action. In rendering both history and politics as ethnographic concepts, I need to comment on the terminology used below. In respect to history, I distinguish between history and historical celebration. *Historical celebration,* and *historical event,* are terms I use when I write about the way Talpians constructed a particular past and their relationship to it – it is my account, my representation of their voice. When, on the other hand I use the term *history*, I denote my conceptualisation of villagers' relations to the past without their intervening celebrations. This latter term is my abstraction of the character of the historical celebrations. The same is true of my use of the adjectival form, political activity, in respect to politics[2].

Commentary on the Bulgarian Marxist-Leninist Notion of History

The Bulgarian view of a Marxist-Leninist history as recorded in writings by Todor Zhivkov, who was the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the President of the State Council, is the focus of attention in this section. In looking at the specifically Bulgarian understanding of Marxism-Leninism, my intention is to locate the centrality of history in the Marxist-Leninist state. The vital position of history in socialist Bulgaria, due to its foundation in Marxist-Leninist philosophy,[3] was recognised by Zhivkov when he declared that history was "...the sage mentor of the peoples..." (1981, p.1). The description of Bulgaria as a socialist state in itself was a statement about the location of the state in respect to a Marxist-Leninist world historical view.

Of 1944 and the advent of the socialist state, Zhivkov wrote "...It was a continuation of the same cause under our specific conditions, a part of the great world transition from capitalism to socialism that began with the socialist revolution of the Russian workers and peasants in 1917" (1974, p.4). That is, the construction of socialism in Bulgaria demonstrated the same traits as those in Russia although there were some characteristics peculiar to Bulgarian conditions. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of Bulgarian history was its perceived historical closeness to the USSR. Zhivkov noted that "...Bulgaria was among the first countries where the sparks emanating from Russia caused a

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2 In the following chapters on tradition and folklore, I differentiate between the same use of the terms folkloric celebration and folklore, traditional practices/events and tradition.

3 Zhivkov identified the Bulgarian state as founded on Marxist-Leninist principles; "...our Party has always thoroughly grasped the international importance of Marxism and later Leninism, has been convinced that the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism hold good for our country..." (1974, p.7).

revolutionary conflagration. And this was no accident – it was brought about by a series of profound historical reasons that made it practically inevitable" (1974, p.26). (Carr also stresses the orientation of Bulgaria towards Russia[4]). One of these reasons has already been noted in the previous chapter, the fact that the Russian army had helped liberate the Bulgarian people from Turkish bondage[5].

Moreover, from its inception, the workers' movement in Bulgaria was strongly linked with the Russian proletariat struggles. Blagoev, who founded the first Bulgarian Marxist groups, had close ties to the Russian proletariat. His followers took part in the Russian uprising against tsarism in 1905 and again in the October Revolution in 1917. It was Blagoev's party which protected Bolsheviks from persecution by the tsarist regime by providing them with Bulgarian passports. Indeed, Lenin himself lived temporarily in Bulgaria as such an emigre. In the first of three unsuccessful clashes by the Bulgarians against fascism in 1918, Bulgarian socialists fought under the slogan "Let us follow the example of our Russian Brothers" (Zhivkov 1974, p.27). Zhivkov cites Lenin's words: "...at the price of national sacrifices we have preserved such international revolutionary influences that now Bulgaria is directly following our example" (Zhivkov 1974, p.27).

From this period, the form of Marxism-Leninism advocated by the Bulgarian Communist Party was specifically identified with Bolshevism (Dimitrov 1938, p.276). The close relationship of the Bulgarian socialist movement with Russia was continued in the early-mid 20th century by Dimitrov. Of the closeness depicted to exist between the two countries, Zhivkov recalls Dimitrov's words: "...the friendship with the Soviet Union is just as vitally necessary as the sun and the air are for every living being" (1976, p.17). Georgi Dimitrov, an exiled figure before World War II, worked in association with Blagoev. The former headed the Communist International during the period 1935-1943 and in 1944 became the first leader of the new Bulgarian socialist state. The fact that the Bulgarian socialist state had not resulted from civil war was due in part to the support of the Fatherland Front (an organisation founded by Dimitrov) which represented the populace's general opposition to the fascist state. This organisation gave a specifically Bulgarian

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4 For example he stated that as with so many other aspects of Bulgarian socialist life, the Bulgarian Communist Party and Russian Communist Party were closely affiliated, more so than most other Eastern bloc nations. And this was from its earliest beginnings; "Bulgarian radical intellectuals of the latter part of the nineteenth century had, almost without exception, received their advanced education in Russia and were as firmly oriented towards Russia as those of most other countries of Eastern and Central Europe were towards the West" (Carr 1964, p.202 and p.207).

5 The close relationship between Bulgaria and Russia in respect to policies was pursued well into the late 1980's. Zhivkov wrote of Bulgaria's restructuring tasks as coinciding with those of Russia and the relationship between them as 'organic'. (1989a, p.12).

character to the form of socialist government. Dimitrov's leading contribution to the foundation of the socialist state extended across all areas; he mapped out the path for the socialist transformation of Bulgarian society, including the idea of cooperative farms as a specifically Bulgarian form of the collectivisation of agriculture (Zhivkov 1982b, p.10). He therefore contributed to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory. The strongest statement of Dimitrov's position in Bulgarian history was evidenced by the fact that, like Lenin in Russia, he was embalmed when he died in 1949. A number of temporary leaders filled the top Bulgarian state position after Dimitrov's death until the mid 1950's, when greater stability returned to Eastern Europe after Stalin's death. At this time, Zhivkov gained the Bulgarian leadership and portrayed himself as a close follower and disciple of Dimitrov; he took charge of the interpretation and development of Dimitrov's plans for the future of the socialist state (see especially Zhivkov 1982a and 1985b). Zhivkov himself was thus a significant figure in Bulgarian history; he represented the contemporary end of a long lineage of specifically Bulgarian Communist leaders that led directly to Lenin and therefore to the Russian roots of Marxism-Leninism[6].

The notion of Bulgarian history as distinct from and yet a continuation of a more general socialist history in which Russia paved the way, called attention to an important point about history – that it was perceived as a progressive continuum. Nineteen-forty-four represented Bulgaria's triumphant advancement into a socialist epoch and a movement away from a capitalist-fascist one. The forward movement of history, which characterised history as progressive, was thus conceived in terms of differing social orders. Very clearly, the movement from capitalist to socialist was upheld as a positive value. "...The abolition of the capitalist social system and the complete triumph of socialist relations in all spheres of life is a decisive change which has come as a result of the socialist revolution. The period from capitalism to socialism has been completed in our society" (Zhivkov 1985b, p.215). Socialism, the present historical stage in which Bulgaria existed, was viewed in turn as an intermediate stage between a more backward capitalist stage – destined to an 'inevitable death' (1985a, pp.96-97) – and the future and final goal of history, communism. Of Bulgaria's contemporary stage, Zhivkov wrote "...In its social

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6 As we see in Chapter 5, Talpa's own political leader Pashev, was in turn acquainted with Zhivkov, thus completing Talpians' privileged link to this lineage. The villagers' past association with Zhivkov was repeatedly drawn to my attention by his long-anticipated visit to Talpa throughout my fieldwork period. In passing, we note that Eissenstat revealed a similar lineage in the Soviet Union; where Stalin legitimated his ruling position by "...posing as Lenin's chosen successor..." (1971, p.238) and then after 1956 and his fall from grace, all subsequent Soviet leaders portrayed themselves as being in a direct line of succession from Lenin (1971, p.239).

development, the People's Republic of Bulgaria together with the other socialist countries has surpassed, by a whole historical epoch, the capitalist states" (1985a, p.101).

Such a progressive history was also evolutionary in character. "...The main trend in the activity of the socialist state is to promote the creation of the necessary conditions for the evolution of socialism into communism" (1985b, pp.218-9). Bulgarian history was evolutionary in the sense that one epoch developed out of another: the original still existed in some remnant form in the present and the two converged in a dialectic which resulted in the development of a third. This process was viewed as irreversible (Zhivkov 1985a, pp.94-95) and a law-governed phenomenon of the socialist system (Zhivkov 1985a, p.95). In taking stock of Bulgaria's 13 centuries of historical development, Zhivkov noted that "The years of socialism are the most fruitful period in our ages-long old development" (1989b, p.14) and that the "...Past, present and future converge as in a focus, in contemporary socialist Bulgaria. Contemporary socialist Bulgaria is the crown of the 1300 year long development of our state" (1981a, p.28). This clearly implied the progressive character of Bulgarian history as an evolutionary process; socialism represented a pinnacle in Bulgarian history, an accumulation of all that which was past and a stage closer to its ultimate goal – communism.

Communism was identified by Zhivkov as the goal of history (1985a, p.110, p.131) and the construction of socialism could be understood only in terms of this historical goal; "...Today our main task is to complete the building of socialist society and in future to create economic, as well as cultural and ideological prerequisites for a gradual transition to communist construction" (1985a, p.107). Building a socialist society was necessary for the development of the realisation of a communist future. Zhivkov was specific enough to place a time framework on this process. During his speech celebrating the first 13 centuries since the foundation of the Bulgarian state,[7] he forecast that "...we see the 14th century of Bulgaria as an age of communism, as a complete triumph of freedom, fraternity, equality, happiness and beauty" (1981a, p.29). But communism was not only the goal of Bulgarian history or socialist history, but of the history of all humankind. "Today there is no worthier, no richer or greater ideal for the working people, for youth, not only in our country, but round the globe than communism" (Zhivkov 1985a, p.123), a goal which was "...most humane, [a] most lofty ideal in the history of mankind..." (Zhivkov 1985a, p.131). Communism represented a historical ideal which had global significance and relevancy. Socialist countries, by virtue of the fact they were more historically progressive than capitalist ones, were leaders in attaining this historical goal. Bulgaria, along with other

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7 Bulgaria was founded in the year 681 AD.

socialist states, was led "...by the great Soviet Union, [which] blazes the trial to communism for entire mankind" (Zhivkov 1985a, p.101).

The evolutionary development of history towards its final goal of communism was a process understood to occur in 'stages', a delineation made in terms of the relations of production. The key to historical understanding was to look at the relations of production as they have developed in the historical past. Socialist relations of production differed radically from those found in capitalism (Zhivkov 1985b, p.198), for the former had eliminated the exploitative and antagonistic class relations which underpinned the capitalist relations of production. "...Under socialism, too, there are classes and class distinctions but these are classes of a new type...under socialism there are no exploiter classes but friendly classes where the working class plays the leading role" (Zhivkov 1985b, p.199). The most important 'friendly class' to which Zhikov referred, was the cooperative farmers, who arose from the specifically socialist form of agricultural production, one viewed as increasingly reliant on technology. The relations of production were thus central to the historical development of the society; the gradual unification of the working class and cooperative farmers, represented the mergence of two forms of socialist relations of production and therefore the means of transition from socialist to communist society. The latter stage would be reached once all classes were abolished; Communism was a classless society (Zhivkov 1985b, p.207) which manifested the increasing humanisation of mankind. (I touch on aspects of a Talpian understanding of communism later in this chapter and again in more detail in Chapter 5).

The building of communism and unification of all working people within working class interests, which was the goal of Bulgarian policy (Zhivkov 1985b, pp.203-204; 1969, p.351), required a change of consciousness of the people which was achieved in part via education. The main task of educators in schools and the *Chitalishte* – be it teachers or *Chitalishte* activists – was to instruct and prepare the people, the builders of socialism and communism (Zhivkov 1985a, p.111). The conveying of socialist knowledge came through theatrical activities, various political and social meetings and lectures. Education was given a broad basis which was available and accessible to the wide populace. A socialist education attributed a Marxist-Leninist historical world-view to the understanding of all forms of knowledge, from science to the arts. At the most fundamental level, education involved conveying to the people an understanding of their history. Educational activities provided the necessary conditions for the development of the socialist state, indeed it was an important means by which the development of history would occur. This was forcibly stated by Zhivkov; "...Our philosophy, our Marxist-Leninist teaching is a view of life of

the working class – of the working people – a theoretical and practical weapon they use for changing the world and storming the sky" (1985a, p.124).

Another condition necessary in raising the conscious activity of the socialist individual in order to ensure the development of history, was implied in the following quotation about Bulgarian socialist society which "...demands roundly-developed and thoroughly-trained people, people who are capable of doing everything, educated and highly cultured people possessing scientific and technical knowledge, practical production skills, people really prepared for great deeds..." (Zhivkov 1985a, p.111). A socialist education in part prepared the socialist individual for the necessarily increasing level of technology needed to sustain a socialist material existence. The development of Bulgarian history towards its communist goal thus involved building the technical-material basis of the country, "...The incessant upswing of our life is based on a modern highly efficient technology which creates conditions for an even faster movement forward" (Zhivkov 1985a, p.101). Indeed according to Zhivkov, the success of socialist Bulgaria in its advancements has been almost miraculous since September 1944, during which time "...socialist Bulgaria has traversed a path equivalent to centuries..." (1981, p.4). In the villages, this has been possible through the cooperative form of production involving the industrialisation of agriculture – tracts of land worked by machinery – and the use of the latest scientific/medical techniques. History and its communist goal was dependent on the ever-increasing advancement of technology, be it in industry or agriculture. Such technological and scientific advancements were (because in part they involved transformations in the nature of productive relations) a sign of historical progress. As Zhivkov notes "...our homeland, which in the course of nearly seven decades under the domination of the bourgeois was only a completely backward agrarian appendage to capitalist Europe, is now an advanced industrial-agrarian state with a developed heavy and light industry, with large-scale agriculture, with a steadily developing science, technology, education, culture and arts, with a growing material and cultural level of the people" (1985a, p.100). What better validation or measure of the progress Bulgaria has made in history from its past capitalist to present socialist stage, than its technologically-based production?

The previous quotation also indicates the final point I wish to make about Bulgarian history. The understanding of the capitalist stage as 'backward' in contrast to the 'progressive' nature of the present socialist stage attributed a moral dimension to history. Indeed the moral character of history was explicitly noted by Zhivkov: "...it is crucial that we all, leaders, workers, cooperative farmers and intellectuals, all workers of socialism, study and master...historical materialism...This is one of the necessary conditions for building communist society, for an extremely high rise in the communist consciousness

and the moral qualities of the whole people" (1985a, pp.123-4). In this statement, a Marxist-Leninist world view was related to a socialist sense of morality, an equation made between a greater understanding of historical materialism and the increased quality of the peoples' morality. He continued "...Only thus can we cultivate a correct way of thinking and realise how we should build communism, and what it means..." (1985a, pp.123-4). That is, not only is an improved morality part of the process of constructing communism, but a true understanding of the historical goal is attained only through recognising that the goal is one of a moral nature. History becomes meaningful only in terms of its moral dimension. Having the correct Marxist-Leninist view of history, was to hold the correct moral world view. We must therefore recognise that as an evolutionary process, history was also a moral progression from a state of little morality, or even immorality, to an ever increasing attainment of a morality which will be fully realised with the communist goal of history. To deny history its rightful place, was to walk on the path of moral decay. A rejection of the fundamental position of history represented a degeneration in the moral standards of the people and ultimately a regression in the inevitable material and social development of society. This is why Zhivkov wrote that a society which forgets that history is the sage mentor of the people, pays dearly and can expect only much suffering and misfortune (1985a, p.104).

The Character of History

To explore the elements which characterise history as a particular construction of the past, it is revealing to examine the historical celebration of the 9th September, an annually and nationally-occurring event commemorating the date on which the Bulgarian state became socialist. In the larger towns and cities, workers representing unions and factories marched in parades waving colourful banners, riding on floats, and moving past state officials, who usually stood outside the *Chitalishte* or another prominent state building. In the villages, where the population was smaller, the national holiday was celebrated not with parades but with functions held in the *Chitalishtes*.

The 9th September celebration (1987) was held in Talpa on the evening of the 8th, which was the actual anniversary of the overthrow of the fascists in the village. The proceedings consisted of a village dance held outside in the central plaza before and after the main part of the function conducted in the *Chitalishte* itself. In the *Chitalishte*, speeches were made, awards were presented, songs were sung and poetry was recited. It is with the speeches, a feature common to all historical celebrations held in the *Chitalishte*, that I am most

concerned. On the occasion discussed, the village dance before and after the *Chitalishte* proceedings was washed out by rain[8]. In studying the celebration, we may draw some conclusions about the specific nature of history, for the celebration required that the villagers reflect on the past in a particular way – as historical. It is noted and will become clear in the course of this study, that many of the features identified below as characteristic to history were common to most historical celebrations, although some aspects of this actual celebration, such as the important role played by the head of the Fatherland Front, were peculiar to this event. I begin by presenting in condensed form the speeches given in the *Chitalishte*.

> On stage sat Pashev, head of the village Bulgarian Communist Party and Novikov, head of the Fatherland Front. Pashev commenced the evening with a short speech : "It has been 43 years since the downfall of fascism and the success of the Communist Party over fascism. In only a few hours we overthrew the fascists because there were not enough supporters of fascism. We established the Fatherland Front in Talpa and a Peoples Republic. Tonight we remember those who supported our national war. On this topic the head of the Fatherland Front – Novikov – will speak".
>
> Novikov: "Six-hundred and eighty-one, 1185, 1876, 1878, 1923 and the 9th September 1944 are dates embedded in our history. We remember those who died in the battle against fascism and capitalism. Again it is September and again we remember that great day 43 years ago. We remember the formation of the Fatherland Front. Forty-three years is long enough to see the changes in our lives. But the foundations of this life happened almost 100 years ago with the formation of the Communist Party in Bulgaria...The worst years were during the time of Hitler and the war. Our Party was mobilised and ready to revolt...as was our great son of Bulgaria - G. Dimitrov...Our Party believes in international peace. It aimed at overthrowing the fascists and establishing the Fatherland Front. Thousands of Communists, young Communists, Agrarian Union members and non-party people all came together to free Bulgaria from fascism...The real war was within Bulgaria against the fascists. In the war thousands of partisans, political prisoners were killed. Many went to prison, to concentration camps". Novikov then quoted a famous Bulgarian poet who had once written of the fascists that "...they killed us as even the Turks didn't". Novikov continued that "...those heroes are an example to future generations of socialists...the war was important for our small village Talpa. Forty residents were involved in the war: 12 as partisan helpers, 3 partisans...The Red Army for the second time helped free us. World War II took 50 million lives...but socialism was won over in six European countries". Novikov then turned to the times since the war. "...The war opened up a new life for the people. The day after the war, socialism started along its road. The Bulgarian Communist Party immediately identified the goals necessary for agriculture and industry in order to help pull the country out of poverty and starvation. Now our country

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8 In any case, anthropological analysis of dance movements or sound is a largely unexplored area (one exception is the innovative ethnography 'Sound and Sentiment' by S. Feld. See Marcus & Fischer 1986, pp.63-64). This becomes particularly problematic in the chapter on folklore where my conventional recording and analysis of field data proved particularly inadequate – since folkloric performances were conveyed largely through sound and visual media, rather than by textual or verbal means.

> is developing under Lenin's ideals and the practical direction of our Party and Zhivkov...socialist democracy is developing...Only those who knew Bulgaria before the war can really understand the great changes that have taken place – it was the most underdeveloped and backward in all of Europe, now it has a well developed technology."

In the final stages of his speech, Novikov talked about the changes that had occurred in village life and the importance of technology in village agriculture.

> "...Agriculture is still very important in our economy and technology plays a vital role in this area. We can really see the deep changes which have occurred. The villages have become little towns – they are clean, have electricity, roads, medical services and many other facilities. Thanks to the Party we are increasing our living standards, we have better supplies of meat, milk products etc. There are few countries which can show off such true democracy as we have here. We have two collectives in Talpa and to date a good record of productivity."

Novikov then gave the names of those workers in the TKZC who had achieved the best productivity results for the year – the 3 best workers who worked with the cows and the sheep, the 3 best machine operators and the 3 best technicians. He stated that the anticipated aims for production for the year had already been reached and in the last few months they hoped to increase productivity even further. Novikov also mentioned other ways in which standards had been increased, giving as an example the Post Office, which had successfully overseen the installation of phones in almost every village house.

> In conclusion, he thanked "...those who have helped with the success of the plan and congratulations to the leading workers. Your role is very important in the development of Bulgaria and our future progress. The past road has not been easy. But it's the only right one for Bulgaria. All the difficult problems are being solved by the Party...which was mobilised by the people...we must continue the technical revolution; if we do not, the evolution of socialism will not occur. More than ever we must aim for peace, for nuclear war would be the end of humanity. The socialist countries believe in international peace, the USSR's political beliefs will lead to international peace. With the coming of the 43rd year since the revolution, we hope for further success for the Party and our Leninist-Marxist ideals. Long live the 9th September. Long live our great Party and the Bulgarian people and the People's Republic of Bulgaria!."

At the end of Novikov's speech, Pashev introduced an official from Nekilva who presented to the mayor the award of 'Model Village' (see Chapter 5). Ivo Gradenarov then presented monetary prizes to the above-mentioned individuals who led in TKZC productivity. The *Chitalishte* celebration concluded with 8 songs performed by the village vocal group – all

on the theme of heroic activities of the World War II period, followed by village school children who recited a number of political poems, also about this period.

As the focal point of most public village events, the *Chitalishte* was the location where a past which villagers themselves understood and termed historical, was re-created. In this sense it was an historical institution. The type of *Chitalishte* functions which celebrated the historical past varied greatly – from formal functions, for example the *Chitalishte* Centennial (see Chapters 4, 6) and the 9th September celebration, to more informal political meetings and social gatherings including play performances and songs by the *Chitalishte* vocal group. While not all these historical celebrations in the *Chitalishte* were of national importance (that is, celebrated throughout Bulgaria, rather than specifically in Talpa), all national historical events were celebrated in the *Chitalishte*, rather than in any other village location. The *Chitalishte* was the place where nationally-recognised historical events were celebrated; the 9th September event was one such occasion. The literary techniques used by Novikov in the speech contributed to establishing the national significance of the historical event. His references to Dimitrov and Zhivkov, that is to Bulgarian socialist figures, and his calls at the end of the speech of 'Long live...' which emulated the style of Zhivkov's writings (see for example Zhivkov 1981, 1985b), contributed to the event's nationalistic character. This character was further underlined by the fact that the function was conducted by officials who represented the state (I look more closely at this aspect in the next section) and was located within a public site.

The national significance of the 9th September celebration was an important facet of its historical nature. Otherwise put, the historical event was a celebration of past occurrences which were constructed as having national importance. Of course this is not to suggest that local past events could not be historical; rather they became historical when interwoven into the national historical framework. The listing by Novikov of the number of partisans and anti-fascist fighters from the village, was a means by which the villagers' own past activities were located within the Bulgarian historical goals. The village anti-fascist fighters were participants in the village's involvement in state goals for the development of socialism. References made by both Pashev and Novikov in the speech to 'we overthrew' and 'our history', and the mentioning of the establishment of the Fatherland Front across the country as well as in Talpa, also incorporated the villagers' past activities into a nationally acclaimed historical past. Further, Talpians' role in agricultural production and the development in other areas which reflected the progressive nature of the village (for example the acquisition of telephones), again located Talpians' past and present activities in terms of the villagers' shared goals with the state. The villagers' own contribution to the development of the socialist state was expressed by writing their past

and present activities into the nationally acclaimed historical past. History thus served a unifying role, incorporating villagers' past into a nationally significant history. Since history was characterised as having a unifying role, then even historical celebrations that were not recognised throughout Bulgaria – for example guest partisan speakers presenting lectures – still acted to involve villagers in wider state concerns. The historical past had national importance irrespective of whether the historical event recognised by Talpa was celebrated throughout the country or not.

The carefully organised format of the event indicated another aspect of historical celebrations, characteristic of all such commemorations I attended at the *Chitalishte*. The formalised nature of the 9th September event involved the physical separation of the speakers, who read usually well-polished speeches to the audience who participated at the appropriate intervals, by clapping; and in less formal functions by asking questions. The introduction of Novikov's talk by Pashev, the fluent speech presented by Novikov, the continuation of the proceedings with the presentation of awards, followed by the musical items, all contributed to the well organised program. Such a high degree of structuring was in part due to the reliance on written material, an issue taken up below.

A feature of the speech was the chronological structuring of Novikov's presentation; the sequential organisation of the paper, in which he first talked about the period prior to 1944, followed by mention of events associated with the advent of the socialist state in 1944, then about the present conditions and finally about the future. This ordered presentation also pointed to another facet of history, namely the importance placed on history as a chronological construction of the past. The chronologically-ordered dates noted by Novikov at the beginning of the speech were all vital in the creation of the Bulgarian state – from the foundation of Bulgaria in 681, the formation of the second Bulgarian kingdom in 1185 after the uprising against Byzantium, freedom from the Turks in 1878 after an unsuccessful uprising in 1876 and the unsuccessful revolution against the fascists in 1923. (Note the inclusion of the dates of struggle, irrespective of whether the activities were successful or not, thus reinforcing history as a past which was about struggle, as discussed below). The fact that the dates were laid out in a chronological, uni-directional manner was important – as this acted to locate particular events within a given context of that which came before and after. Nineteen-forty-four was established as significant in part because it was set within a broader context of the whole of Bulgarian history, as the final date in a list which began with the foundation of the country in 681; 1944 was therefore constituted as the accumulation of all that had occurred before it.

That there was no date following 1944, indicated its relevance as the momentous occasion in the present phase of the contemporary Bulgarian state. The 9th September commemoration was as much about the events of 1944 as a celebration of the progress made in the 43 years since 1944. As Novikov said, "43 years is long enough to see the changes in our lives". In this way, 1944 maintained contemporary relevancy as the measuring point for all that had been achieved since then. This process involved the individualisation of every historical celebration, through statements such as 'It has been 43 years since the downfall of fascism...', so distinguishing this historical celebration from any previous one – the 42nd year – or future one – the 44th year. History thus involved not only the chronologicalisation of past events, but also their representation as non-repeatable occurrences. Every historical act was a unique event.

To say that such a history was a chronological ordering of unique events was not to assume that these historical occurrences were formed as isolated incidents. As implied above, the identification of annual historical celebrations as the 43rd, 44th etc since 1944 was, rather, a means by which each occurrence was individualised and yet was a continuation from that which had passed. In this sense, history was also an evolutionary process. Indeed it was explicitly termed as such in Novikov's speech, where the evolution of socialism was identified as dependent upon the continued development of technology. Socialism was the result of an accumulation of all that had followed before in Buglaria's past. The whole process of continuing to develop socialism, to which Novikov referred in terms of technological advancements and improved living conditions in the village, were a real display of the purposeful goal towards which history was moving. Phrases such as 'the development of Bulgaria' and 'future progress' indicated a projected future, the country's progressive development in terms of an anticipated goal – communism. That is, history was future oriented, its goal characterising it as teleological.

The above four characteristics of history – as an evolutionary process, which chronologically ordered events in a forward-moving direction that had a future designated, purposeful goal – all contributed to the significance of history's linear nature. When I speak of the linearity of history, it is to this which I refer; to its evolutionary, chronological, uni-directional and teleological character. The linear nature of this history was perhaps best viewed in terms of the metaphor used by Novikov in regarding Bulgarian history as a 'road' which linked the past to the present in a particular way. It was only because of the specific road chosen in the past, that the present Bulgarian position on the road – socialism – had resulted. This road, as all roads, led away from one place – fascism-capitalism, (the two terms were used interchangeably in the speech) – and towards a particular destination – communism. The destination attributed the road with a purpose,

one that in Novikov's terms must realise Marxist-Leninist ideals. The linearity of history meant that it was a construction of the past which understood the present (and future) in terms of the past. To borrow Novikov's metaphor, one could know the present and anticipated route of the road only through knowledge of where it had originated and the path it had previously traversed. History was not a temporal construction which referred solely to the past, but also gave significance to the present and anticipated future. Accordingly a historical celebration such as the 9th September, placed as much importance and concern on the present and future as on the past; a point evident from Novikov's speech, which showed an understanding of the presently changing conditions under socialism and its anticipated future goals in terms of understanding the events surrounding 1944. Because the present and future were known only in terms of the past, any reference to the former two, irrespective of whether they were directly associated with the historical past, was ultimately an indirect reference to the historical past.

As a temporal span incorporating the past, present and future, ordered in a linear manner and comprised of unique events, history was also constituted as a knowable past. The origins and understandings about a particular present phenomenon were known through being directly traced to such a definite and knowable past. Note, for example, Novikov's attribution of the present socialist state to the foundation of the Bulgarian Communist Party 100 years ago. In this way, a particular and precisely-located event in the past, explained a present situation. The ability to so identify, specify and explain origins through a definable past was largely due to the media through which history was conveyed – literary sources and written documentation. The ultimate reference of all historical celebrations, irrespective of whether they were read speeches (spoken texts) or more informal gatherings in the *Chitalisthe*, was textual material. The high value placed on literary sources (works by Marx, Lenin, Dimitrov and others), written speeches and documentation, defined history as a well detailed, knowable past. History was a knowable past because historical events could be recorded in considerable detail, information which could then be retrieved at any time in the future.

Not only did the textualisation of the past contribute to the character of history as knowable, but it also attributed to it an element of authority. Textualisation was the means by which history was legitimated as the authoritative past through being recorded in manuscripts, monuments and in photographs (as in the village museum). These provided 'evidence' of the legitimate position of the historical past. It was not only the content of Novikov's 9th September speech, which depended on the use of such historical documents (references to Zhivkov, Marx and Lenin), but the very speech itself was a verbal presentation of a written text. As a spoken text, it held a certain authority (in part due to

the fact it could draw upon detailed accounts) that any other form of presentation would not have possessed[9]. The songs performed by the vocal group and the poems read by the school children were also presentations which originated from texts. However, the lack of visible texts contributed to this section of the ceremony being viewed as 'entertainment', while the speech constituted the most important aspect and was seen to convey the informative part of the event. The only part of the celebration which was non-verbal and therefore totally removed from any historical documentation was, significantly, the activity not located in the *Chitalishte* – the village dance. The *Chitalishte*, as the place of education, learning and historical celebrations (usually textually and/or verbally based activities) was thus fittingly the central site for the 9th September event. (The link between history, the written work and the *Chitalishte*, was implied in the previous chapter when the anti-fascist villagers (socialists) were the ones who attempted to protect the library and its books from destruction).

The final character of history I wish to discuss here was the central theme exemplified in all historical celebrations – namely, preoccupation with the events of 1944, with the struggle between the fascist and anti-fascist forces leading to the advent of the socialist state. The central theme of these *Chitalishte* activities and especially so of the 9th September celebration, was the victorious struggle in 1944 of the communists over the fascists. The fact that these events, which occurred over 40 years earlier, were still celebrated, recounted and played the dominant role in the *Chitalishte*, indicated their importance as basic to history. (Given the role of the *Chitalishte* in the past as a central focus of resistance to the fascists – see Chapter 1 – it was perhaps not surprising to find that all historical events which celebrated the advent of the socialist state occurred in the *Chitalishte*). Nineteen-forty-four and the events surrounding the advent of the socialist state was the fundamental period brought up consistently in historical celebrations and conferred a privileged position in such celebrations. This was implied in the above discussion, when it was noted that 1944 was the foundation of history, everything previous and following was measured from this point. Thus the statement that it was the 43rd year since the advent of the socialist state in the 9th September speech, was the measurement of the present in terms of the past; not any past, but a particular point in the past – 1944. Even the dates prior to 1944, for example 1923, 1878 etc. were all known in terms of 1944, being viewed as part of the Bulgarian struggle for the freedom and development of the socialist state. This was the central focus of all historical celebrations; all referred back to

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9 Unsurprisingly it was leading socialist figures who were involved in the textual production of history. It had, indeed, become customary for Party leaders – including contemporary figures such as Gorbachev and Zhivkov – to have works published.

this point in the historical past as the turning point, as the foundation for the future. Nineteen-forty-four – that is, the advent of the socialist state – was established as a momentous date for the country, the beginning of a new epoch in Bulgarian history.

Such a past presented the fascists and their activities as counter-beneficial to the development of the socialist state and at the same time was sympathetic to Communist Party aims and goals, one that in talking about the struggle between communists and fascists, always sided with the communists. (It was also a past which, through references to the role of the Russian army in Bulgaria's past, gave significance to and support for alignment with the USSR). The enemy – the fascists – were depicted as unparalleled in terms of their oppressive nature. Recall the poet's words quoted by Novikov, "they killed us as even the Turks didn't". The historical celebration thus included the identification of certain activities and certain individuals who participated in rebellion against their fascist oppressors, as heroic. In so doing, a particular morality and value of humanity was designated. The communists, mentioned in Novikov's speech, who fought the fascists, were said to be brave and heroic people who "...are an example to future generations of socialists". The positive valuation attributed to the events resulting in the advent of the socialist state clearly gave a positive morality to all figures involved in this historical past, as exemplary. That is, heroes were identified as those aiding in the development of history; they were the moral upstanding figures in history. This helps to explain why TKZC workers who had the highest production record were rewarded in the ceremony. For these were the people who had contributed to the contemporary development of the state through their outstanding productive activity. History had a moral nature which placed value on humanity in terms of the villagers' participation in historical goals. (I take up the moral dimension of history again in the final section).

From the historical celebration of the 9th September, I have identified a number of characteristics which may be understood as subscribing to the concept of history. There were four facets contributing to the linearity of history: as linear, history was a uni-directional forward-moving (that is non-reversible) process where events were arranged in chronological order. History was also defined by its evolutionary and teleological nature. As a concept which referred to the present and future through a knowable past, history was an interpretation of the past with a moral dimension, celebrated in public places and the state domain, and existing largely in textualised form - written works or other verbal/visual means of documenting the past. However, as a social construction of the past and one that was determined by state officials, history was more than just a means by which villagers linked their past to a nationally approved version. Historical celebrations also provided an opportunity for villagers to cultivate personal associations with the legitimate state-

approved history, since the celebrations often included facts about individuals' involvement in past anti-fascist activities. History was therefore linked to certain villagers, those who, non coincidently, were contemporary political figures. The connection indicates perhaps the most fundamentally important character of history – its political significance. In the following section I explore this association between history and politics.

The Political Dimension of History

While each event in the linear progression of history was unique, not all such events were equally significant for the progress of history. Moral and teleological aspects of history – the knowing of the future goals in terms of a valued historical past – defined certain facets as more important than others. The greatest significance was given to events leading to 1944 and the advent of the socialist state. That is, 1944 was constructed as a moral and teleological point of reference and given a privileged position in history. (Those who were involved in 1944, established it as the most moral and teleological event. We see how this happened in this chapter; it is also dealt with indirectly in Chapters 5 and 6). Historical celebrations which commemorated this past, were therefore about moral and teleological events which were considered highly significant – the 9th September celebration was perhaps the finest example, being an annual reveration of 1944 events. This indeed was the 'function' of the moral or teleological attributes of history; they served as a means of differentially evaluating historical events and the people involved in them.

This suggests a basis for an understanding of political action. Politics was historically directioned action, that is, action which was perceived to contribute to the historical development of the Bulgarian socialist state. Political activity was oriented in terms of the valuation of some historical events over others; it was dependent upon the quality of an individual's participation in 1944 and how 'quality' was judged in moral and teleological terms. The moral and teleological valuation of particular historical events created the basis of villagers' differential relations to history and therefore of their political activity[10].

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10 Depending on the occasion and topic about which he wrote, Zhivkov sometimes emphasised the significance of 1944 events in history; on other occasions, 1944 was contextualised and held no particular relevancy in the context of the broader Marxist-Leninist history. Both were valid interpretations of history as presented by Zhivkov, and part of the multi-dimensionality of this construction of the past. It provided, as we see in Chapter 6, a source of village discontent. However, for the purpose of this section, I am interested more specifically in the political dimension of history. That is, I look at the particular emphasis Talpians gave to a Marxist-Leninist history, which constitutes the political dimension of history.

I analyse the variety of political relations in the village by focussing on the various officials involved in the 9th September celebration, the role played by them in the event, and the institutions to which they belonged. A distinction is therefore made between individual political action and how this relates to the political institutions. Individual political activity was about relating the self to particular historical events. An individual's role in the historical past determined in turn to which institution she/he aspired; it allowed engagement in political institutions which had assigned functions in the furthering of Marxist-Leninist history.

We may begin with the Party and its particular role in history. Of the Party, Zhivkov noted that the "...Bulgarian Communist Party is a universally acknowledged leader of the people, uniting and directioning the efforts of the working people toward one goal...for the cause of the working class and in the service of the people, for communism" (Zhivkov 1969, p.564). The relation of the Party to history was one legitimated through its alignment with working class interests. The working class held a privileged role in history, which was to realise the historical destiny of humanity and remove the source of social antagonism. That is, the historical mission of the working class made it the instrumental force in the realisation of communism, the "...natural leader of all working people..." (Zhivkov 1985b, p.207). While the working class was in this sense the privileged social group in the Bulgarian state, the Party, by virtue of the fact that it led the working class, was therefore the most historically important body; on this basis, it was given the role to lead. Indeed its task was to "...theoretically sum up and give meaning to the historical experience of the past and of the present and also discover future trends..." (Zhivkov 1985b, p.188). That is, the Party was entrusted with the responsibility of interpreting and translating the historical significance of the past, present and future. The Party's leading role in the state was due to the fact that it was best placed to understand and define the meaningful role history played in the socialist state. This explains the broad and fundamental spectrum of the Party's activities in the state including: "...the scientific analysis of social processes, forecasting the nation's economic and cultural development, overseeing the improvement in the operation of state organs at work and theoretical elaboration of problems in socialist development (Zhivkov 1969, p.569).

The way in which Pashev participated in the 9th September celebration was exemplary of the formal position of the Party in history, of its leading association to history. Pashev's contribution to the event as the Party head, was to introduce the speakers, so 'guiding' the proceedings from beginning to end. Pashev provided the backbone to the celebration, directing the event and all the other state organisations involved in it – the Village Council, Fatherland Front and Agricultural Cooperative. Such a role which extended his leadership

across all organs of the state was rightfully his according to state policy (Zhivkov 1969, p.537; 1986c, p.306), and established his position in respect to history as one of its leading figures.

While in the 9th September speech the Party was, in accordance with Zhivkov's interpretation of Marxist-Leninist history, given a leading position in history, this position was emphasised not in terms of its alignment with the working class *per se*, as much as in terms of the Party's role in bringing about the socialist state in 1944; that is, through its activities during that period. We may recall Pashev's opening sentence: "It has been 43 years since the downfall of fascism and the success of the Communist Party over fascism." This gave prominence to the role of the Party in the overthrow of fascism. It was the Party which was presented by Novikov as the body responsible for the realisation of this historically significant date and in the continued development of history; "...the Bulgarian Communist Party immediately identified the goals necessary for agriculture and industry in order to help pull the country out of poverty and starvation. Now our country is developing under...the practical direction of our Party..." In the speech the Party was viewed as the leading force in the overthrow of the fascists, its role in history thus legitimated in terms of the activities resulting in freedom from fascist oppression. Yet this did not deprive the other organisations of their specifically assigned roles in the celebration.

The Village Council, as the government organisation, played a comparatively minor role in the 9th September celebration. The mayor's participation was limited to accepting the recently won 'Model Village' award on behalf of the village. This was enough, however, to clearly indicate the role of the government in the development of socialism. The fact that the award was handed over to the mayor rather than to the head of the Party or Fatherland Front, indicated the role of the Village Council as responsible for all general village matters. It was the organisation which represented in an administrative sense the whole village. Zhivkov wrote that one important function of village councils was "...the coordination and control over the work in the different fields of life" (1969, p.541). As the main local government organs, village councils were responsible for implementing state economic, social and cultural state policy within their territory (Zhivkov 1969, p.552), and for addressing problems connected with the communal, social and other needs of the population (Zhivkov 1969, p.553). Their role as coordinators of all activity within the village territory made it appropriate that the mayor, rather than any other leading village political figure, should collect the award for the 'Model Village'. This also defined the role of the government in the realisation of historical goals. Its task was one of coordination and administration of the Party's directives. The Village Council was active in the

development of historical goals only on the basis of its association with the Party as the central coordinator of Party policy. It had no active role in 1944 activities, at least not one given attention in the 9th September celebration. Yet during an informal conversation with Pashev, I was told that the village had never had a fascist mayor, not even in the pre-1944 period. Given the socialist leanings of the Village Council, we can expect that this institution had played some part in events leading to 1944. However, the contemporary mayor, who was too young to have had personal ties to this past, was forced to establish his political authority through his support for Pashev. This explains the relatively minor role of the mayor, as the head of the Village Council, in the 9th September celebration, his political authority being subsumed in that of the more powerful Party.

In Zhivkov's writings, the Fatherland Front held an important role in history. He declared: "...it is an objective rule, intrinsic to Marxist-Leninist theory, that the people are the makers of history...Socialism can develop only if it banks on the social and political creativity of the widest mass of the people" (Zhivkov 1984, p.157). Leninist principle dictated that there must be active participation of the population in governing of the state (Zhivkov 1969, p.536); that is, Marxist-Leninist theory required active involvement of the widest mass of people. As we see in Chapter 5, this was central to a socialist notion of democracy. The importance of the Fatherland Front in history was due to the fact that the organisation represented the largest body of working people, being an alliance between the working class and cooperative farmers, incorporating communists, agrarians and non-affiliated Bulgarians in the biggest organisation in the country, numbering over 4 million members; that is, approximately one-half of Bulgaria's population. It was viewed as the embodiment of alliance and friendship, of the unity of purpose of all Bulgarian workers – party and non-party – achieving a national unity which resulted in the mass participation of the working people in public affairs. According to Zhivkov, the Fatherland Front "...is a brilliant embodiment of the ideological, moral and political unity of the Bulgarian nation building a socialist society" (1974, p.140). Its contemporary role was to provide support to the government (Zhivkov 1969, p.584) and as a 'social mainstay' to the Party (Zhivkov 1974, p.144). Founded in 1942 by G. Dimitrov, it played a vital role in history; it was set up "...in order to rally and unite all the patriotic forces in Bulgaria and to lead them in the struggle against the monarcho-fascist dictatorship and Nazi occupation..." (Zhivkov 1974, p.140).

The fact that Novikov, the head of the Fatherland Front, gave the main speech of the evening, was a means by which the Fatherland Front's important position as the organisation representing the 'makers of history', was acknowledged. It was a recognition of the working people's fundamental role in the development of the socialist state, which

correlated with the role envisaged for it by Zhivkov, who stated that it should "...enlist working people in the discussion and solution of vital problems of our social development" (1986c, p.197). The way in which Novikov talked about history in a personalised rather than objective manner, supported the notion of history being realised by the people. Novikov, while too young to remember, let alone to have participated in World War II events, talked of 'our history', one owned by all the people. The cardinal function of Novikov in this celebration denoted the role of 'the people' in history, since the Fatherland Front was the organisation which represented all workers.

Despite the prominence of Novikov as the main speaker, the importance of the Fatherland Front was denied in the content of the speech, where history in Talpa was presented as not 'made by the people'. While he noted that the victory against the fascists took only a matter of hours because the people were largely against the fascist regime, the Fatherland Front in Talpa was established only after the advent of the socialist state; that is, only after the Party had successfully overcome fascist forces. Pashev, in his introductory remarks, spoke of the Party having "...established the Fatherland Front in Talpa..." Novikov continued this theme by recognising that the date, 1944, represented the year of the formation of the Fatherland Front, and again that the Party "...aimed at overthrowing fascism and establishing the Fatherland Front." In Novikov's speech, it is very much the Party, not the body he represented, which was given prominence; the Fatherland Front was portrayed as having existed only as a consequence of the Party's successful campaign against the fascists, therefore the Fatherland Front itself was not an organisation which contributed to the events leading to 1944. The Party overthrew the fascists and the Fatherland Front existed only because of this; it was not the people who were the 'makers of history', but the Party[11]. In this way the Fatherland Front's role in Talpa was subsumed in that of the Party, the former owed its very existence to the latter and was not active until after the advent of the socialist state in 1944. The Fatherland Front was, in respect to the Party, relatively powerless in political terms, because of its relevancy in Talpa only after 1944.

The TKZC was the central site of productive activity in the village and consequently had a part to play in the 9th September celebrations, where the development of historical goals via production was noted to be a concern. The TKZC was viewed as providing the basic form of village production; it was state owned and technologically based. Both these were

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11 This provides an interesting inflection of the history of the Fatherland Front presented by Zhivkov. Clearly, while established nationally in 1942, it was only after 1944 that the Fatherland Front became an active force in Talpa. This was used to the advantage of leading village Party figures, who thereby demonstrated their political dominance in village history.

vital factors in the progress of the socialist state's historical goals. The cooperative form of organisation amongst its workers established them, in state terms, as a class which, while not working class, was nevertheless a socialist class – the cooperative farmers, who represented a progressive form of agricultural organisation. "...We have established cooperation among our farmers and have built a highly developed, modern socialist agriculture" (Zhivkov 1974, p.143). The continued reform of agriculture towards greater technology was viewed as a means by which even greater unification could occur between the cooperative farmers and the working class. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the importance of machine operators in the village TKZC arose precisely from the nature of their work – which depended on technology and was thus representative of the reformation of agriculture. They were perceived to be the leaders in the development of village agriculture towards its socialist goals and inevitable unification with the working class. Zhivkov said as much when he distinguished the machine operators from other TKZC workers, by identifying them as the working class in agriculture (1974, p.143). At this juncture, it is not relevant to discuss in greater detail the association between the TKZC and the cooperative farmer class as distinct from the working class and town (industry/factory) workers. It is merely necessary to emphasise that the TKZC represented a relationship to production which, while socialist and increasingly working class in nature, nevertheless remained distinct from the working class. Furthermore, the cooperative class had little significance in history in comparison with the working class, which had a deterministic role. The class of cooperative farmers was, through the development and use of a technical form of agriculture, moving increasingly towards a form of production unified to working class interests. Indeed, it was for this reason that the TKZC workers most active in the development of historical goals and in decreasing the distance between the two classes through high productivity levels, who were rewarded in the 9th September celebrations with monetary prizes presented to them by the TKZC head.

Significantly, the TKZC had no connection to 1944 events; indeed it was not established until 1947 (Zhivkov 1969, p.355). Therefore there was no reference in the speech to the TKZC in the all-significant activities leading up to 1944. It was instead given only present and future relevancy; recall the comment made by Novikov who, having congratulated the 'leading workers', the present heroes of history, said that "...Your role is very important in the development of Bulgaria and our future progress". The TKZC had no links to the historically significant events of 1944; for, as an organisation, not only was it not founded until 1947, but it did not have direct links to working class interests which were historically most important. As an organisation which established relations to production which were socialist (and so non-antagonistic), distinct from the working class and not

involved in 1944 activities, the TKZC was the least powerful in political terms in respect to the other three institutions already discussed. The head of the TKZC, Gradenarov thus represented a relationship to history which was less politically significant than that of any of the previously mentioned leading political figures.

In the above discussion, I emphasise firstly that the 9th September celebration was integrally linked to village political figures (who controlled and participated in the event) and secondly that each figure representing an individual institution, had a different role to play in the proceedings, which paralleled the formal role attributed to them by state policy, modified under specifically Talpian circumstances. The political bodies – the Party, Village Council, Fatherland Front and TKZC – and the individuals who served in the respective organisations, represented distinctive relations to the particular past raised as history in the 9th September celebration. The institutions were political precisely because of their established relationship to this history, which served to orient and assign them a definite role in the contemporary development of historical goals. The four different institutions thus represented four differing relationships to history. The Party held the most politically powerful position in history through its leading role in 1944 activities. The Village Council had a subdued role, with political power only in terms of its connections to the Party, as the coordinator of Party policies and its responsibility for their implementation. The village Fatherland Front had no role in the morally and teleologically most valued historical events, its contribution to history being limited to mass involvement of the people in historical goals since 1944; it was therefore less politically significant than the above two organisations, but more so than the TKZC. The Agricultural Cooperative, which was founded several years after 1944, had no historical links to that period. It therefore had little political power when considered in relation to the other institutions. Politically active villagers were located in slightly differing relations to history, depending on the institution to which they belonged. Those differing relations were a formalised aspect of the socialist village political structure.

The potential to engage in political activity in the village was centred on links to history via membership in a particular political institution. The basis of political activity depended on villagers' participation in a political institution, which in turn represented an individual's specific relation to history. Or put otherwise, villagers' relationship to history was the basis of political activity. When individuals linked themselves to historical activities associated with the advent of the socialist state in 1944, they were acting politically. This relationship was expressed in terms of their position in the Party-administrative structure; every institution having a certain role in history, a designated function in contributing to

the realisation of historical goals, which depended upon different degrees of alignment with historical events considered the most morally and teleologically important.

We may now raise two points in respect to this. Firstly, in looking at political activity as associated with villagers' relationships to history in the context of a historical celebration, I have moved away from the strict association of politics with institutional activity. The more restrictive association of political activity with political institutions is henceforth termed 'institutionalised politics'. The most important feature of political activity was not its absolute and restricted ties to certain institutions recognised as political, but rather that it was a process emerging from villagers' differing relations to the 1944 historical past. When I speak of political activity I am referring to this process. (While investigating further the association between history and politics as a way of focussing on political activity, we are simultaneously attaining a greater insight into a facet of the character of history).

Secondly, if an individual villager's position in a political institution reflected her/his relation to history, we still need to examine how individuals manipulated their relation to history and thus their political career. Below, I consider the way individual political leaders established their relations in and to history, that is, how they legitimated their political activity in terms of history and, in so doing, were able to move up (or down) the political hierarchy. This is illuminated by focussing on events associated with the publication of a book which mentioned the historical activities of the leading Party figure in Talpa.

During my fieldwork, a book entitled "Reputations have Flown with Scorched Wings" (Hristov 1986), was being circulated amongst some villagers. I had brief access to this book when Boteva obtained the copy for a short period before passing it on to another interested villager. On one page, the author described some of the anti-fascist activities he had carried our during World War II in the villages neighbouring and including Talpa[12]. He wrote: "...With Hristo Kantev we met with the Party and Young Communist League leaders in Lesecheri, Talpa, Byala Cherkova and Vishovgrad. Everywhere the comrades accepted the Party line for the visionary uprising and worked towards the distribution of weapons, training, food...The population became determined not to surrender to officials of the fascist power. We experienced certain problems in Talpa with one of the communists – Tsonu Pashev – who had the authority, but was not agreeable to pass on to armed battle. On a number of occasions we contacted him, but he declined to be involved. He was

12 Hristov (1986, p.111). Translations from this book are my own.

afraid. The work in Talpa was carried out by the younger communists – Kotov, Dimov, Hristo Ivankov and his communist father, who was steeled in life's experiences" (Hristov 1986, p.111). (Both Dimov and Ivankov were currently employed in high level administrative positions in Sofia, according to Boteva).

Although the above was the only passage in the book which cited Pashev, he must have felt quite threatened by it, for he was said to have taken legal action against the author, in order to stop publication. The case was unsuccessful. Later, he is said to have bought out all the copies of the book in the nearby township of Nekilva, in order to stop others in the district having access to them. The single copy being circulated amongst the villagers in Talpa, indicated that he had had some measure of success.

Comments made behind Pashev's back by some village Communist Party members, ridiculing his 'brave' anti-fascist activities bore witness to the damage the book made to his political reputation. Indeed, an anonymous letter was apparently received by the Talpian Communist Party, sent to cause him further embarrassment in front of the entire village Party. The letter merely brought the book to the Party's attention and referred them to the relevant page.

As a way of re-establishing his lost respect, Pashev was in the process at the time of my fieldwork, of collecting material for a book to be written about the history of the Communist Party in Talpa. In it he intended to publicly validate his own position and activities in history as a brave and heroic anti-fascist fighter; that is, he intended to prove he was a good communist and partisan at the time of World War II. He said he had contacted 26 people with whom he was involved in anti-fascist activities before 1944, inviting them to send written responses about their experiences together, what had happened and how he had helped them. To date Pashev had received replies from one-half of them and read me one from a man who was currently a Bulgarian General in the army. The letter spoke of his association with Pashev during his time as a partisan and how in 1944 Pashev had assisted him at great personal risk. Once Pashev had collected all the information, he planned to commission a writer to document the material in the form of a book.

On other occasions during my fieldwork, Pashev showed these letters and spoke of his intended book to both Tzela and Boteva (and probably to others). In a chance meeting between a few villagers – including these two women, a village ex-mayor and another neighbour who all happened to be at Boteva's house one afternoon – the subject of Pashev's book came up. Tzela had just returned from having visited Pashev, who had

shown her the collected letters. Tzela said (to us) that the letters proved nothing since no one would say anything bad to Pashev, not in a letter to him. She said that when she read the letters, which were to be a primary source for the book, she noticed that they all highlighted Pashev's own activities. The letters mentioned him and Rakov, but failed to acknowledge the activities of Panev, an active fascist fighter, who was now dead. Tzela said she had asked Pashev why Panev wasn't included anywhere and that Pashev had answered that he'd never said Panev hadn't helped. "...But then," Tzela commented as an explanatory note, "...he's dead and so can not push his own interests...that's why they cannot get a history of the village published and haven't been able to for the last 20 years. It is because those left alive are all trying to rise above the others and become more important."

The action Pashev took to protect his activities in the past indicated the significance of the way one was located in history. It was essential to Pashev's political career that he try to halt publication of the work. Failing this, it was important that he should redress the reputational damage the book had caused him by documenting his own version of his role in history; a version which would establish his brave and active role as a fighter against fascism and therefore counter Hristov's interpretation which suggested that Pashev's role in history was not as heroic as everyone may have believed. Pashev intended to retaliate with evidence to falsify Hristov's interpretation, to re-assert his heroism, that is, re-establish a certain past as the valid history. The book challenged Pashev's legitimate version of history, a challenge which Pashev planned to foil with his own intended publication of 'the facts'. This represented a debate about which version was the factual, historical past. In questioning Pashev's role in history by presenting him as a 'coward' and a non-cooperative Party figure in the development of history, his legitimate position as head of the Party was also being threatened. Since Pashev's close association with history legitimated his political position in the village as leader of the Party, any questioning of his past historical activities and therefore his relationship to history was also a threat to his leading political position in the village.

Indeed, much of the political activity in the village was centred around the way individuals linked themselves to history through presenting their activities of the World War II period and through claims and counter-claims about peoples' involvement in this historical past. On rare occasions, such as with Pashev, this occurred through publications, but often in the village it took place in more casual ways. Everyday *Chitalishte* activities – meetings, gatherings – posed regular opportunities for political figures to recall and recount their participation in history. Any occasions, from the casual gathering of friends to more formal village meetings (such as annual reports by the mayor) gave opportunities for

Pashev and other villagers to relate personal experiences and recount their own brave and comradely deeds performed against the fascists. It allowed them to heighten or confirm the reputation and retell the great and glorious deeds of the Talpian Party and its members, as well as to emphasise that Talpa was a sanctuary to communists, including Zhivkov, during fascist times. *Chitalishte* functions offered opportunities for the names of those individuals involved in the activities to be vocalised and political careers to be enhanced. The regular historical celebrations in the *Chitalishte* provided the basis of village political interactions; as the participants located themselves in terms of the historical past, they reinforced if not enhanced their position in the political arena.

One such meeting in the *Chitalishte* gathered to hear an old partisan who was the guest speaker. He praised T. Pashev and a few others he identified by name, who were in the Talpian Party organisation at the time. He singled out Retko Rakov, who he said had shown him special kindness in taking him in and nursing him during sickness. "Do you remember Retko?" he asked, while recounting the story. Often the speaker would stop to confirm a detail with those involved in the activities, or even be corrected when he erred in apparently trivial details, by a listener who thus established her/his interest, knowledge and most likely involvement in the past. During question time at the end, the guest speaker was specifically asked to name those from Talpa who had helped him when he had first arrived on partisan business in the village. The meeting took on the atmosphere of a few old comrades reunited in order to re-live their memories, while the rest of the audience listened. In the quotation I have cited from the book criticising Pashev's alledgedly cowardly activities in the historical past, the names and places recounted in particular detail served a similar role – firstly to contribute to the historical validity of the account as a unique event which can be specifically verified through factual detail, and secondly to establish the legitimation of particular figures in history, so questioning the role of others who opposed this interpretation.

The fact that some political figures such as Pashev could link themselves intimately to history while others – for example all those too young to have participated in history – could not, indicated that history was a political resource. Historical celebrations allowed not only the villagers to re-live past events and know the past in a particular political way, but also permitted some to reveal their personal participation in the most morally and teleologically significant historical event. Although this history was celebrated publicly in the *Chitalishte* and therefore in a sense was available to all, it was not available to all in the same way; everyone could not establish equal relations to it. Only some could prove their active participation in history and gain public acceptance of their past as history, namely those involved in the advent of the socialist state in 1944. History was a political resource

because it was differentially accessible to villagers. By differential access I mean that some were able to prove their involvement in the morally and teleologically most important historical event and continuously displayed this involvement – for example Pashev – while others such as Gradenarov, had no personal ties to this past. Others again had ties but chose not to openly display their involvement – for example Veleva (Pashev's wife) who was reputedly as active in anti-fascist activities as her husband, but chose not to politicise her past. Because history was a political resource, villagers were able to carve their political niches in different ways, dependent on the nature of their relationship to history.

Effectively the arena of state politics in Talpa was the Communist Party. Party membership was the pre-condition to a villager's public career; it provided a legitimate indicator of an individual's commitment to state-determined historical goals. Membership allowed an individual to negotiate the nature of her/his relationship to history; as an active participant in the most significant historical event as in Pashev's case, or as having no personal connection to this period, as in the case of Gradenarov. Thus Party membership reflected an individual's committment to history and provided the preconditions for an individual to associate her/himself with the morally and teleologically significant historical past (but it did not guarantee an individual's political success). The mayor and Novikov (both Party members) who had no personal involvement in the events of 1944, created their political positions by support of figures such as Pashev through attendance at historical celebrations which recognised Pashev's participation in 1944 events. Others, such as Pashev's wife (also a Party member), who had an equally impressive historical past, chose not to politicise her own involvement in 1944 activities by publicly validating and advertising her active role in the historical past; and so was not a politically active figure. Again, other Party members who also had a historical past – Rakov, Mikanov, Matov, – were involved in the negotiation and battle for enhancing their political careers but, apart from Matov, head of the *Chitalishte*, they held no leading official post which legitimated their ties to the past. Their future political success depended on the way they publicly aligned themselves to history.

Since a person must be able to display and validate her/his past as historical fact, much of the politicking that occurred in Talpa was aimed at gaining public acceptance of a certain past as history. That is, political activity was about constituting a particular past as historically factual. I have already discussed above how in village meetings, for example during the talk given by a guest (partisan) speaker, villagers verbally associated themselves with history. This was the most commonly-pursued means by which an individual could construct her/his past as politically significant. However, a surer means of validation was

through the textualisation of the past. As noted in the previous section, historical celebrations always included textual material; either references to texts, or readings from texts. Political authority was often achieved through the process of legitimating a particular past as history as a result of recording it in manuscripts, monuments or photographs. Such documents were the validation of a particular past as history. Consequently the book critical of Pashev's past was a great threat; verbal accusations could always be disregarded as 'hearsay' and 'rumour', while printed material was 'evidence'. So while both verbal and written communications were used by individuals to establish their own role in history and construct their past as historical, written texts were associated with a greater degree of legitimacy and authority. The contention of history via documented means raised the debate to a level of authenticity not present in situations relying solely on verbal communication.

The different status accorded to written rather than verbal history was indicated by the final comment that Tzela made about why the village had no recorded official history. In Chapter 1, I noted that Naymov's work was not an official history. We may now understand that this occurred in part because the author had no political authority – he was not a Party member, let alone a political leader – and had contributed little to the socialist cause during World War II. He did not, therefore, have the authority to write an official history. On the other hand those with the authority to write such a history could not do so because their political activity was expressed in terms of disagreements over the true version of history. Boteva said that other less progressive villages like the neighbouring town of Tevelak had written their history; however, in Talpa "...everyone pulls in different directions". The statement reinforced the fact that political activity in Talpa was closely related to history.

That the village had no official history, indicates the extent of the political manoeuvring that occurred. Tzela's comment that an official history could not be written because "those left alive are all trying to rise above the others and become more important," is a direct reference to the political nature of history and the importance of its textualisation in an individual's pursuit of political ambitions. (I look at 'important' as a political term in the following section). The political activity of continually negotiating history was instrumental in the processes of Talpian village life. The fact that the village had no officially-approved history, indicated that history was a domain of dispute as some politically active villagers established their credibility in history and others lost it. Indeed, much of the politicking in Talpa appeared to be dependent on the un-refined nature of history, as villagers questioned individuals' roles in history, in the advent of socialism and overthrow of capitalism. While there was no officially recorded Talpian history publicly

accepted by the villagers, history would continue to be openly and continuously debated by various political leaders who vied for greater political powers through legitimating their own past activities as historically significant (as the official history). It was not that textualisation of an 'officially' recorded history would reduce the disputable nature of history (as we saw in the case of Pashev and the book affair, documented history maintained the level of debate). However, textualisation did add a greater degree of factuality to one interpretation above another. Textualisation did not reduce the contentious nature of history as much as elevate it to a different level of authority.

Both the instance of Pashev and the book, and the village's lack of an official history are indicative of the importance of the written text in Talpian political-historical activities. Political activity in both cases involved the manipulation of historical facts, the questioning through claims and counter-claims as to the validity of particular details of the past as historically factual. Significantly, it was the events associated with 1944 that were central to both of the identified political incidents. While all Communist Party members had an officially legitimate relation to history, not all relations were equally valued; those who could trace their relations to the foundations of the socialist state held a privileged position in respect to history. Thus while in the previous section I noted the importance of the events surrounding 1944 in historical celebrations, here we can recognise this as a facet of history's political nature. Political activity raised history or rather a particular period in the historical past as a contentious domain of socialist village life. Historical celebrations identified those events in the past which were historically the most important and which were potentially a source of political activity. The specific significance which 1944 attained in history and the prominence it was given in historical celebrations such as the 9th September, was an aspect of the political dimension of history. It provided the source which determined orientation of political activity in the village.

The participation and achievements of various individuals involved in anti-fascist activities in the World War II period was under continual debate, as politically active individuals vied for further political authority. It was through the manipulation of individuals' own links to the historical past that political careers were determined. The ability of individuals to locate themselves in relation to particular events associated with 1944 was a means by which they attained success in the political arena. Much political preoccupation in Talpa had to do with an individual's attempts, or lack of them, to display her/his self as a participant in state-approved history. Indeed, given the formalised construction of political institutions on the basis of their perceived role in history, any validation, legitimation or even enhancement of a political position in the village occurred through a villager addressing her/his relationship with history. To be able to align the self with history

during a celebration or event which commemorated events leading to the advent of the socialist state, was central to the political career of an ambitious villager and fundamental to what constituted political activity. This explains why, as on the occasion of the guest partisan speaker, it was so important for villagers to recount personal memories of historical events or seek the names of those individuals who had been involved. Movement between political institutions occurred as a result of individuals re-negotiating their relationship to history.

In turn, political activity determined when a particular interpretation of the past became historically significant and was publicly accepted as such. This process involved the continual negotiation of the historical past and included the questioning of the currently dominant interpretation of history. Pashev's leading position in the Party was based on his verified heroic participation in historical activities. A questioning of these activities was not only a threat to his political position, but also involved a questioning of the accepted historical facts. While state officials were legitimating their political activeness in World War II, the past was being validated and attributed historical significance. Political activity established history as an arena of debate in which history itself came under a continual process of re-finement. If history was the presentation of a factual past, then political activity was the gaining of public acceptance of a particular past, as history. (Historical events were occasions when the legitimate version of history was celebrated and therefore the particular roles of village political figures reasserted). History was a politicised construction of the past, in part because politics was about defining a specific construction of the past as history.

The fundamental aspect of political activity was not so much that it was about the past, but that it was moral and teleologically significant events from the past which held relevancy for socialist historical goals in the present and future. The contemporary relations villagers created for themselves in respect to specific events in the historical past, formed the basis of meaningful political activity. In turn it was the consequences of political activity that contributed to the selection of past 'facts' as history; the construction of the past as history was a political act. Thus political activity was the contemporary dimension of history, or more specifically it was the contemporary relationships between people emerging from their particular relation to the historical past.

The Moral and Teleological Dimension of Political-Historical Activities

I have already noted that a characteristic of history was its association with a sense of morality. Since an individual's political position was dependent upon the nature of her/his relationship to history, we would expect that those villagers who were politically-historically active would also be constituted in a specific moral way. In this final section the moral nature of political figures is discussed, a morality dependent on their particular relationships to history. Such a morality was indicated by Novikov in his speech at the 9th September celebrations, in describing those involved in fighting the fascists as "...heroes and an example to future generations of socialists". It quite plainly located those anti-fascist fighters who could show themselves to have participated in such activities, as exemplarily moral figures, their past acts having been immortalised and embedded in terms of national ideals for a communist future. It also implied that those political figures who did not have a close relation to history, who were not active in World War II events, would be less worthy of attaining a degree of morality as respected socialist beings.

I look at the moral dimension of political-historical leaders through a discussion of how Talpians themselves speak about their leaders. The terms '*istanski komunist*' = 'true communist', '*golemetz*' = 'great man', '*vajzhen chovek*' = 'important man' and '*nyama choveshtnost*' = 'lacking in humanity', were used by Talpians in reference to their political leaders both within and outside the village. The terms distinguished between those who held a variety of relations to history and therefore a variety of public offices. At another level, because the terms were employed only in reference to leading political figures, they were also used to distinguish between village political leaders and others. Ordinary Party members, for example, were not designated by such terms, which seemed to be reserved exclusively for the heads of political organisations. In short, they were the means by which leaders were morally located in a politicised historical context.

Pashev was the only villager (to my knowledge) called a '*vajzhen chovek*'; that is, an 'important man'. As an 'important man', Pashev had greater authority than any other politically active village figure. I have spoken above of the relationship of the Party to the development of historical goals; here it may be emphasised that as the leader of the Party, Pashev was also the moral exemplar of the entire village Party. All Party members were expected to be exemplary figures, disciplined, honest, responsible, community-minded, and to have socialist interests at heart; that is, they were progressive figures (indeed any new Party member was carefully scrutinised for these qualities before being accepted). Zhivkov declared "...leading posts cannot and should not be held by people who do not possess generally recognised political, professional and moral qualities" (1986c, p.192;

also see 1969, pp.575-6). However as a Party leader, Pashev was supposed to be matchless in these socialist virtues. He led the Party precisely because he had established his activities leading up to 1944 as being more morally and teleologically significant for the realisation of historical goals than that of any other village Party member. An aspect of his political position as Party leader, and a vital factor of his being an 'important man', was that he was also a moral leader. Pashev was the only political figure in Talpa who held sufficient respect that he could publicly preach moral guidance to the people and to enforce moral standards and rules of politeness. On rare occasions, other historical figures who held no political office (except Party membership) such as his wife, Rakov and a few others, would also publicly express their views on moral concerns, but always in support of those of Pashev. For example at the meeting presenting the Annual Report of the Village Council in March 1987, Pashev spoke against rumours which divided the villagers and in support of a greater communal spirit: "We should not waste our time with gossip; to help people, that is the socialist ideal". At the same meeting he criticised the rude and 'backward' behaviour of those villagers who answered their telephones with 'Who is it?' or an even more slang version of just 'Who?'. Instead, Pashev instructed, it was correct to answer the phone by saying "Who is it please?'. In the same vein, he advised people that when they have issues to raise with him or others or wish to ask questions, to do so by all means, but not to shout them across the plaza in a rude way – instead, to come and ask them in a civil manner.

That Pashev was the only political figure in the village in a position to lecture on morality, revealed the considerable amount of moral, political and historical respect he held in the village as an 'important man'. However on occasions he was witnessed to have acted in a way contradictory to that expected of an 'exemplary' moral leader. As Tzela had revealed, the self interest that Pashev had shown in the collection of material for his book on the history of the village Communist Party – through his ignoring the activities of Panev – was not that expected of a true communist. Further, when Tzela commented that the village had no official history because Pashev and others were all trying to rise above each other and become more 'important', she was identifying the tenuous position of Pashev as an 'important man'. Clearly there were other politically-ambitious villagers attempting to gain the 'importance' Pashev currently held. Indeed, the disappointment in Pashev's leadership was explicitly vocalised later in the conversation between Boteva, Tzela, the ex-mayor and a neighbour when they noted the shameful way Pashev had treated his brother, Andre Pashev who was not accommodated by Pashev, but forced to board elsewhere when he returned to Talpa to retire. Tzela said that in this respect Pashev and his wife acted badly towards A. Pashev and that it "...just showed that T. Pashev was not a true communist,

even though years ago I remember him making a speech that everyone should give as much as possible and that money was not important". She added that it was shameful that they could not find him a room in their own house. The lack of generosity and hospitality Pashev showed towards his brother and noted by a number of villagers, was ultimately an inditement on him and on his reputation as a political figure. It explained to Talpians why Pashev could not be a 'true communist'.

On rare occasions, a political figure was referred to as an '*istanski komunist*', that is, a 'true communist'. The only villager whom I heard called this was Arian Pashev, uncle to both Tsonu and Andre Pashev. Because Arian Pashev died in early 1987 at the age of 92 and had spent the winter with his family in Sofia, I did not have the opportunity of meeting him. However he was well known throughout the village; he had been an active political figure in the anti-fascist uprisings of both the 1920's and 1940's, unlike T. Pashev and most other contemporary figures whose historically significant activities began in the World War II period. His ties to history were thus considerably more politically significant than those of most other Party members, including the current head, his nephew T. Pashev. After 1944, Arian Pashev became the village mayor for a short period before being made a federal minister in Sofia. Apart from his political posts, he was a painter of some distinction. Of him, Boteva said that he was one of the "...few people you can call a true communist; all, including myself, are Party members but are not real communists".

Because political success was determined by an individual's relation to history, to have a formal education was only of secondary importance in the making of a political figure. In other words, to be educated in the sense of being a good communist was different from the attainment of a formal school education. This distinction was made obvious in Arian Pashev's case. His formal education stopped when he was in 4th grade, yet he was known by the villagers as a 'true communist', an achievement which required a deep commitment to the historical past and to his participation in the development of history through revealing himself as having played an important role in the historically significant period leading to the advent of the socialist state. The close, indeed exemplary, relation held by a 'true communist' such as Arian Pashev to history, was reflected in the nature of his political position. That is, a 'true communist' held, as did Arian Pashev, a high level position in the Party-administrative hierarchy, a position not confined to the village level, but rather one which gave him authority over a district and allowed him to be a representative of the district at the federal level.

The political term 'true communist' denoted an individual who was a morally exemplary political figure. As a 'true communist', Arian Pashev was seen as truly human: he was

compassionate, considerate to other people, honest, responsible and had demonstrated that he held the ideals of communism above individual and monetary concerns. A 'true communist' was a person who followed his socialist ideals, not wealth or riches. His past relation to history was portrayed as exemplary in terms of the nation's ideals for its future. All Party members were expected to be such exemplary figures; indeed admittance into the Party was subject to selection dependent on whether the individual could display such moral requirements (via references from neighbours, employers etc.). However, while all Party members verbally supported such ideals, few in practice reached such a high level of morality in their own lives, as noted in the above comment made by Boteva.

Indeed most Party figures, even those at the highest levels of Party and administration, were rarely called 'true communists'. Generally, a high level figure was known as a '*golyam chovek*' or '*golemetz*', that is 'great man', a term which located the individual somewhere between an 'important man' and 'true communist'. This intermediate position defined a relation to history which was less politically significant than that of a 'true communist' and yet more so than that of an 'important man'. 'Great man' was a political term reserved for those well above Pashev in stature, both in political position and moral terms. Federal government ministers were 'great men'; they were outstanding political-historical figures, yet not equal to 'true communists'. Significantly, Zhivkov and his fellow ministers were defined to be 'great men'. For example, at a *Chitalishte* Council meeting gathered to discuss invitations to the 100 year *Chitalishte* celebrations and the possible attendance of Zhivkov, Rakov made a comment that "...we don't know if Zhivkov will come, but we could invite another '*golemetz*', like the Minister for Culture". It was a term which in respect to morality and political authority, denoted powers far more pervading and extensive than Pashev's. Thus the difference between a 'great' and 'important man' was a matter of degree. 'Great men' were figures with political authority which extended to the national level; this paralleled the extent of their moral leadership. 'Important men' such as Pashev, while having some influence outside the village, were largely confined in their political and moral leadership to within the village. That the villagers called Pashev an 'important man', was a recognition of his relatively limited powers. It located him within the wider political context – an acknowledgement that there were others who had greater political powers.

The situation of Gradenarov differed from that of the previous leaders already mentioned. Gradenarov was a historical figure because he was a Party member and head of the TKZC. However, the former merely gave him authority to negotiate his relationship to history; the latter legitimated the nature of this as relatively distant. That is, as noted in the previous section, his position as head of the TKZC defined his location as the least powerful in

political terms. For the TKZC had a less significant role in history by virtue of the class which it represented (the cooperative farmers who, while sharing the goals of the working class, were themselves considered not as progressive) and also because the organisation did not have an active role in 1944 events. The head of the TKZC was thus in a position relatively less politically powerful than the heads of other Party-administrative organisations. Gradenarov contributed to this distant relationship by showing little interest in the historical past, through his lack of participation in historical celebrations, except for those where protocol demanded his presence (such as the 9th September commemoration). This revealed that Gradenarov's legitimate relation to history was not in terms of his active participation in the historical past. (In Chapter 6, I argue that his relation existed as an orientation to the historical present rather than to the past). The fact that he was too young to have personally participated in World War II events, was not in itself any justification for so basing his political position. Like the mayor and Novikov, Gradenarov could have offered his verbal and practical support for a historical figure such as Pashev, through attendance at historical meetings. In return for such support, both Ivanov and Novikov earned some favour from Pashev in their own political careers. However in not attending most historical celebrations, (such as the lecture presented by the partisan guest speaker), Gradenarov displayed no interest in Pashev's role in the historical past. He therefore alienated himself from any degree of closeness to the historical past, even through the indirect means of aligning himself with someone who had been involved in 1944 activities – which was the only way available for achieving a closer relation to history for those with no personal involvement in the advent of the socialist state.

Since events relating to 1944 were the important theme of historical celebrations and since they were central to an individual's establishment of political authority, Gradenarov's non-involvement or participation in these celebrations defined the specific nature of his position – as an immoral political figure. Having an active role in particular historical events was the morally positive state; non-participation in such a historical past was therefore defined in terms of negative morality. I have heard Pashev and others say of him "*Toi ne e chovek*" and "*Toi nyama choveshtnost*" – that is, "he is not human" and "he does not have any humanity" respectively. In being described in such a way as having 'no humanity', Gradenarov was denoted in morally negative terms. (This differed from the situation of most Party members, government or mass organisation participants, who were not distinguished by any political term. Such figures, unlike Gradenarov, were morally 'neutral'; they did not have enough political authority to warrant identification in political terms, the absence of which signified their lack of political importance). 'No humanity', was a political term which denoted Gradenarov's lack of participation or interest in the

most morally and teleologically significant period in history. As a political leader with 'no humanity', Gradenarov was a figure who seemed to be despised by a large proportion of the villagers for his immoral activities, his favouritism of some workers, corrupt financial dealings and rumoured extra-marital affairs. Boteva had felt particular animosity towards him ever since her husband, who had been a TKZC worker, died due to a stress-related illness soon after he had been sacked by Gradenarov for apparently not following the correct procedure in his work. I was told by Boteva and other ex-TKZC workers that her husband had refused to sign papers saying that TKZC funding had been used in an appropriate manner (actually it had been illegally used by Gradenarov and others). In the following years, Boteva had attempted in many ways to have the affair investigated by an independent organisation which she hoped would clear her husband's name (and remove Gradenarov from office). Many supported Boteva in this matter, including Pashev, who had, at one Party meeting, called Gradenarov the 'moral murderer' of Boteva's husband. On another occasion he apparently told Boteva that Gradenarov may have had a tertiary education but had never learned how to be a human being. Humanness was clearly not dependent upon level of education but rather on level of morality, which was linked to the political dimension of history. Unlike other political figures such as Pashev, Gradenarov was deemed to be a morally negative figure, a 'murderer' in terms of the socialist moral order. He was therefore viewed in an opposite way to those who held leading political positions and were, relatively, morally exemplary figures.

Since morality was a value statement made about an individual's relationship to history, it had consequences for her/his success in political activities. The morally negative element of Gradenarov's leadership had a significantly constraining, indeed limiting effect on his political career. This became clear in the autumn of 1987, when the customary shortage of seasonal workers – grape pickers – and the need to pick the grapes before the weather turned cold, required the help of voluntary village labourers. Because of his unpopularity with a large section of the village, Gradenarov was forced to appeal to the central village branch of the Communist Party and to Pashev as its head, to find volunteers. Villagers had been unwilling to help when Gradenarov had asked for volunteers because they said that in the recent dealing out of animal fodder, Gradenarov had given only to 'his people' rather than fairly amongst the villagers – so let 'his people' (those whom he had favoured in the allocation of animal fodder) go and pick for him. Accusations of extending privileges to some workers above others were examples of more general problems whereby agricultural workers were frequently factionalised between those in and out of favour with Gradenarov. This not only contributed to his reputation as having 'no humanity' because of his self interested activities, but also prevented the TKZC working efficiently as a 'cooperative'. In

this particular instance, it was only by turning to Pashev, who as an 'important man' had the moral respect of many villagers, that enough were persuaded to volunteer, and the wastage of hundreds of tonnes of grapes was avoided.

In being denoted as 'true communist', 'important man', or otherwise, political leaders were explicitly located within historical terms of morality. The political hierarchy was related not only in respect to an individual's role in realising the socialist state during the World War II period, but was also associated with a concept of morality; the closer the villagers' relation to history, the higher was their political position in the administrative-Party structure and the correspondingly greater degree of their moral authority. Thus, as an 'important man', Pashev's relation to history was designated as relatively exemplary, hence his political position as the leader of the village Communist Party and his high level of moral authority in the village. Gradenarov, whose political position was determined in terms of a much more distant relation to history (because of his disinterest in the historical past) was judged correspondingly as a morally negative leader.

When we consider the four political terms discussed above in relation to each other, they appear as a scale with 'true communist' at one end and 'no humanity' at the other. The former represented the idealised form, the teleological goal, towards which all political figures and society should be moving. From the rarity with which this term was applied, villagers clearly did not believe many such progressive figures existed. While a 'true communist' was overwhelmingly one of moral upstanding and humanness, 'great man' and 'important man' implied some tainting of this virtuous position. These latter, to differing degrees, reflected the extent of the more common political leaders' relations to history. Gradenarov represented the other extreme, that from which all should be evolving. The distinction between the two poles was between two differing relations to history; between Pashev's concern to show intimate links to the historical past and Gradenarov's disinterest in such historical events . Gradenarov accepted historical goals and was involved in their realisation, but had no personal or intimate relation to the morally and teleologically significant historical past. The participation of Pashev in historical celebrations and the absence of Gradenarov from all such events (the guest speaker, the book affair) determined the two men's differing relations to history; that is, between one who played an important role in the past (Pashev) and another (Gradenarov), whose political position was not legitimated in terms of the historical past, having made no personal contribution to the advent of the socialist state. This difference in relations was expressed in their contrasting political and moral locations as 'important man' and 'no humanity'. These terms, which gained significance only in respect to the historical past, did more than identify individuals' roles in a historical context and in the political structure of the state Party-administrative

hierarchy; they also represented the moral and teleological dimension embedded in any political-historical activities. Politics had a moral character which was historically based.

Ultimately, the significance of the political terms was defined when considered within the context of a Bulgarian Marxist-Leninist history. The terms were representations of certain 'moments' or stages of a Marxist-Leninist history. Thus at one extreme was the 'true communist', who embodied all the qualities and characteristics that one day would be evident throughout humanity in a communist society. At the other extreme was someone who lacked humanity. Explicitly linked to non-socialist values, this represented an undesirable state in a developing socialist society. An individual who had 'no humanity', embodied everything the socialist spirit strove to overcome in its attempt to achieve the communist ideal. 'No humanity' was thus equated not with the contemporary socialist society in which Gradenarov functioned, but to a more backward stage of history. Indeed it was explicitly termed as such by Pashev when a number of villagers met informally in the *Chitalishte* to report their results after the first day of volunteer help sent to the TKZC to pick grapes. Pashev said to them before Gradenarov had arrived, that "...the TKZC is like the times of feudalism, no one could get in or influence it, it is closed off from us". He referred to the fact that Gradenarov's contribution to history was restricted to the confines of the TKZC, rather than publicly in the central Talpian arena through historical celebrations in the *Chitalishte*. The comment associated Gradenarov with a backward stage of history, that from which socialism had developed. The term, 'true communist', thus represented the historical stage of communism; while 'no humanity' depicted the alienated nature from which humanity would eventually be removed. The other two terms, 'important man' and 'great man', characterised the stage of development somewhere between the two extremes. Both had elements of 'true communist' and 'no humanity' – they were embodiments of an exemplary and yet tainted existence and perhaps typified the socialist stage of development in which contemporary Bulgaria currently functioned.

The leading figures of the political institutions were thus living 'models' of socialist history; a few exemplifying 'true communists' in all their humanity and at the opposite end, those alienated from humanity, the condition from which all communists must evolve. Between the two extremes was the struggle between the two forces, as socialists strove towards their goal. As a 'true communist' provided a living model of the individual in a future communist society, so 'no-humanity' provided an exemplar of the past and that from which communism must evolve. The political terms defined political leaders' moral character on a temporal scale which was historical in nature; progressing from an immoral fascist and feudal past, through a socialist present and moving to a morally exemplary communist future.

This also established a socialist conception of 'humanness' which was delineated through activities which where simultaneously historical, political and moral. A socialist understanding of 'humanness' was constituted in terms of an individual's relation to history and the extent to which she/he was politically active in the realisation of the goal of communism. The political terms used by Talpians to locate their political leaders within a historical, political and moral framework provided the basis from which a specifically socialist notion of humanity was defined. The political terms discussed in this section clearly defined exemplary and immoral notions of 'humanness'; those individuals most active in the historical past were essentially more human than those, like Gradenarov, who were not involved in the politically significant historical past and as such were defined as lacking in humanity[13]. In short, 'humanness' was bound up with the historical dimension of socialist life, a realm which was simultaneously political and moral in nature.

Conclusion

History as a construction of the past was a specific way to understand events in the past, present and future. Historical celebrations ordered past events in a chronological arrangement, where each occurrence was seen as a unique element in a uni-directional process which was evolutionary in nature. The teleological character of such a constructed past meant that the past was defined in terms of the communist future which would be the inevitable outcome of such a history. The central figures in any historical celebration were state officials who organised and presented the events, most often in the *Chitalishte*, although on occasions in other public village sites. The highly structured nature of these events, which held national significance, depended largely on textualised materials; that is, on a historical past which was known and communicated to others in a variety of largely documented forms – books, photos, and the reading of speeches using written references. At more informal events at which history was made an issue, the establishing of factual historical details also occurred through the verbal confirmation between those who shared the same historical experiences.

Following the characterisation of history, central attention was given to political activity which provided an important dimension of history. The different institutions in which political figures served – the Party, government, mass organisations, TKZC – each of

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13 This implied that a socialist delineation of humanity can also be understood in terms of, and was bound up with, class relations; the historically, morally and politically leading working class providing the foundation and potential for any true conception of 'humanness'.

which had a specifically defined role to play in the development of the socialist state, determined the political involements of villagers. The particular institution in which a villager served, implied a certain relationship that that individual had to history; it located her/him in a specific way to the political state structure. Village political careers involved the movement of individuals within and between these institutions. The current success and the extent of any villager's political authority was in part indicated by the villager's position in any particular institution. However, only through the re-negotiation of their relationship to history could individuals elevate or change their position in the political hierarchy.

By establishing their relationship to events in the past which were historically the most important, villagers constituted themselves as political beings; the act of setting up their relation to history was a political act. Political activity was thus defined in terms of the contemporary relations emerging from villagers' relations to history. In the first instance, such a relation could be established only through Party membership. Once membership was attained, an individual was free to begin to negotiate the nature of her/his individual relationship to history. Of course the historical context was broadly restricted in terms of Marxist-Leninist principles as interpreted by Zhivkov (and the Communist Party) and enforced in state policy. However, there was room for negotiation of the historical facts within these broadly defined terms. (Political activity was not about the re-definition of history, merely its refinement). It allowed individuals to establish their own past as being historically significant through the negotiation of a certain past as history, by way of verbal, written or other means. Such an association was in part constructed by involvement in the political institution in which they served and in part through individual efforts to align (or not to align) themselves with the historical past. This not only formed the focal point of village political activity, but also defined history as a political resource – for since villagers' relationships to history and therefore their differing political positions varied depending on their closeness to the historical past, not everyone could engage in such political activity and those that did, did not do so in an equal way.

There was a fundamental inter-relatedness between politics and history as mutually dependent entities. The interdependency was one between a history which held political significance and a politics which determined history. Indeed, at an ethnographic level there was no distinction between historical and political activities. Political activity was the means by which a certain past was established as historically significant. This meant that political activity was about the continual re-interpretation of history (historical 'facts' were contended) and as such it rendered the historical past as a contentious realm of socialist village life. In turn, historical celebrations, formal and informal, were the focal

point of village political activity; it was on these occasions that individuals' political authority was asserted and political struggles between ambitious figures played out as each tried to validate her/his own past activities as historically significant.

All Party members had, by definition, an established relation to history. Some, such as Pashev, were concerned with expanding their own connections to morally and teleologically significant past events as historically valid and therefore were intent on increasing their political powers. Others, exemplified by Gradenarov, who framed their relation to history in terms of non-engagement in the historical past, presented themselves as disinterested in political activities. The former were morally positive, the latter were viewed by villagers as morally negative. While all these figures had an established relation to history, not all were defined as acceptable in terms of morality. The terms 'true communists', 'great' or 'important men' or 'no humanity', constituted a moral judgement of the state officials; it was an evaluation of the nature of their relation to history and their location in terms of a politicised-historical context. In this sense, the terms ultimately defined a leader's level of humanness in respect to her/his relationship to history; the greater the individual's role in specific historical events, the greater the humanness, and therefore the higher the position within the political hierarchy. This defined the moral dimension of village political-historical activities and denoted a socialist understanding of humanness founded on a Marxist-Leninist history.

That history was a particular understanding of the past, becomes more obvious when an alternate interpretation is offered. Such an alternate view of the past was indicated in a conversation I had with a villager who was in charge of accepting and paying villagers for the eggs they had to sell, eggs which were then collected by the Cooperative. While handing my eggs to the old woman, I happened to mention that I was to visit Georgi Naymov that afternoon. The woman asked me what I do there; I replied that he tells me about the history of Talpa. In an unexpected outburst, she bitterly retorted "Ask him to tell you the way he let them kill my brother in 1944. He is an egoist". The awkward atmosphere which followed the obviously inappropriate comment made by the woman in front of five other villagers, put an abrupt end to the conversation.

While I was unable to ascertain the details, the woman's statement clearly indicated that not everyone had accepted whole-heartedly the state-approved history. In calling Naymov an 'egoist', she identified his activities as being self indulgent – the term normally referred to an individual who gave priority to her/his own selfish concerns above those of socialist society. In this case the significance was reversed; 'egoist' was now equated with a figure who supported socialist history, not someone who opposed it. By espousing an

interpretation of the past which sympathised with and supported her fascist brother while criticising Naymov, the woman was indicating that there was an alternative understanding of the past. That which was historically correct was presented by her in a negative way. This differing way of knowing the past, provides the topic for the following chapter where I focus on an alternate construction of the past – tradition.

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Chapter 3 Tradition

History was not the sole means by which the past was known and social time established in Talpa. Traditional celebrations and practices provided an alternative way of constructing the past, one quite distinct from history. This chapter explores tradition as a particular ethnographically constituted notion of time, by focussing on the characteristics of tradition and the nature of its relationship to a historical construction of the past.

The exploration begins by examining the character of traditions, a term which denotes my conceptual representation developed from Talpian understandings about the customs they called traditional. A discussion of customs involved in funerals and the celebration of *Zarezan* are two practices considered in order to draw out an understanding of the traditional past. At the heart of both activities was their religious significance, they were thus deemed to be about processes beyond the control of the state and associated with the realm of supernatural forces. An aspect of traditions' religious source was their definition in a structured manner as cyclic, unchanging, and having an indeterminate past. Further, traditions were celebrated in private areas outside the state domain (in households or public sites with no historical significance) and were generally not attended by state officials and Party members who distanced themselves from such practices. The clear distinction made between a state-determined history and traditions was an important facet of the latter's character and established its relation to the former as a-historical in nature.

Having isolated the qualities from celebrations Talpians termed traditional, the second section considers the conceptual opposition between history and tradition. A funeral of a Turkish villager and another of a Sofian communist, which displayed support for ethnic and religious differentiation through the practice of traditions, are instances used to discuss the way traditions demonstrated an opposition to state historical goals. I suggest that a traditionally significant past formed a specific notion of humanity which delineated humanness in terms of religious, ethnic and territorial factors; it established human difference in terms of these three realms. We may understand the oppositional significance of this in respect to history when we recall that a historical definition of humanness was denoted in respect to villagers' political and moral activities, that is, in terms of their contribution to the realisation of communist society. Thus a historical and traditional construction of the past defined two contrasting means of conceptualising

humanity, which formed the basis of a traditional opposition to history and identified tradition as a potential source of temporal resistance to the state-determined historical past.

The Character of Traditions

To discuss the nature of traditions, as already foreshadowed, central attention is given to two practices: special acts associated with funerals and *Zarezan*, a festival celebrating viticultural production. Both these occasions provided situations for the observance of traditional practices, which Talpians themselves identified as *traditzia*.

I begin with the customs involved in the burial of a villager. Funerals incorporated observances which were influenced by the state and others in which the state played no role. Traditional acts associated with a funeral were confined to the latter, that is to the activities in which state officials had no involvement. (State influence on the proceedings is central to the discussion on folklore, which I take up in Chapter 4). Because of the demography of Talpa – with two-thirds of the villagers being pensioners – I witnessed a number of funerals; and describe one of those attended, that of *Baba* Milka[1].

Baba Milka died at home after suffering from leukemia and was confirmed dead by a doctor from Nekilva who was called to her home. She lived across the road from *Baba* Grigora, the mother of Boteva, and next door to *Baba* Teta, both of whom took over responsibility for the organisation and arrangement of the funeral, (since *Baba* Milka's family did not live in Talpa). This included preparation of the body for burial, organising the digging of the grave and the cooking of meals for the large number of guests. On the day of the death, both women prepared the body – washing the deceased with wine, then dressing her – and placed her in the state-provided coffin which they lined with a rug, blanket and sheet. (In cities and sometimes when the death of villagers occurred outside Talpa, the preparation of the body was performed by others who were paid to do so, but in the village it was generally a task performed by friends or family). Later that night the women began the cooking. With help from neighbours, a sheep was slaughtered and cooked into lamb stew. (If the deceased owned no sheep, the family would buy the number required from the TKZC).

Burial usually occurred within 24 hours of death. The next morning *Baba* Grigora served breakfast to the four neighbours who had volunteered to dig the grave, before they left for

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1 '*Baba*' was a term of respect used towards all elderly women, '*Dyado*' towards all elderly men.

the village cemetery. By mid-morning a number of friends and family of the deceased from outside the village and from within it, gathered at her home to pay their last respects. The deceased was laid out in the coffin in the main downstairs living room, facing east. The visitors placed flowers in the coffin, some lighted candles and placed them either in the hands of the deceased or on the table beside the coffin. The older visitors crossed themselves when entering the room and some placed small pieces of food – chocolate, biscuits and apples – in the coffin at the feet of *Baba* Milka. Those who stayed inside with the body, spoke about their fond memories of the deceased. One woman who lived in the same street and who had recently settled in Talpa from southern Bulgaria, commented that in the south they did not wash the body in red wine and that it made a noticeable difference; the body did not go off colour so much and made the deceased look as if she was asleep. The grand-daughters of the deceased, who had arrived that morning from a near-by town, handed out scarfs to the women and handkerchiefs to the men in memory of their grandmother. Some of the visitors moved outside where tables had been laid. *Baba* Grigora and *Baba* Teta served those seated at the tables with lamb stew, bread, red wine and a sweet dish made from wheat and walnuts (which was always provided on such occasions).

A little before 2.00 pm the deceased was placed on the special TKZC trailer pulled by a tractor, to begin the journey to the plaza. The procession to the plaza comprised, firstly, someone carrying the standard state-supplied pyramidal, red painted plaque on which was written the name of the deceased, with date of birth and death. This usually remained at the grave site until a permanent headstone had been provided. Following were the wreath carriers, then the deceased in the trailer. Riding with the coffin were those most closely related to *Baba* Milka and those too old to walk the distance. Behind the trailer were the mourners (some in cars, but most on foot) and at the tail end of the procession, the four-piece village band which played sorrowful music. The church bell was rung continuously until the procession reached the plaza.

At the plaza, the procession halted outside the *Chitalishte* in front of the war memorial. The band and church bell also stopped as the village official, in this case the mayor's secretary – but on other occasions the *Chitalishte* head, or one of the senior school teachers – read an eulogy of the deceased, which was essentially a biography. (It was this particular aspect of the funeral which was explicitly the state's input to the ceremony; further discussion is reserved for the following chapter). With the end of the 10 minute speech and the re-commencement of the band music and the ringing of the church bell, the procession continued to the cemetery, where the coffin was set down next to the grave. Those who wished, usually the people closest to the deceased, said their final goodbyes to

the *Baba* by approaching the coffin and touching or kissing the deceased's forehead. One minute's silence was observed. If the person was an outstanding figure, for example a political leader or someone who had died very young, a second, shorter eulogy was read by another official; in this instance however the occasion passed without a second reading. The sheet, blanket and rug lining the coffin were wrapped around the deceased, enclosing the body with all the flowers and other goods inside it, the lid placed in position and the coffin lowered into the grave. The grave had been dug wider than the area taken up by the coffin and bricks had been placed around the coffin's perimeter. They served to support the cement planks which were placed across the coffin to protect it from the soil. A plastic sheet was laid over the cement planks and then in accordance with custom, handfuls of soil were thrown in by individuals before the grave-diggers filled in the grave. The people dispersed; most went to the village tavern to eat lunch, again lamb stew, red wine and a sweet wheat dish, prepared by friends and family of the deceased.

The first and perhaps most important point to note about some of the practices in the funeral which may be identified as traditional, was their association with religion. There were two such acts – crossing themselves when entering the room in which the deceased lay; and the placing of the body facing east, both in the home and in the cemetery – which were explicitly recognised by most of the villagers with whom I spoke, as having religious associations. Although *Baba* Grigora was not one of the small number of mostly elderly villagers who crossed themselves when entering the room where the deceased lay, it was recognised by her as a religious act. The direction in which the deceased were always laid to rest, had a similar significance. When I asked Boteva why all graves faced east, she said it was because "we are Eastern Orthodox Christians. But do not bother asking me anything more because I know nothing about the religion." She therefore acknowledged the Christian origin of this practice but simultaneously refused to discuss it further. In this respect she reacted similarly to other Communist Party members who openly distanced themselves from religion. (I say more about the rejection of traditions by state officials in the following section). According to a friend in Sofia, the significance of burial facing east was that when Christ was born, the three kings all followed the star in the east which led them to Christ[2]. Burial facing in this direction was thus appropriate for all Christians. (It also explained why all altars in Bulgarian churches were on the eastern side). The importance was not so much in whether this explanation was correct or not, but simply that villagers, among others, recognised burial and crossing themselves as practices which had

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2 This friend was knowledgeable on religious matters and also, non-coincidently, unsupportive of the socialist government.

religious associations. Association with Eastern Orthodox Christianity was thus one aspect of that which defined such customs as tradition.

Other rites were not explicitly verbalised by Talpians as having religious roots, although clearly the association existed. This included a variety of acts: the ringing of the church bell, the lighting of candles, the serving of wine and *pita* bread, were all part of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox church ceremonies which I witnessed on the few occasions I observed church services in Nekilva and Sofia. Burning candles (the selling of which was one source of income for the churches) were a usual part of Bulgarian Orthodox church rites, and represented protection of the spirit and eternal life[3]. It was customary for those entering the churches to light candles and place them on either the high or low trays; the low tray, I was told by a Sofian friend, was for the dead, the high tray for the living. The candles lighted in the Talpian household on the occasion of someone's death were these same candles sold by the church and used in a similar way. *Baba* Teta said they were lit 'for the dead'. We may therefore infer a close association between the church activity of lighting candles and the same act by Talpians in their homes. The red wine and *pita* bread were also used in church ceremonies; the Easter ceremony I witnessed in Nekilva ended with the priest feeding bread dipped in red wine to everyone present. As a Christian symbol of Christ's blood and flesh and associated with his resurrection, the wine and *pita* bread used in Talpian funerals may well also have gained importance as symbols of afterlife. In celebrations held at home to mark the anniversary of the death of a family member (at regular intervals after death) a meal consisting again of the obligatory foods – red wine, *pita* bread and a sweet wheat dish – was served. This was believed to nourish the spirit of the departed.

By lighting candles, ringing the Church bell and serving particular foods, Talpians may not have consciously been imitating church practices in home funeral rites, but on the occasion of a funeral, these practises were reminiscent – indeed a duplication – of some aspects of the Bulgarian Orthodox church ceremonies. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that their original significance can be associated with religious rites which have been re-located from the site of the church to the privacy of individual homes. However, Talpians did not explain their acts in such terms; when asked why they performed these rituals, Talpians responded '*tay e traditziata*', that is "its the tradition." Whether or not they explicitly reflected upon the knowledge that such customs were essentially of religious origin, was not as important as recognising that the observances (including those explicitly acknowledged to be associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church), were spoken about as

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3 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985) *Etnografia Na Bulgaria*, Vol.III p.194

traditional. When Talpians identified any particular custom as traditional, they were referring to acts which were religious in nature. In this way, practices which were not encouraged by the state and indeed which opposed a state historical construction of the past (an issue addressed more fully in the following section), were talked about in a manner which offered no direct or obvious linkage between the villagers' customs and the church. Despite the implicit nature of the association between traditions and religion, the former were inseparably linked to the latter; indeed the religious nature of traditions provided a fundamental facet of their character.

Other burial customs were not directly associated with Eastern Orthodox religion. Again explained as traditional, these appeared to have their roots in practices which pre-dated Bulgarian Christianity. The placing of food and other possessions in the coffin was one such act. In *Baba* Milka's case, apples, biscuits and chocolates were placed at her feet. At other funerals, I observed the inclusion of medicine bottles, clothes and other small personal possessions. In one instance involving a particularly tragic death in a car accident of a 17 year old villager, a great variety of items was buried with him; apart from fruit, sweets, and a new pair of socks placed at his feet, the mother dropped into the grave a plastic bag containing the bloodied clothes he had been wearing at the time of the accident and in a separate bag his clean clothes, handkerchiefs and comb. When I asked Boteva why he was buried with these items, she first answered that it's so they do not have to look at them at home and be reminded of the tragedy, but then she added, "these things are meant to be there for his use." The tenor of Boteva's statement was that the youth would have further use for material goods; that is, she implied a belief in the notion of afterlife. Such a belief was also evident when Talpians visited the cemetery. On such occasions they usually took with them flowers, candles, food (such as the sweet dish served at funerals), *pita* bread and red wine. Candles were lit by the tombstone, the food left "*za pokoynika*" – "for the dead" – and red wine sprinkled over the top of the grave. (We may recall the religious significance of wine and *pita* bread as a symbol of resurrection). In other villages in Bulgaria, I noted that even a greater variety of foods, including grapes, apples and capsicum was placed at the grave, sometimes with a spoon and plate, an observance I did not see in Talpa.

These customs denoted a belief in afterlife; the placement of personal possessions and food within the coffin and the leaving of food by the graves were acts which denied the permanency of death, or rather signified that life did not end with physical death. Such a view was also implied in the importance attributed to burial as the method of body disposal. On one occasion when driving to Nekilva with Pashev, I was asked about funeral practices in Australia and after my response he commented that "...unfortunately our

people have not reached the stage when cremation is acceptable. They still cling onto traditions and wish to be buried." We may assume that the direct link Pashev made between preference of method of body disposal (burial) and traditions, was an implicit reference to the Christian beliefs which necessitated the body remain intact in order that resurrection could occur. We note too that burial as a traditional practice was defined by the communist as a more backward 'stage' of body disposal. In this way Pashev was implicitly attacking the importance given to burial as upholding the Christian belief in resurrection.

The belief in afterlife was spoken about in terms of the deceased's '*doosha*' that is, 'spirit'. On the day of *Baba* Milka's funeral, when *Babas* Teta and Grigora were serving food to the guests at the home of the deceased, *Baba* Grigora told me (on my asking) that people eat because when they have eaten, so has *Baba* Milka. She said the *doosha* of the person was still with us and when we eat or drink, *Baba* Milka was eating and drinking. The food left at the grave site after visits to the cemetery was also for this purpose: the feeding of the deceased's spirit. The *doosha* also always returned to the place most dear to the person in life, wherever she/he felt they belonged, irrespective of where the person's body had been buried. Thus *Baba* Grigora said, at the time of my grandmother's death, that "*Baba* Marinka may be buried in Australia but her *doosha* will return here (to Talpa)." In this way the traditional practices associated with funeral rites established death not as a final act but as a meaningful part of a process, a state between birth and resurrection. Thus death was defined as a non-permanent state of existence, a necessary part of the life-death-resurrection cycle. As a non-final state, it was a reversible phenomenon in the sense that it was only through death that eternal life could be achieved. Death was defined as the means by which the deceased transgressed from one state of being into another. Yet the return to life was in a different realm from that possessed by the living in the mortal world; life was returned to the deceased in the 'other world' of eternal life. It was a world in which the deceased still lived as spirits with material needs – eating, drinking, clothing and grooming implements. Thus the traditional practices which were part of a Talpian funeral constituted death as a necessary part of a cyclic process of existence.

The traditional observances themselves determined the cyclic nature of such events contextually through their rhythmic and regular practice at given moments. This represented the cyclic delineation of nature which was reflected in the actual celebrations – the annual event of *Zarezan* at the end of winter and onset of spring, traditional funeral practices which happened at the end of a life and which were necessary for the spiritual re-birth of the deceased. Nothing about either of these events – death or fertility – made them inherently cyclical, rather it was through the practice of traditional customs that these

occurrences were structured as cyclical in manner. The practice of traditions in the specific moments in villagers' lifecycles, the repetition of such acts at regular intervals – death for example – provided the delineation within which such 'natural' events were defined as traditionally cyclic phenomena. Tradition constituted nature as a cyclic phenomenon.

In turn the performance of the customs was determined by the occurrence of natural events – death in this instance, but in other instances on seasonal events – which provided the context by which traditions were performed and defined. The regularly recurring performance of all traditional events practised for example in times of life, death and change of season, set up traditions as also contextually cyclic phenomena. In being subject to 'natural' occurrences rather than determined by human plan, traditions were characterised as associated with events over which humanity had little control. Natural events delineated when traditional practices were carried out. Any 'control' humanity could attain over 'natural' phenomena was by appeal to supernatural forces for protection. This represented villagers' resignation to their 'fate', not their control over natural life processes. Villagers spoke of death in terms of "*koi kakto mu padni*" and "*kakto e pisano*" that is "as fate brings" and "whatever is written." Through such phrases, Talpians revealed a fatalistic resignation to death, an event which was somehow pre-ordained in a manner over which they had no control. The carrying out of traditional acts was not about understanding or changing "whatever is written," but a way of accepting their destiny. Death and fertility were deemed outside human control and in the hands of a 'God' or some other mysterious and powerful force. Traditional practices were an acceptance of villagers' lack of control over natural phenomena; they were the means by which Talpians acknowledged their fate to be in the hands of supernatural forces beyond their comprehension but which offered them some form of protection. That is, traditional practices were a way to appease supernatural forces, but not to either control or understand them; the appropriate practices related to death involved the appeasement of forces such as the 'spirit' which remained both mystical and beyond human comprehension.

Traditions were also perceived to be unchanging in nature. When I asked *Baba* Teta, why she placed food in *Baba* Milka's coffin, her response was: "that's the way it has always been." Whether correctly regarded or not, traditions were thought to be unchanging customs which have remained constant throughout the ages, back into the unknowable past. Food was placed in coffins not because of any explicit belief in after-life, but because "that's the way we've always done it." In actual fact traditions did appear to change with time; for example, the relocation of once church-based funeral practices to within the home. Despite this, traditions were conceptualised as activities which were

performed in the same way in contemporary Talpa as in the past and as they would be carried out in the future. Traditions denoted a past, present and future which was an unchanging temporal order.

The cyclic content and context as well as their perceived unchanging form, contributed to another characteristic of traditional practices – their indeterminate nature. Villagers were unable to isolate particular acts as introduced with the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria in the 9th century or as being pre-Christian in origin. Most traditions could not be located within a specific period in the past. This denoted a huge part of the past – from the pre-christian/pre-founding times of Bulgaria before 681 AD, through to 1944 and the foundation of the socialist state – as the potential time scale of the origin of traditional practices. The whole period was the source of traditions, which could not be traced to any definite period or tied to any specific event in the past and had no known origins except vaguely recognised ties to a Christian or pre-Christian past. In the same way that history was characterised as linear – through its chronological, teleological, evolutionary and uni-directioned ordering of the past, which made it a determinate, knowable past – so the cyclic nature of traditional practices which were perceived to be an unchanging ordering of the past, defined traditions as a past constructed as both unknowable and indeterminate.

These traditional qualities of a cyclic, unchanging and unknowable past contributed to the denial of the social uniqueness of particular events. Traditions provided a medium whereby the experience of death was reduced to a commonality; the associated acts were a means by which the social uniqueness of the experience of death was denied. This was achieved by repeating the same practices at every death, irrespective of who or what the individual had been in life – man or woman, store manager or agricultural worker. Indeed villagers talked about death as being a levelling experience; an often-used phrase was "*vseki si otiva na red*" that is "everyone goes in turn." In talking about death in this way, they rejected all distinctions in respect to it and instead focussed on the common feature – that it was an experience which everyone must have, irrespective of the differing social positions held in the mortal world. (The notion of 'turns' also implied a sense of order; this was not however an order villagers viewed as being within their control).

It was not only the experience of death which was reduced to the common elements – that it occurred to all irrespective of their social differences in the 'mortal world' – but afterlife was similarly affected. In placing the deceased's most prized possessions with them, often something important was forgotten. The daughter-in-law of *Dyado* Slavcho (*Baba* Grigora's next-door neighbour) told me how, when the wife of *Dyado* Slavcho had died, a few women (including herself) had prepared the coffin. Some time later, *Dyado* Slavcho

dreamed that his wife had said she was cold and 'why wasn't her yellow jacket left with her?'. *Dyado* Slavcho approached his daughter-in-law who had suddenly remembered and confirmed that it was true; it had not been buried with the woman. *Dyado* Slavcho had not known this since he had not helped in the preparation of his wife's body. To rectify the problem, they arranged that the deceased's jacket would be buried with the next funeral that took place. A similar situation concerned a Nekilva girl who had been buried without her comb (she had long hair). Her mother had dreamt that she had asked for it and so with the next funeral, a comb was buried with the dead stranger. Both these accounts – related by *Dyado* Slavcho's daughter-in-law, who lived in Nekilva but was herself from the village of Tevelak, while her husband was a Talpian – implied the common state of all those in the afterlife; that burying a possession with one body will somehow reach and provide the needs of another. Afterlife, as much as death itself, was framed as a denial of the importance of the experiences as socially unique. (Burial of possessions also reinforced a belief in afterlife and indeed in the possibility of communication between the mortal and 'other world').

Finally, in respect to death rites, attention is directed to the fact that traditions were customs practised in a manner involving little or no state involvement or determination. Traditions were located in private, non-state areas – mostly in the confines of the individual household – where state officials played no formal role in the proceedings. The traditional part of the funeral involved those rites associated with non-state interception. Death was not an institutionalised experience which occurred in a hospital, but by preference, occurred at home. A hospitalised patient for whom the doctors could do no more, was normally returned home to die. Even if a person died in hospital, she/he was always driven home to lie in state before the funeral. Many other aspects discussed above also remained a private concern, including the preparation of the body and organisation of the funeral. As noted, it was the family, not the state, which took care of all arrangements and responsibilities for burial. The fact that such customs occurred in private locations by individuals not acting in any official state role, defined the private nature of traditions, as rites in which the state had no involvement. The private element of traditions was obvious in that no state-approved body carried out traditional practices – thus for example the placing of food in the coffins was an individual act rather than one performed by Party-government officials.

Although an individual could opt for a religious funeral in a church, I did not witness such an occurrence either in Talpa, or in any other Bulgarian village, town or city. In Talpa the disuse of the church and lack of a village priest meant that traditional rites, even those with explicit religious importance, were practised in the home. For example, villagers crossing

themselves when entering the room, delineated the transformation of the ordinary room into a temporarily sacred space. Such traditions represented the re-location of church activities in the household domain[4]. They were not celebrated in the *Chitalishte* or any other historically significant location. At the point when a traditional practice was re-located into the *Chitalishte*, it could by definition no longer be traditional, for re-location into the *Chitalishte* signified that the traditions have been appropriated and to a certain degree transformed by the state, that they held historical significance.

Even traditional celebrations which occurred in non-private arenas and which involved a large number of villagers were still not state-determined. *Zarezan* was one such event which I view more closely in order to introduce further characteristics of tradition, for as a different kind of custom – a public celebration with large attendance – it contributes to a further understanding of tradition already developed from a discussion of traditional funeral practices which were carried out privately and on an individual basis.

Zarezan was celebrated in most regions in Bulgaria where vines were grown, although there were differences in the details between regions[5]. It was considered the holiday of the vines, taverns and gardens which were all under the auspices of Saint Triffon. *Zarezan* was the day which initiated the beginning of a new agricultural season with the cutting of the first vines and was meant to ensure the good productivity of the vines in the district. From this celebration onwards, the villagers could start working again in their gardens, beginning with the earliest task – pruning of the vines.

Usually a male celebration, I noted that there were some 10 men who had gathered at the village tavern when I arrived about 10.30 am. They were arranging the tables and chairs for the lunch which was to be held there later. At the same time they grumbled amongst themselves that following custom, they should go to the vineyards to take vine cuttings; but this was not possible because already it was too late to do so and that in any case no one had organised a band for the day and they could not possibly go to the vines without music. Assuming that they would not be going, I took the opportunity to return to *Baba* Grigora's house to collect the *pita* bread and other food she had been baking for the luncheon at the tavern. On my return, however, I discovered that two car loads of men had after all gone to the vines. (Reflecting on their actions, I now believe that the men had

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4 In her discussion of 'folklore' in Bulgaria, Silverman (1983, p.58), wrote that Christian practices have been replaced by secular ones. Perhaps this is so in terms of the public-state domain, but clearly many Christian practices have not been replaced as much as relocated to the private realm of village life.

5 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985), *Etnografia na Bulgaria*, Vol.III, p.109.

encouraged my return to *Baba* Grigora's as a polite way of not including me in their male-only customs). They returned soon after and many had long cuttings of vine twisted into rings which they wore either around their hats or across their chests like a sash. One of the men twisted the metre long cutting into a 'crown', placed it on my head and said I was "Queen for the Day" and could command whatever I pleased.

Men and women began arriving by noon, bringing with them salads, freshly baked *pita* bread and drinks – wine, beer and *slivovitza*. The five lambs which had been slaughtered for the occasion and cooked at the TKZC kitchens, were brought across (the renovations to the tavern kitchen facilities had not been completed at that stage). We were served lamb soup, lamb portions with rice, while people shared their home-made *pita* bread, salads and drinks. In accordance with the new state laws recently passed, which restricted the consumption of *slivovitza* to the evenings, it was announced by Gradenarov that only wine and beer could be consumed, *slivovitza* should not be seen on the tables let alone drunk. This did not appear to deter some of the villagers, who had brought a supply disguised in soft drink bottles. While the majority stayed only 1-2 hours and then returned to work – most of those present were TKZC workers – the remaining 30-40 villagers brought in a cassette recorder to solve the problem of no live music and continued drinking and dancing the '*horo*' (traditional dances) until the evening.

We note in the *Zarezan* custom, many of the features already denoted as characteristic to traditional celebrations: association with religion, indeterminate past and cyclic content and context. I therefore only touch on these aspects, preferring to focus on additional material which can be drawn out of this instance. As a celebration of one of the martyrs of the Christian faith – Saint Triffon[6] – *Zarezan* was connected to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Villagers explicated the religious origins of the holiday; many of those who attended the event told me that another name for it was 'St. Triffon Day' and that it was held in honour of the Saint in charge of the vines. However, little else was known about its religious aspects. Naymov, who a couple of weeks earlier had described to me how the holiday had once been celebrated in his youth (according to him much had changed

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6 According to Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985) *Etnografia na Bulgaria*, (Vol.III, pp.57-58), the characteristic of the saints in such celebrations as *Zarezan* was not purely religious (at least not as presented in the Bible) but a mixture of religion and the 'peoples' culture'. For the Bible saints were images with no associations with the people, while St. Triffon had a real concrete shape and 'interrelated' with people on specific occasions such as *Zarezan*. (The same applied in the case of other saints, such as those who were protectors of agricultural interests; for example, St. Georgi who was protector of cattle breeding and St. Todorov who was protector of horses). In presenting the saints as 'peoples' culture' rather than stressing their religious qualities *per se*, the authors attempted to deny the religious significance of such customs and thereby to construct folklore (a line of argument proposed in the following chapter).

especially in the last 10 years), did not mention the church as having played any role in previous celebrations. Nevertheless, a written description of the tradition indicated that *Zarezan* had once involved a church holiday service before all the men left for the vines and that in some regions the priest used to accompany them and sprinkle the vines with holy water[7]. As with the funeral practices, *Zarezan* was not identified with any definite past events or origins, except some vaguely recognised ties to a Christian past; as such it reflected an indeterminate past. Further, in signifying the end of winter and the beginning of spring – representing the start of a new growing season, the renewed fertility of the land and the protection of the vines from misfortunes for the year – the cyclic nature of the event's content was established. The annual performance of *Zarezan* on the 14th February marking the onset of spring and the beginning of the productive season, set the contextually cyclic framework for the holiday. The location of *Zarezan* in the village tavern was also an aspect of its traditional character; in respect to this, we note that while not celebrated in the private domain of the individual household, it nevertheless was sited in an area with which historical-political activity was not associated. There was no doubt some significance attached to the fact that the event was held in the building situated directly opposite the *Chitalishte*, which was the site identified as central to all historical-political activity.

The lack of national significance was also a feature of traditions. The fact that *Zarezan* was carried out in a number of different ways in different regions in Bulgaria and indeed not carried out at all in other areas, established its character as marking distinctions between territorial regions rather than having any unifying importance as a nationally significant practice. The choosing of a regal figure in the *Zarezan* celebration, a practice indicative of the Turnovo region (and a few others) was not typical to all regions which celebrated this tradition. Further, in the Turnovo region, it was a king who was chosen. Apparently any villager who wished, could become king, but the person chosen usually owned many vines and was a good viticulturalist. In these qualities the villagers anticipated good productivity for all orchards and vineyards during the king's reign[8]. Talpians broke with this custom of their region by naming a queen (who owned no vines and knew very little about viticulture) and so distinguished their traditional celebration from others in the region – such an act served to discriminate Talpians from other *Zarezan*-practising villages. We may also recall the comment made by one villager about the Talpian custom of washing the deceased's body in red wine, as something not done in

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7 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, (1985) *Etnografia na Bulgaria* (Vol.III, p.109).

8 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, (1985) *Etnografia na Bulgaria* (Vol.III, p.109).

southern Bulgaria. Despite a number of similarities between all the regions celebrating *Zarezan* (cyclic content and context, religious origins) there were also significant differences (the presence or absence of a regal figure, the extent of contemporary involvement of the church). This points to the quality of traditional practices as means of distinguishing between Bulgarian practitioners, rather than uniting them under common principles and customs.

The lack of national significance and the diversity in the way traditions were celebrated in different areas of Bulgaria, contributed to their largely unplanned nature. Traditions were not reflected upon practices, at least not in the sense that their carrying out demanded any degree of planning or organisation. *Zarezan*, as all traditional celebrations, was not a formal or highly organised event; rather the opposite, it appeared as almost a spontaneous, impromptu set of acts which demanded little reflection. Thus *Zarezan* had no definite point at which the proceedings began or ended and was relatively open to spontaneous activity associated with the central functions of eating, dancing and drinking. Further, *Zarezan* was not focussed on a verbalised or textualised set of observances, as was the case with historical celebrations. The beginning or ending of the event was not demarcated in terms of an introductory speech or closed with a well rehearsed musical program. Villagers trickled in and left at various times of the day, depending on whether they wished to make it a whole day or lunchtime only function. Any villager who chose to participate and contribute to the organisation, did so and no individual took a leading role in the process; no one had taken the initiative to organise live music and the celebration continued without it until, on the spur of the moment, a villager returned home to bring his own cassette player. The music and dancing was not preplanned, but depended on the selection of cassettes chosen by participants who, as the afternoon wore on, reached an increasing level of merriment and intoxication. Likewise, the couple of villagers who decided to name a queen of the vines, did so without consulting the others in the tavern; it was a spontaneous and impetuous act made possible through the largely unstructured, uncontrolled and non-hierarchical nature of the celebration. It contributed to the distinct way in which Talpians celebrated *Zarezan* in comparison with the neighbouring villages or in other regions[9].

The basis of the tradition, namely the successful growth of vines and their protection from hail and other misfortunes, also provided an insight into the traditional characterisation of

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9 Such 'disorganisation' was uncharacteristic of historical celebrations, where the *Chitalishte* head and other state officials were automatically expected to carry out any organisational tasks associated with the event.

villagers' relations to the land. We see from the celebration that the success of village production – at least its vineyard concerns – was not dependent on the development of technology, nor the increasingly educated and knowledgeable state of its workers, but rather on the carrying out of a traditional custom in the name of a religious figure whose function it was to protect villagers' vineyard interests. Correspondingly, those villagers who were involved in using TKZC technology (tractor drivers) or were educated specialists (for example viticulturists and veterinarians) were not given any privileged treatment or special recognition in the traditional event. From the perspective of the traditional, it was the acts associated with *Zarezan* which guaranteed the successful fertility and production of next year's vineyard operations. Indeed, the ceremony influenced not only vine-based activities but all activities of an agricultural nature, in the sense that it determined the year's timetable by signifying the date from which villagers could begin working in the gardens. It was not meteorological reports or scientific knowledge but a traditional celebration which initiated onset of the villagers' agricultural working year.

Traditional practices which were concerned with basic village issues of life, death and fertility of the land were closely connected with natural phenomena. As with traditional funeral practices, *Zarezan* linked villagers to nature in a particular way; via the mediatory religious/superstitious traditional activities which were initiated by the onset of natural occurrences. Thus the traditional celebration of *Zarezan* set up villagers' relation to the land as beyond the control of human forces. *Zarezan* was about villagers' reliance on a practice which ensured success in the agricultural realm not through human control over nature as a result of knowledge or technology, but by dependence on the practice of traditions, an application of mystical and religious beliefs as a means of meditating villagers' relations with nature. Fertility and protection of the vines was ensured by honouring St. Triffon in the manner described. Death and fertility were defined by tradition as natural occurrences not within the control of humanity, except through the practice of traditions, that is, except by dependency on external superhuman forces, which ordered the past in a particular cyclic, indeterminate way.

The final point I make in respect to the traditional celebration of *Zarezan*, concerns the absence of state officials. As with other traditions, the lack of state support of *Zarezan* was evident from the fact that it was not an official holiday. Those who wished to participate took the day off or at least took two hours during the lunchtime period to attend. As far as state officials were concerned, it was a normal working day. Villagers themselves made the distinction between *Zarezan* and state-organised celebrations, when they said that *Zarezan* was not an official holiday but a traditional one. The location of the event in a

non-historical site and the small number of state officials who participated in the event, provided further indication of the lack of state support. Those officials that did attend, did not do so in any official capacity. Indeed the only state official whom I observed to be in attendance was Gradenarov, while Pashev, Matov, Novikov, Boteva and others were absent. But Gradenarov did not appear to be attending on the basis of his official position as head of the TKZC – apart from his warning at the beginning about state restrictions on the consumption of slivovitz, he played no other formal role in the celebration.

The subdued nature of Gradenarov's participation – he was not one of those who organised the tavern, nor one of the two car loads of men that went to the vineyards – was perhaps surprising for, as head of the TKZC, his more-active involvement could have been expected, especially since the majority of those attending were TKZC workers. Later, I was informed by *Baba* Grigora – who held no great admiration for Gradenarov because of her loyalty to her daughter – that in recent years the TKZC head had taken the opportunity to make a speech at the luncheon. She believed that this year he did not do so because of his heightened unpopularity in the village; apart from corruption scandals of which he was accused by Boteva and others, it was also nearing election time and opposition was mounting against his re-election as TKZC head.

Two points may be noted in respect to the role (or lack of it) played by Gradenarov in *Zarezan*. Firstly, the knowledge that Gradenarov had had a more active participation in the event in previous years, is a strong indication of the event's changing and possibly declining significance as a traditional celebration and correspondingly its greater association with celebrations which had historical importance. The restructuring to include a textualised speech and the active participation of a state official would have largely transformed the significance of the event. While Talpians did not explicitly associate the inclusion of official state participation with the declining nature of the custom as traditional, many did acknowledge its fluctuating nature and the changes that had occurred in the past 10-15 years. Georgi Naymov told me that in the past the celebration had involved the entire male village population (the one I attended could not have had more than 200 participants, about two-thirds being men) who went to the vineyards. Here they slaughtered and cooked the lambs and drank wine. After eating and drinking together, every man took a long cutting from the vines and twisted it into a head piece which he wore for the rest of the day. Then with the band, the menfolk walked to the plaza where the whole village gathered for a '*horo*'. Clearly in previous years the men played a much more extensive role in the celebration, while the women's participation was largely excluded. Reduced participation in the celebration which once involved the entire village, was another factor in its decline. Both the (fluctuating) inclusion of the state into the event

and the transformed composition and level of attendance, were aspects not typical of other traditional practices such as those that occurred during funerals. Yet in many other senses identified above, it was characteristically traditional and indeed villagers themselves maintained that the celebration was traditional, despite their recognition that it was undergoing change.

Secondly, the view *Baba* Grigora and others expressed – that Gradenarov had not spoken on the occasion because of his unpopularity – revealed a belief by ordinary villagers that they had control over the celebration and the extent to which political-historical figures were actively involved in it. Gradenarov's lack of popularity and consequently his discouragement from speaking at the celebration was perceived by these villagers to have changed the course of the celebration; their opinions and actions were understood to have determined the role Gradenarov, as a political-historical figure, played in the celebration. (Given the proportionately greater role political-historical figures had in the celebration of history, villagers had little determining input to historical events). It was ordinary villagers rather than state officials who determined the nature and extent of state involvement. Talpians perceived that through traditions they themselves controlled the festivities rather than state officials; they determined the extent to which the state was allowed to participate in the celebrations, thus the participation of a state official – Gradenarov – was at the discretion of the villagers.

These factors – the absence or inactive role of officials in the traditional celebration, the great level of control villagers believed they had in determining the extent of state officials' involvement in traditional customs, the usually private location of the activities or at least their distancing from public sites with historical significance – all contributed to the a-historical character of tradition. Since in the previous chapter, history was shown to be associated with the state officials' political activities – careers being dependent on the nature of their constructed relation to history – and since history was the legitimate construction of the past recognised by the state, then traditional practices which remained aloof from history were in these terms a-political. This defined the location of tradition in respect to history as a construction of the past which not only lacked historical significance, but held an importance which in many ways was based on its (conceptual) opposition to history. Below, I discuss in greater detail the tension between history and tradition as two different constructions of the past.

Tradition and History: Contrasting Constructions of the Past

Traditional practices had religious significance, were about natural processes in non-historical sites outside state control and ordered the past as cyclic, unchanging and indeterminate. At the conceptual level, this meant that traditions and history contrasted with each other. The following explores the way in which they were conceptually opposed and also suggest that because of this opposition, tradition was, potentially at least, a source of resistance to state determined history. By way of introduction I provide a description of a Moslem funeral that occurred in Talpa.

In the 1980's the Bulgarian government had made it illegal for Moslems to carry out many of their (Moslem-Turkish) customs, as a part of an official assimilation program. The actual rites performed at a Talpian Turk's funeral held particular interest therefore when looking at the nature of traditional opposition to the state. Unfortunately, I did not attend the funeral and this itself was due in part to the irregular nature of the funeral. For while, as noted earlier, all funerals were organised to arrive at the plaza at 2.00 pm (and occasionally at 12.00 pm when the weather was bad or more than one funeral occurred in the same day), the Turk's funeral was apparently conducted at 10.00 am. Boteva, who had lived most of her life in the village, told me she could not remember any funeral having ever taken place so early in the day. In addition, other indicators that a funeral was taking place, such as the music and the ringing of the church bell, did not occur.

I did however talk to a Bulgarian, the next door neighbour of the deceased, who had attended the funeral. He informed me of several other procedures which he witnessed as being at variance with a normal (Talpian) village funeral. Firstly, it had been only men who had ridden with the deceased in the trailer to the *Chitalishte*; all the women had walked. The family had apparently not wanted an eulogy to be read outside the *Chitalishte*; however, my informant said that the family was "talked into a reading." Upon asking, he told me that the name used at the reading was the deceased's Bulgarian name, the one he had been officially forced to adopt a few years earlier. (This supports the view that the eulogy read comprised the state's 'voice' in the funeral proceedings, a factor of interest for the discussion in the next chapter). At the cemetery, the Turk was buried without having planks placed across the coffin to protect it from direct contact with soil. Although the mourners did not follow the Moslem tradition of running away from the coffin after burial – as the Turks were accustomed to do according to my informant – everyone did step back and away from the grave. Also, a Turkish mullah had sung after the man was buried. I asked my informant where this man had been found, since the practise of Moslem rites was illegal and was told "...its easy to find one if you know where

to look." After this, as with Bulgarian funerals, all the mourners went to the village tavern to eat. When I visited the grave site that afternoon, I noticed that unlike any other grave, the state-supplied red-painted pyramidal plaque had not been completed – there was no name, date of birth or death – instead, it had been left blank. Undoubtedly the relatives had not wanted to use the deceased's official Bulgarian name and yet were unable to legally write in his Turkish one. Further, the uncompleted plaque was, according to Moslem custom, facing west – not east, as was traditional for all Bulgarian tombstones and temporary plaques.

We must note in respect to the above funeral that the state part of the proceedings remained consistent whether for a Bulgarian or Turkish funeral. Despite reservations by the Turkish family of not wanting an eulogy to be read, the state's role in the funeral was carried out. This procedure was the same for all villagers; it consisted of the reading of an eulogy irrespective of the deceased's ethnic background and religious beliefs, since both these distinctions were not relevant in state terms. On the other hand, it was significant that the traditional rites of the funeral were changed and accordingly attributed a distinct identity to the funeral procedure and to the deceased for whom the funeral was undertaken. That is, it was through electing to abide by particular traditional practices in the funeral that a villager made a statement about her/his specific identity in respect to nationality, religion and territorial alliances – being either Bulgarian or Turkish, Christian or Moslem, Talpian or outsider.

The traditions in the funeral were the means by which ethnic and religious distinctions were created. Both these cleavages were implied in the above example. Observances not followed in the funeral, such as the lack of ringing of the church bell, no eastfacing name/date plaque, the separation of men and women in the funeral procession and facing the name/date plaque west, located the man's religious beliefs as other than Christian. The presence of the mullah, clearly established his beliefs as Moslem. That is, the deceased man was identified as a Moslem by the presence of certain traditional practices and the absence of others. This delineation of the funeral as Moslem rather than Christian, was also one expressed in terms of ethnicity; a Turkish rather than Bulgarian identity respectively. The deliberate act of not writing the name of the deceased on the plaque was a rejection by his family of the Bulgarian identity enforced upon the deceased by the government. The non-use of his Bulgarian name, which was also attempted by not wanting an eulogy to be read (the state part of the funeral that inevitably used his legal Bulgarian name) were means by which the deceased's non-Bulgarianness was established. The separation of the women and men mourners, which did not occur at Bulgarian funerals, and the lack of music – playing of music was basic to many Bulgarian traditions

including weddings and *Zarezan* – were again means by which the family of the deceased determined his non-Bulgarian, Turkish identity. Unlike other areas in the country where Bulgarians had been Mohammedanised during the period of Turkish rule, in Talpa all Moslems were from Turkey; thus the association between a Moslem and Turkish identity. (Indeed this was an association made, as we may recall, from the times when Talpa had been resettled by Bulgarians who founded the 'new Bulgarian village' – see Chapter 1). The Bulgarian villagers who had attended the funeral perceived the traditional rites as specifically Turkish-Moslem – traditions which defined the Turkish funeral as 'Turkish' and 'Moslem' rather than 'Bulgarian' (and Christian) and therefore made visible the ethnic and religious diversity in the village. Notably, traditions established Bulgarianness and Turkishness as separate identities largely on the basis of religious differences and *vice versa*. (This is particularly relevant when considering folklore in the next chapter, where a Bulgarian national identity was encouraged, but on the basis of different – non religious – terms).

The practice of such traditions implied distinguishing villagers not only in terms of religion and ethnicity, but also on territorial-based differences. That is, traditions created distinctions in terms of locality. Since the Turks' traditional practices differed from those of the Talpians', they defined themselves as outsiders, precisely because it became apparent that they did not share Talpian traditions. In being viewed as having customs which were different from those of the Bulgarian Talpians, Turks were identified as village residents who came from outside the village. Traditional differences based on territorial delineations were relevant at a variety of levels; between Talpian village households (the Bulgarian neighbour talking to me about his Turkish-Moslem neighbour's funeral), between villages and regions within Bulgaria (other areas did not automatically assume an association between the Islamic faith and Turkey) and ultimately between nations (the deceased was an outsider from another country)[10].

Traditional practices encouraged, indeed created, a means of distinguishing between the villagers, based on the interwoven facets of religion, ethnicity and territorial elements[11]. Since they defined the central point of difference between people in terms of ethnic, territorial or religious claims, traditions were conceptually opposed to history and were a potential means of resistance against the state-determined historical view of the past. State

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10 The basis on which traditions constituted 'village' and 'Bulgarian' was on very different terms from those in relation to history or, as we see in Chapter 4, folklore.

11 We note that in *Zarezan*, as in the Moslem funeral, traditional practices also delineated in terms of gender, unlike historical celebrations which did not make distinctions on such grounds.

officials, who gave unified treatment to all villagers in funerals, preferred that such traditional practices be ignored and that history should constitute the only legitimate basis for distinction amongst human beings. An indication that the distinctions created by traditions were not those which state policy encouraged, was clear from the fact that certain traditions practised by Moslem-Turks were the very practices the state made illegal, in an attempt to discourage a notion of Turkish identity and encourage adoption of Bulgarian identity.

The funeral of the Turk allowed discussion to focus on traditional distinctions which delineated human difference in terms of ethnicity, religion and territorial boundaries – the point of contention being between the Bulgarian state and Turks-Moslems. However, traditions were a means not only for Turks – an ethnic minority in the country – to reject state policy, but Bulgarians also used traditionally based religious and territorial differences to express their opposition to the state. One such brief moment was witnessed during *Zarezan*. Some participants, knowing about the restriction on the consumption of *slivovitza*, ignored state law by bringing the alcohol disguised in soft drink bottles. The bringing in and drinking of the banned *slivovitza* in spite of the warning at the beginning that it was forbidden by law or perhaps because of it, was a rejection of state laws by Bulgarian Talpians. The fact it occurred in a hidden manner represented an acknowledgment that it was contrary to state law. However, it was not a collectively-organised rebellion in any sense; the disregard for the state law was not carried out as an organised movement, but by a few individuals who were not deterred by this particular law.

It was impossible to know whether either the Moslem funeral or *Zarezan* incident were deliberate attempts to challenge the state, as much as a simple pursuit of customs without inciting the attention of the authorities or explicitly acting against the law. The same can be said for other traditional acts such as the placing of food in coffins. When the elderly villagers did this they did not appear to be consciously trying to counter state views, nor did their activities appear organised in any sense for this purpose. Rather, they were pursuing their own traditions as they had always done. *Organised* opposition to the state via the practise of traditions did not occur in Talpa to my knowledge; instead the traditions in the village were activities which were unplanned customs – for example funerals – or not carried out explicitly – for example *Zarezan* and the Moslem funeral – but in a covert manner in non-historical sites. This allowed officials to turn a blind eye to their practice. Non-confrontation was also chosen because the main offenders – especially in the village – were predominantly elderly Talpians. State officials were much more concerned with the youth who represented the state socialist future. (The association between youth and

socialist future is further discussed in Chapter 5). This was evident at the Easter church service in Nekilva where a couple – apparently Party members – stood outside the gates attempting to persuade the youth rather than the elderly, from entering the church yard and attending the ceremony.

Ignoring actions contrary to state ideals was more difficult in another incident which was related by my Sofian friend, in which traditions were used in a conscious and premeditated way in a Sofian funeral to express opposition to the state. (The accuracy of this story is unknown; its significance is in the fact of its perceived importance by the Sofian). This was a story of a Communist Party member who used his funeral explicitly to show his disillusionment with the Party. The man in question had been a partisan before 1944 and was said to be a true and good communist. He had become increasingly disillusioned with the Party since its rise to power after 1944, so much so that on his death bed he asked his wife to arrange a fully religious funeral – with candles and religious ceremony. This was not, my Sofian friend commented, because he was religious, which he had never been, but it was his last means of protest to the Communist Party and government.

Here we have an unmistakable and conscious use of religious traditions to express anti-state views, which offered an important means of resisting state values at a very fundamental level. The expression of dissatisfaction towards the Party was more noteworthy, given the pro-communist views of the deceased; other Party members could not turn a blind eye to his choice of a religious funeral in the same way they could for a non-party member. While the practise of traditions by elderly non-Party villagers was tolerated, Party members were expected to distance themselves from all religious beliefs and acts. As the Sofian Communist was clearly aware of this, his action was so much more pointed and effective as a form of protest.

A historical construction of the past explicitly rejected the mystical-religious practices in which traditions were rooted. Indeed this was evident in the separation which historical-political figures set up between themselves and traditional practices. I have already noted that the celebration of traditions was not recognised by the declaration of public holidays, observances were located in non-historical sites and state officials played no, or minimal, role in the celebrations. But more than this, communists rejected traditional funeral practices, at least those with a religious basis. For example, there were no candles lit beside Arian Pashev's body (a 'true communist', as discussed in Chapter 2) and one of my village neighbours who attended the funeral said to me that "there were no candles in the room because he was a communist". The implication was that Party figures did not partake in practices associated with religion. This was clearly established when I invited

Boteva, her daughter (who lives in Turnovo) and Boteva's sister-in-law to accompany me to the church Easter ceremony in Nekilva. They all declined, replying that as Party members they were not allowed to attend church ceremonies and should they do so, someone was bound to recognise them in a small town like Nekilva. Party members, those obliged to uphold the historical past, could not go to church or practise traditions. We may surmise this was for one reason, the fact that traditions were not perceived to be aligned to historical goals.

On another occasion I was at Naymov's house when Pashev, Mikanov and Matov dropped in to discuss plans for the 100-year *Chitalishte* celebration. They began reminiscing about the World War II period and Pashev stated something uncomplimentary about someone who was deceased. He then said "its not nice talking this way about the dead, but we are communists and can talk about the dead". Pashev was referring to a superstition which stated that one must not speak ill of the dead. In speaking in such a way, he established that they were not concerned or influenced by superstition or religion, that as communists who therefore had a legitimate relation to the historical past, they were unaffected by such traditional beliefs. (Naymov who was not a Party member, showed obvious signs of pleasure at being included in this category). So while communists appeared quite tolerant of those who practised traditions – especially of the elderly villagers, many of whom, even at Arian Pashev's funeral, slipped food into the coffin, an act ignored by the large number of gathered communists, – they themselves made evident their own disbelief in such practices. Unlike the ordinary villagers, communists showed they were not controlled by traditional beliefs and practices. In fact, as communists, they rejected and distanced themselves from traditions. In ways noted above, both historical-political figures and the villagers who practised traditional customs, contributed to the separation between the state-legitimated historical construction of the past and traditions. We note, therefore, that traditional activities were not only the means by which villagers were distinguished in terms of ethnicity, religion and territorial boundaries, but also indicated a person's status in terms of history – state officials distanced themselves from religious traditions. The practise of traditions was therefore a statement about the political alliance of an individual; the greater the reliance on tradition, the more an individual defined her/himself as an a-political being, not interested in constructing relations to the historical past on the basis of political activity.

Traditions provided a conflicting way of constructing the past to that of state-legitimated history (irrespective of whether or not individuals intended their activities to be expressions of opposition to the state). This was because the distinctions created by the traditional practices were conceptually at variance with history; that is, these practices

defined difference in non-historical terms. A traditional conception of humanness rendered the social world on the basis of religion, ethnicity and territory, all of which were interwoven dimensions characteristic of most traditions. It was not that the traditions exemplified difference between people, as much as that the practice of traditions created religious, ethnic and regional differences. Such a dis-unifying notion of humanness which defined the social world, existed alongside an 'other world' produced by traditional practices associated with death. It was in death and afterlife that humanity was ultimately united and all distinctions created in the social world overcome. The 'other world' in which eternal life was established, rendered social uniqueness expressed in terms of traditional difference in the mortal world, as irrelevant. Traditions did not encourage unification of humanity in the social world, but did so through religious beliefs in eternal life. The afterlife represented a state of being in which all humanity was united through a belief in a religious-mystical force beyond the social domain and well outside the control of the state.

This contrasted with a historical conception of humanness which separated humanity in terms of man's relation to history, that is, to involvement in the realisation of a future communist – classless – society. Social distinctions, such as ethnicity or territory, were irrelevant since all humans were distinguished in terms of their relation to history, delineated through their moral and political contributions to the historical goals. This provided the foundation of historical unity and distinctions. Further, the realm of such historical humanising activities was grounded solidly in the social world, a world controlled by state bodies, where man controlled natural forces. There was only one world with relevancy, the socially constituted one. The unification of humanity would not come in some other mystical world, but in an anticipated future, when historical goals of the state had been realised as communist society.

Traditions were a potentially significant form of resistance to history by virtue of the fact that they posed an opposition which was ultimately between two different ways of defining humanity. Traditional distinctions served to undermine a humanity delineated in historical terms. It was thus no accident that the Sofian communist chose a religious funeral as a way to express his dissatisfaction with the government, for it was through showing support for traditional practices that the most effective statement of opposition to history was made. Traditions represented a whole way of being, a means of understanding others and the self as human in an alternative and conflicting manner to history. As contrasting means of representing humanity, history and tradition were not only differing ways of distinguishing between humanity, but also contrasting ways of achieving the unification of humanity. The two constructions of the past ultimately represented opposing

understandings of humanity based on different temporal orders. Thus while both history and traditions were notions of temporality which delineated humanity in terms of a particular way of constituting the past, present and future, their opposition was one between a cyclic, religious construction of the past and one which delineated humans in terms of a linear and humanising temporal order. Through the practice of traditions, a notion of humanness based on an a-historical conception of time was being expounded, one which posed, potentially at least, a temporal critique of history.

Conclusion

In exploring traditions as a particular social construction of the past, we must recognise its fundamental difference as a temporal order from that constituted by an historical perspective. Traditions constructed the past as cyclic, unchanging and indeterminate. Most importantly, they were about natural processes perceived as not within human control; traditions represented man's acknowledgment of 'other world' forces (religious-superstitious), they were a means of appeasing natural phenomena otherwise beyond human determination. The fact that traditional celebrations lacked any formalised organisation, were located in non-historical sites outside state control, held no national importance and lacked state sponsorship, all contributed to a construction of the past which, in respect to history, may be considered a-political. These characteristics placed traditions, at least at the conceptual level, in a position of opposition to history.

In the second section of this chapter I examined the nature of the contrasting relations between history and traditions and the terms by which any opposition between the two was expressed. Traditional practices and events created and celebrated distinctions between the villagers which defined humanity in terms of religious, ethnic and territorial differences (the distinctions were replicated throughout village, regional and national levels). That is, via traditions, villagers could know themselves as 'Bulgarians' or 'Christians' or 'villagers'. The very nature of this system of differentiation was contrary to a historical delineation of humanity expressed on the basis of an individual's role in the development of the country towards its communist goals. The unification of humanity was also defined in conflicting ways – traditions encouraged unification in a supernatural world, history anticipated unity in terms of a future communist order. Thus each of these constructions of the past defined a very different way of determining the terms on which social distinctiveness and unity were delineated. Indeed, traditional distinctions served to undermine humanity detailed in terms of history. Or at least a traditional construction of the past provided a set of

characteristics or concepts which were at variance with the state-determined historical view of the past and which provided a potential means of temporal critique of history. Whether this opposition was consciously recognised or not, was not as significant as the fact that in the very practise of traditions, historical views were being contrasted and therefore their validity implicitly rejected. While I witnessed no such collectively-organised use of traditions in Talpa, its potential in repelling a state history was clearly recognised and used by others – the communist's funeral in Sofia provided one such instance.

The incompatibility between traditional and historical constructions of the past was noted by an ex-villager now residing in Turnovo, who was attending the *Zarezan* celebration in Talpa with his sister who lived in the village. He commented that traditional customs were less adhered to in Talpa than in other villages. When I asked why, he answered that it was "...because there were so many communists in Talpa". Clearly a historical past – to which communists were most closely aligned – was defined in terms of the lack of association with tradition. The absence of substantial traditional activity in the village was attributed to villagers' apparent commitment to historical goals.

Another ex-Talpian who lived and worked in Sofia as a historian, also commented on the lack of traditional activity in Talpa on a different occasion. He warned me that Talpa was not the best place for me to conduct fieldwork if my interest was in traditions, for Talpa had relatively little traditional activity for two reasons. Firstly, he said that as a 'new Bulgarian village' it was comprised of people from many different villages which all had slightly differing traditions. When all these immigrated to Talpa there was no one traditional practice above others which could be adopted and shared amongst all villagers. That is, the village was not unified on the basis of the practise of a common set of traditions. Talpa did not have Talpian traditions; there existed just an odd collection from other villages and these traditions were gradually becoming more irrelevant. Secondly, the historian said that the immigrants to village Talpa were relatively more wealthy than people in other villages. He made a direct association between their better economic situation and the lack of the maintenance of traditions by explaining that Talpian wealth was invested in educational ventures. This resulted in a more forward-thinking, progressive population which was less likely to fall back on traditional practices, while those in villages which were poorer were less educated and clung onto such activities. The association he made was between a lack of tradition and a greater level of education (we remember the importance of education in Zhivkov's writings, as a means to realise historical goals. I explore this further in Chapter 4, where state determined folklore had an important educating role). The claim by Talpians to be good communists, was in part

therefore displayed through their lack of concern with tradition. The disinterest in traditional celebrations in the village (recall the rather poor attendance at *Zarezan* which once attracted all the male population) and the absence of any organised collective resistance to a state determined historical past by means of traditional practices, emphasised Talpians' commitment to communist ideals. One would not expect to find much traditional activity in a 'good communist' village such as Talpa.

The significance of traditions as a potential expression of resistance to state history was a dilemma of which state officials were aware and attempted to redress. This was explicated by a Sofian official from the Fatherland Front, Cultural Section, who told me that while the government would like to give support to truly Bulgarian traditions, it was unable to do so since traditions not only represented Bulgarian customs but were also associated with the church. The problem, the official informed me, was how to support distinctively Bulgarian traditions, while separating them from their religious associations. In the following chapter I look at how state officials addressed the threat posed by traditions through the development of what I define as folklore.

Chapter 4 Folklore

Folkloric celebrations had become increasingly popular in socialist Bulgaria since the late 1950's – early 1960's. Indeed, a Communist Party official in Sofia estimated that there were as many as 36,000 amateur folklore groups in all of Bulgaria – in villages and cities – concerned with the performance of folklore, involving mainly dancing and singing[1]. Folkoric activities existed in a variety of forms – ranging from the serving of foods offered on special occasions (for example, when receiving foreign visitors), the wearing of costumes and the performing of music, songs and dances, to certain handicraft activities including weaving and pottery. Such practices could be viewed nightly on television and heard daily on radio, as well as being performed at festivals and by amateur vocal groups. Here I am concerned with folklore as another construction of the past and with the nature of its relationship to tradition and history. As with history and tradition, folklore is dealt with as an ethnographically constructed phenomenon, which I develop from Talpian understandings of folkloric events[2]. My presentation of the way Talpians constructed such events I term *folkloric*, while the conceptual representation developed from this is denoted *folklore*.

The rise in popularity of folklore is viewed as hardly coincidental but rather a particular way in which the state appropriated tradition for its own hegemonic purposes[3]. In the first

1 Personal Communication, Ivan Panchev, Sofia 1987.

2 In using an ethnographic definition of folklore, my approach differs from a number of previous works on 'folklore' by both folklorists and anthropologists. Firstly it differs from works such as Romanska (1978) and Lodge (1947), whose approaches are purely descriptive and, in my terms, part of the transformative process by which tradition becomes folklore. My approach also differs from, for example, Dundes (1965) and Dorson (1966, 1976) – who seek to define 'folklore' in some absolute sense, accordingly not giving due consideration to it in any particular context. This problem was implicit in other works concerned with the lack of a definition of 'folklore' or its unspecified location in the academic field, e.g. Maticetov (1966); and specifically in respect to the location of 'folklore' and anthropology (Bascom 1965). Others such as Szoverffy (1968) – who investigates the connection between 'history' and 'folklore' and concludes that 'folklore' functions to reflect 'history' – and works by Dundes (1966) and Degh (1965), use 'folklore' as an indicator of the level of a society's civilisation, as some mediatory mark between civilised and savage societies. Such evolutionist approaches are also unsatisfactory for reasons discussed in the thesis' conclusion.

3 More recent studies of 'folklore', including Lombardi-Satriani (1974), Zygulski (1973), Oinas (1975) and Eminov (1975), are concerned with the 'political' use of 'folklore', and thus do not treat 'folklore' as an isolated entity devoid of social context. Still clinging onto the belief of 'folklore' as an absolute concept, Dorson (1976) trivialises 'politicised' 'folklore' as 'fake-lore' and therefore unworthy of study. The problem with all these works is their usage of 'folklore' as a taken-for-granted concept. Although a

section the character of folklore is explored through a discussion of a new year's celebration – *survakani* – which was practised in Talpa as both a traditional and folkloric custom. From a comparison of these aspects, the characteristics which designated the transformation process by which tradition was re-contextualised as folklore, are discussed. State involvement in the creation of folklore cannot be underestimated. Re-contextualisation involved the selection of certain traditional aspects and their incorporation within state-organised events. This resulted in the structural and meaningful transformation of tradition into folklore – including the rejection of religion; emphasis of the visual presentation of the traditional objects; the movement out of private and into public arenas; of movement away from the authority of traditional figures and within the control of state officials; and a breaking of the traditional cyclic context by the adoption of a linear one. Such a re-contextualisation also established the a-temporal nature of folklore, serving to temporally and spatially distance the villagers' own native customs from their traditional context. With such a distancing, tradition became redefined as folklore.

The next two sections explore the functional worth of folklore arising from the particularities of its character. At the same time both sections provide an elaboration of the way in which folklore involved a state rejection of tradition. The section on folklore and

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relatively sophisticated study of 'folklore', Herzfeld (1982) also uses the term in an ethnographically uncritical way. Flores (1985), as a more recent study, is at the same time one of the most problematic, epitomising most of the above-mentioned weaknesses. She presents a romanticised view of 'folklore', as isolated and untouched by hegemonic processes, and having implied egalitarian value. This she opposes to 'art', which is characterised as typical of 'bureaucratic' societies, as a tool of ideological oppression. Apart from the implication of upholding an evolutionary understanding of 'folklore' (see especially p.255, p.261) her definition of 'folklore' is anything but ethnographically specific, being a term she generalises to have cross-cultural and cross-temporal importance; indeed her discussion of 'folklore' refers to examples from 1500 BC Mayan society (in Mexico) to present day North American blacks.

Many of the above criticisms are also relevant to Silverman, who deserves special consideration because she is the only Western anthropologist (to my knowledge) to have worked in Bulgaria, and because her writings focus on 'folklore'. In both her articles, Silverman (1983, 1989) presents aspects connected with 'folklore': that it promotes nationalism, socialist and ethnic unity, it is a cultural phenomenon, is affected by 'politics' and has ties to the past. At this general level, these findings are in agreement with my own. However Silverman's discussion I find rather superficial; she leaves unanswered many questions as to the actual nature of the relationship between 'folklore' and culture and 'politics' and the specific form of 'folklore's' ties to the past (except a passing comment which implied 'folklore' to be frozen in time (1989, p.146)). A consequence of the latter oversight is her confused usage of the terms 'tradition' and 'folklore'. At times she uses the two terms interchangeably (1983, p.57, 1989, p.150), on other occasions she indicates a difference between 'tradition' and 'folklore' (1983, p.60, 1989, p.152). In the latter situation, Silverman writes of 'folklore' as transformed from 'tradition', which involves secularisation and 'politicization' (1983, p.57), that 'folklore' is 'artificially' and 'selectively' preserved by the Bulgarian government (1983, p.58, also 1989, pp.146-7), but does not follow this process through ethnographic detail. A discussion of 'politics' and 'culture' located as meaningful concepts in the Marxist-Leninist Bulgarian state appears necessary, for we cannot assume (as does Silverman) that they held the same understandings as in the West. This has resulted in her somewhat confused and superficial treatment of 'folklore'.

tradition focuses on folklore in terms of its relationship with tradition. A characteristic of folklore was that unlike traditions, it defined practices firmly within the social rather than religious domain. I take up this issue by means of a theme introduced in the previous chapter – death – but this time concentrating on the eulogy reading which represented the state officials' input to the funeral. In the process of establishing nature as a set of 'laws' in the eulogy, the importance of knowledge as a means of understanding and therefore influencing nature was advocated. Through a transformation of the relationship between man and nature as under the control of the state rather than under the auspices of supernatural influences, 'natural' events such as death were delineated as social, not religious phenomena. The similarities between the state funeral practice and *survakani* allows the findings about the former to provide an insight into the way folklore attributed relevancy to the social rather than religious domain.

In the final section, the relation between folklore and history is examined; this provides an opportunity to explore in more detail another 'function' of the character of folklore – its role in providing a notion of Bulgarian identity. The theme, essentially one of 'ethnicity', was also addressed in Chapter 3 and is now reintroduced, this time by directing attention to the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration and the performance of folklore within it. A consequence of folklore's re-contextualisation and manifestation as a collection of objects which held aesthetic value as Bulgarian culture, was to add a further dimension to Bulgarian identity. Folklore provided a revaluation of the traditional past in a state-approved manner which encouraged unification at the regional-national level (rather than creating distinctions at a number of lower levels, as in the case of tradition). In the ways premised above, folklore provided not only a state critique of the traditional past, but a means by which tradition was subsumed under the historical goals of the state.

The Character of Folklore

In this section I construct a definition of *folklore* which reflects Talpians' understanding of the concept, by analysing the process by which tradition was transformed into folklore. Discussion is centred on a new year custom called *survakani*, which was practised in Talpa as both tradition and folklore. The distinction between the traditional and folkloric practices was implied by Boteva, who said in relation to the observance of *survakani*, that "I never made them (*survaknitsi*) for myself or my daughter, now I am making them for my grandson." This comment highlighted the transformed significance *survakani* activities had for Boteva: from their dwindling relevancy in the early years after the advent

of socialism and through the 1950's and 1960's, when Boteva and then her daughter were children, to the last 15 to 20 years when Boteva's grandchild was young. It also represented a change from non-acceptable to acceptable activity in which Party figures could engage; as a Party member, Boteva did not participate in the activity during her daughter's youth and yet did so in her grandson's childhood. Indeed we can trace the changes in *survakani* practice as an element of traditional value from 1944 to the late 1960's and early 1970s – when Boteva, as a Party member, did not participate in the practice – to the transformation of *survakani* into its folkloric form in more recent times. The differing significance of the *survakani* as a traditional custom and a folkloric celebration, implicates the essential ingredient of the transformation: the involvement of the state. By concentrating on the basic means by which tradition was appropriated and constituted as folklore, we are also focussing on the character of folklore as a construction of the past, since the process defined its character.

There were a number of traditional practices carried out in the new year, of which *survakani* was one. Although differing in details, the custom was recognised in its basic form throughout Bulgaria[4]. When performed as a traditional practice, *survakani* was carried on by children who decorated a branch from a cornel tree and tapped adults with it while simultaneously reciting a verse. In Talpa at the time of new year, children – usually between the ages of four to fifteen – made their own *survaknitsa* from a freshly cut branch of the cornel tree, approximately one to one and a half metres in length. The smaller branches radiating from the central stem were folded back to the centre and tied, thus forming loops progressively decreasing in size along the length of the *survaknitsa*. These loops were decorated in a fairly sparse way with popcorn, dried fruits and coloured woollen threads. On new year's day, for a period of only twenty-four hours, children from the village collected in small groups and visited households in order to *survaka* the inhabitants. Each group selected the houses of friends, neighbours and relatives, to carry out the ceremony in turn. This was almost invariably performed from very early in the morning on new year's day until mid-day (and not later), although it was permissible to start the practice after mid-day on 31 December in special circumstances (known absences on new year's day, or the need to visit a large number of households).

I was at *Baba* Grigora's house when the neighbours' children came to *survaka* her and her husband, *Dyado* Gosho. The children tapped each adult on the shoulder with their *survaknitsa*, while reciting a verse which wished health and happiness to them for the year to come. There were a number of different verses I heard in Talpa; all began and ended in

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4 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985), *Etnografia Na Bulgaria*, Vol.III, p. 103.

the same way, while the middle few lines varied. Below I have noted the one recited by the children who visited *Baba* Grigora.

Verse:

surva surva godina	*surva surva* year[5]
vecela godina	happy year
pulni kosharnitsi ses agentza	sheep pens full with lambs
cherveni yabalki v gradina	red apples in the garden
pechen puyak v furna	roasted turkey in the oven
golyam grozd na loze	large bunches (of grapes) on the vines
zhivo, zdravo do godina	life, health for the next year
do godina, do amina	till the next year, amen

The verse wished the recipients health and success in their agricultural endeavours for the following year. After this, *Baba* Grigora offered the neighbours' children a variety of food treats which she had placed on the kitchen table – including popcorn, walnuts, apples, dried fruit, lollies – and the children helped themselves. The children went through the neighbourhood households with the *survaknitsi*, tapping adults and chanting the verse, and in turn receiving food treats from the villagers. This act of *survakani* was said to be a blessing which ensured the health and prosperity of the villagers. *Survakani* could be performed only until mid-day on January 1st, after which the *survaknitsa* lost its powers.

As a folkloric celebration, *survakani* was not restricted to the twenty-four hour period centred on the change to new year; it involved a number of different activities which, while clearly rooted in the above traditional practices, had quite a different significance and worked around a different time scale. The folkloric celebration of *survakani* was focussed on the entry of *survaknitsi* in a state-organised competition. In mid-December, Boteva and I went to the house of *Baba* Grigora and *Dyado* Gosho specifically to make a *survaknitsa* for Boteva's nephew (the grandchild of *Baba* Grigora, named Tenu) who lived in Nekilva and who intended to enter his *survaknitsa* in the national competition. Tenu's other grandfather, *Dyado* Torno, along with Boteva had searched the village and collected a number of cornel branches. They finally selected the branch they considered to be the best because of its straight shape, its many smaller branches stemming from the central one and the large number of buds on each branch. As in the traditional preparation, the small branches were tied back to the central one to form a number of loops. Domestic natural coloured wool was wrapped around each looped branch, covering all the bare patches

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5 A specific greeting used at new year – happy happy year.

where there were no buds. Various items were then hung from the loops: strung popcorn, dried fruit, walnuts, hot peppers, garlic, small onions, decorations made from brightly coloured home-spun wool, dough figures such as birds and donut-shaped rings (made by *Baba* Grigora). At the base of the *survaknitsa* was attached a small handwoven bag which was filled with fruit and popcorn, while at the very peak was hung a small bell wrapped with geranium leaves; the geranium in Bulgarian was called *zdravetz*, a word which comes from *zdrave*, literally meaning good health. The *zdravetz*, Boteva said to me, was there for *zdrave*, that is, to signify good health.

The *survaknitsa* was to be picked up by Tenu the next day to be taken to Nekilva and exhibited at his school. Boteva explained that every school held its own competition and only if Tenu's was considered amongst the best in the school, would it be exhibited in the Nekilva *Pionerski Dom* (Pioneer Home) – the children's political organisation of which all children aged from eight to eighteen years, were members. At the *Pionerski Dom*, his *survaknitsa* would be judged against all the other best examples selected from the district (other villages and Nekilva). The best from the district capital were then sent to Turnovo to be judged at the regional level and then finally to Sofia, where they were adjudicated at the national level against all others from the country. The best at each level of adjudication were awarded prizes. With pride, Boteva said that the *survaknitsa* she had helped her grandchild make last year had received first prize in the Turnovo regional competition. The participation of Boteva and other adults in the creation of a folkloric *survaknitsa* differed considerably from their function in the traditional practice. For the traditional practice was a children's custom in which adults had a restricted role as the recipients of the blessing, while conversely in the folkloric practice, it was largely adults who prepared the *survaknitsa* on the children's behalf (for example on the present occasion Tenu did not partake in the making of his competition *survaknitsa*). The transformation in the role of participants in the tradition of *survakani* – between the child as the practitioner of the rite and the adult as the receiver – resulted in the greater involvement of adults, often state officials, such as Boteva, concerned with the successful running of the competition. This points to the crucial feature of the *survaknitsa* as a folkloric endeavour – as a state-determined practice.

The first and most important aspect of the folkloric activity was the involvement of the state, through a variety of officials from school teachers to adjudicators (folklorists). The folkloric significance of the *survaknitsa* was focussed on the requirements of the competition, which was initiated and organised by state officials. The competition began within every school where children were taught about certain practices of the past and encouraged to make *survaknitsi*. According to Boteva, who taught at the Talpian school,

the teachers were the ones concerned with the initial organisation of the competition at the most basic level. In Talpa, as in all the schools, these *survaknitsi* were exhibited in the school corridors. A panel of teachers and the school principal in Talpa chose the best, which were then sent to Nekilva and exhibited in the *Pionerski Dom*. Here the director of the *Dom*, aided by specialists from Turnovo – artists who specialised in folkloric art, and folklorists – adjudicated the best in the district which were in turn sent to be judged and exhibited in the *Pionerski Dom* in Turnovo, the regional capital. This procedure took three weeks. The best were sent to Sofia and adjudicated nationally against *survaknitsi* from other regions. The competition was thus run by state officials and largely controlled and organised by the *Pionerski Dom*; and held a similar importance to this organisation's after-school classes in art, music and sports, all of which were viewed as an essential part of the overall socialist education of the child, complementing her/his formal education attained at school.

Unlike traditional practices and like historical activities, the making of a *survaknitsa* for entry in the competition involved some degree of planning and organisation at a variety of levels, from its creation by villagers to its national adjudication in Sofia. When we met at *Baba* Grigora's, Boteva, *Baba* Grigora and *Dyado* Torno had already thought about and organised details of the construction of the *survaknitsa*; Boteva and *Dyado* Torno had searched through the village for an appropriate branch from the cornel tree, *Baba* Grigora had baked dough figures, found wool and made popcorn for decorations. These activities had to be well coordinated to coincide with the deadline for entry into the competition. A fair amount of reflection was also involved in the construction of the *survaknitsa*. Boteva, as a teacher who was more acquainted with what the judges looked for when deciding on the best *survaknitsa*, took the lead in guiding the decorating of the cornel branch. She was obviously aware of the symbolic significance of the *survaknitsa* and the specific materials used for its decoration – recall her explanation for the use of geranium as symbolic of good health. The choosing of the branch by her and *Dyado* Torno also revealed the extent of reflection involved in the construction of the *survaknitsa* – they both searched for a good specimen branch, one that had many buds, which they told me was a symbol of health and future prosperity. Indeed it was explained to me that only this tree could be used since it was well known for its strength and thus had symbolic importance. The making of the *survaknitsa* was therefore in part at least a planned and reflected-upon activity; the adhering to a timetable for entry into a competition, the discussion about the decoration and explanation on the symbolic importance of the ornaments, were all aspects of the folkloric significance of the *survaknitsa*, factors non-existent in the traditional practice.

Not only was the competition run in state organisations by state officials and involved a degree of planning, but the central activity of the folkloric practice – the construction of a *survaknitsa* – was determined by the requirements of the competition and by the adjudicators who followed set guidelines stipulated by specialists in the field, such as folklorists. Much greater attention was paid to the decoration of the folkloric *survaknitsa* than to that used in the traditional practice. The best *survaknitsa* was decided in terms of its aesthetic appearance and on how closely it reflected, in the experts' opinion, traditional authenticity. 'Authenticity' was judged in terms of two factors. Firstly the decorations had to reflect the type of livelihood in a particular area. Thus the *survaknitsa* we made for the nephew of Boteva, was decorated only with produce characteristic of that grown *in the region* rather than any products specific to Talpa (other regions in Bulgaria used their own characteristic materials); and of course was restricted to the lasting qualities of the produce – for example grapes were not attached because they would not last. The bag placed at the base of Tenu's *survaknitsa* was woven in a style characteristic of the Turnovo region, no other style would have been appropriate. Each area had embroidery patterns and styles peculiar to its own territory, which could be identified by an expert in regard to its origin. The required regional rather than district or village significance of the *survaknitsa* meant that whether it was constructed in a village or city was irrelevant since it had to convey the essence of the region. Boteva who had made, in Talpa, a *survaknitsa* for her grandson (in the previous year) was obviously successful in attaining such a level of significance, resulting in winning first place in Turnovo and subsequently representing the Turnovo region at the national Sofian level of the competition. Secondly, 'authenticity' required that the decorations for the folkloric *survaknitsa* remain true to the type of materials used in the traditional *survaknitsa.* Since the materials had to have folkloric significance, the handwoven bag hung at the end of the *survaknitsa* could not have been replaced by, for example, a plastic bag or any modern machine woven bag[6]. For a *survaknitsa* to be authentic, it had to be decorated with ornaments which signified the traditional period, that is, anything that characterised and defined it as belonging to the pre-1944 period. No modern (post-1944) objects could be used; to do so would immediately invalidate its authenticity. The materials used – determined by regional locality and significance as non-modern – defined the two main rules for decoration which attributed 'authenticity' to a *survakanitsa*[7].

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6 In other folkloric practices, modern variations were encouraged – such as modern styled weavings on synthetic materials – but these were always traceable to 'authentic' traditional styles and gained significance in terms of them.

7 Silverman also discusses the importance of authenticity in folklore, an aspect of authenticity being the exclusion of any element from "contemporary life" (1989, p.147).

The folkloric celebration focussed purely on the aesthetic appearance of the *survaknitsa*. A comment made by *Baba* Grigora while helping to make her grandson's *survaknitsa*, emphasised this when she said that, "In the old days they never made the *survaknitsa* so fancy, they just tied some dried fruit and bits of lolly paper on the branches." Clearly the folkloric emphasis on the appearance of the *survaknitsa* using traditional materials characteristic of the productive livelihood of the region, was itself a movement away from the traditional practices. It was not because the materials used were not traditionally significant, but because the quantity and variety in which they were used defined a concern, indeed preoccupation with the appearance of the *survaknitsa*, which in turn established the new folkloric significance of the *survaknitsa* as an object for display – for exhibition.

As an object of display, the folkloric *survaknitsa* shared with the traditional custom the character of having indeterminate and unknowable origins. The traditional practice could not be related or understood in terms of any particular event or period in the past, although it was closely bound to pre-Christian religious acts. When I asked *Baba* Grigora and Boteva about the apparent connections of the verse to Eastern Orthodox Christianity because of its ending with 'amen', I was told that the practice had no Christian connections and 'amen' was said at the end just because it was the accepted way of finishing the verse[8]. We may surmise that the traditional practice was seen as a religious act but not with its basis in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, but in superstitions which pre-dated Bulgarian Christianity[9]. This was backed up by a comment made by *Baba* Grigora when I asked her about the significance of the verse and of the rest of the traditional practice. She said the custom was a way of 'blessing' the household for the year to come.

The *survaknitsa* exhibited as folklore also maintained unknowable and indeterminate origins; however, unlike its traditional counterpart, the former was devoid and separate from any superstitious-religious associations. This was achieved by its remodelling as a part of a competition where the traditional verse spoken by the children was ignored, as indeed was the entire religious significance conveyed by the activity of tapping the

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8 An interpretation reflected, noncoincidentally, in ethnographic writing on *survakani* which deny it religious associations (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985), *Etnografia Na Bulgaria*, Vol.III, pp.102-103).

9 This suggests a reason as to why some traditional customs were appropriated as folklore and others were not. The more peripheral a traditional practice's association to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the more easily it appeared to be taken up as folklore. The view that *survakani* was not a custom rooted in Christianity allowed it to be 'seized' by the state. Those traditions which had explicit references and direct associations with the church were less easily distanced from their religious meaning and therefore less easily appropriated by the state as folklore.

shoulder or back of an adult during a designated time of year. That is, those state officials who organised the competition, played down the mystical beliefs underlying the *survakani* practice by not including the verse or accompanying activity as part of the object exhibited or judged. Both the practice of touching the adult with the traditional *survaknitsa* and the verse, were absent from the competition; they were neither performed nor exhibited as relevant documentation. Given the length of the competition, which began in mid-December in the schools and finished in the second week in January in Turnovo, the folkloric *survaknitsa* was obviously not meant to serve any traditional-religious purpose on new year's day, for it was not available for use at the very time when it could play a traditional role. The richly-decorated folkloric *survaknitsa* was too cumbersome to be used, the branches weighed down so much with decoration that carrying it, let alone using it in the traditional way, was quite difficult. The folkloric *survaknitsa* seemed to have but one purpose – as an exhibition piece. Indeed *Baba* Grigora and Boteva recognised this and said that the *survaknitsa* we had made for Tenu was purely for the purpose of being entered in the competition.

Clearly the separation of traditional practices from their superstitious-religious roots was a vital part of that which defined folklore. Through the exaggeration of its visual presentation and the rejection of pre-Christian religious beliefs, the *survaknitsa* attained a new folkloric significance as an aesthetic work in a state-determined competition, a piece of art work symbolic of the traditional past, yet distinctly detached from its traditional meanings and practices. That is, the new folkloric importance of the *survaknitsa* established it as both non-religious and as an object of aesthetic pleasure. To underline this point, we recall that the figures considered appropriate in judging the *survaknitsi* were those believed to be skilled in evaluating folklore; that is, artists and folklorists.

As with traditions, the folkloric *survakani* celebration was closely associated with natural phenomena. I have already noted that the folkloric *survaknitsa* was connected to agricultural production through the fact that the decorations had to reflect the livelihood of a particular area. The tying of natural, agricultural produce on the *survaknitsa* and the maintenance of the use of the cornel tree (rather than for example a plastic imitation), established the continued relevancy of the theme of nature in folkloric celebrations. Further, folklore signified a particular 'natural' event – for example ritually potent times such as the beginning of a new year – but unlike tradition, was not contextually determined by nature (see below). That is, the folkloric celebration was closely connected to a particular season or natural occurrence. Such factors – which established a feature folklore shared with the traditional *survakani* custom – constituted a close association between folklore and nature.

However, the established relation between man and nature via the folkloric *survaknitsa* practices differed considerably from that associated with the traditional practice. The folkloric *survaknitsa* demanded reflection on agricultural production and nature, but defined the man-nature relation as devoid of religious beliefs; folklore defined the relation as not dependent on some mediatory, supernatural force on which humanity relied in order that nature could be influenced. This was evident in the folkloric celebration by the fact that it was state officials who determined when the folkloric practice was performed. Since part of the power of the traditional *survaknitsa* depended on it being practised only within a twenty-four hour period and at that, a specific twenty-four hour period – December 31 to January 1st, at the boundary between years, a ritually potent time – then the reorganisation of a folkloric practice which rejected these beliefs and extended the competition over a three-week period, was an important way in which folklore denied the influence (pre-Christian) religion had in the traditional practice. The folkloric celebration established new ties between man and nature; state officials defined the duration of the folkloric practice, when and how it would be celebrated (without religion and as a competition); and indeed where the competition of *survakani* was to occur. Folklore represented a relation between humanity and nature which attributed control to the former over the latter. This was an important way in which traditional practices were moved out of the religious and into a socially determined domain. (I discuss further this process in the following section).

While folkloric celebrations such as *survakani* were associated with natural phenomena, they were not inevitably cyclic. The control state officials exercised as to where, when and how folklore was performed, meant that unlike traditions, folklore had a linear rather than cyclic context[10]. The powers of direction which state officials had over the performance of *survakani* resulted in its detachment from the cyclic context of tradition, which occurred with a rhythm determined by appropriate points in the 'natural' life cycle. Folkloric *survakani* was not performed or restricted to any seasonal 'natural' logic which recurred in a predictably cyclic way, rather it was embedded in a new contextual setting – a state-run competition – which was defined by state officials and given a linear order. Reminiscent of history, each annual folkloric *survakani* competition was denoted in linear sequence as the 1987, 1988 ... event. So each competition was distinguished from and yet connected in sequence to, the ones of previous and future years. In the case of *survakani*, the folkloric

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10 In Chapter 2, I defined linearity as having four 'properties' – it was teleological, evolutionary, uni-directional and chronological. When I speak of the linear context of folklore I refer to only one of these four aspects, namely the chronological or sequential nature of linearity. For folklore, as elaborated below, is a static temporal order and as such it did not implicate the character of a teleological, evolutionary or uni-directional understanding of historical linearity.

celebration followed an annual pattern; however, there was nothing to restrict the exhibition of *survaknitsi* to this period. Indeed *survaknitsi* could be viewed in a number of folkloric museums around Bulgaria irrespective of the time of year. The cyclic context of the traditional *survakani* practice was therefore broken by the control over the *survaknitsi* through their state institutionalisation. The new state-approved linear context identified the folkloric importance of the practice. The result of such a transformation from cyclic to linear context, was exemplified in an extreme form in folklore festivals, where various different folkloric customs were performed or exhibited together, totally detached from their traditionally cyclic context. At the largest folkloric festival in Koprifshitza, which occurred once every four years, an entire range of activities – from spinning, to the singing of wedding songs from all over Bulgaria – was performed on a number of outdoor stages, side by side. There was no cyclic traditional sense to this mass conglomeration of such Bulgarian folklore, which was restricted neither by specific seasonal nor life-cycle determinants. Folkloric performances were presented out of the cyclic time logic characteristic to traditions; and instead were incorporated within a state-determined linear context, as part of a performance on stage or in a competition.

While the contextual logic of folklore was linear, its content was still cyclic. The maintained links between the folkloric *survakani* and nature discussed above – constructed largely through the agricultural products used to decorate the *survaknitsa* and its connection with 'natural' events – gave the *survaknitsa* agricultural importance and associated it with seasonally-based activities. That is, these references to agriculture and therefore seasonal elements, signified the cyclic content of the folkloric *survaknitsa*. The cyclic symbolism of the folkloric *survaknitsa* was implied in Boteva's comment about the cornel tree being the "first to bud and last to bear fruit." As such, Boteva explained, it encapsulated the life cycle of all annual fruit-bearing plants, which were represented inclusively within the most extensive one, the cornel tree. That is, the folkloric *survaknitsa* signified the cyclic element of nature, although the competition did not reflect this contextually.

The fact that folkloric celebrations constituted the past as cyclic in terms of content and yet linear in terms of context, meant that as a temporal order, folklore was contradictory, or self-effacing – it was both cyclic and linear and yet neither. This order was one that determined folkloric time as neither cyclic nor linear, but one rather that was static. Folklore was therefore unlike the cyclic (traditional) or linear (historical) ordering of time. The latter two had a contemporary and future reality which was denoted in terms of the past – tradition 'always had been and would be'; history was a way of knowing the future in terms of the past. However, folkloric celebrations belonged to another realm in which

the past was separated from, not contiguous with, the present and future. Its contemporary relevancy was established only through its separation of the past from the present and future. Folkloric celebrations thus constructed the past as time-less. Folklore was perceived as unchanging but in a different way from tradition; it represented the past as it had been, but not (like tradition) a past as it was at present and would always be. Folklore was unchanging because of its static-ness and detachment from either cyclic or linear time – its indeterminate and unknowable nature was due to the fact that it belonged to a period now passed. This was spatially evident through the fact that there was no place for folklore in the everyday contemporary world except on stages, in exhibitions and museums. When the *survaknitsa* competition was over, the *survaknitsi* were returned to the children who, I was told, threw them away. Traditionally, *survaknitsi* were also thrown, not into garbage bins, but on top of the roofs of animal pens, a custom said to ensure good health for the households' animals.

The knowledge that folklore defined a static time, allows us to understand the relegation of folkloric celebrations to stages and exhibitions in state-owned and state-run locations, which played a fundamental role in constituting folklore. The confinement of folklore to these sites enabled people to learn about the traditional past in a specific state-determined way, to reflect on the traditional past as belonging to another time, even to become actively involved in the appropriation of tradition through participating in folkloric activities. *Survakani* was such an occasion, where villagers who entered the competition were incorporated in the process of appropriating the traditional past in state terms. In part this happened because the *survaknitsi*, as folklore, demanded reflection on the traditional past; recall Boteva's explanation of the symbolic importance of particular aspects of the decoration of the branch. Since the competition was carried out initially by the schools and further up the administrative hierarchy by the *Pionerski Dom*, it had an explicitly educational significance. (The educational significance of folklore is considered further in the final section of this chapter). It was a means by which school children – not to mention those who helped to make the *survaknitsi* – learnt about and reflected on the traditional past in a specific way defined by the state officials involved in the competition. All institutions such as museums, galleries and festivals served a similar purpose; to disseminate folklore as objects of study through a variety of means including books (written by folklorists and other specialists), photographs, film, radio, classes, as well as through live performances of songs and dances. These were all part of the transformational process by which traditional practices were appropriated by the state and then exhibited or performed as folklore, as objects belonging to another time. This was evident from the way the Talpians talked about folklore. When I attended a folklore

exhibition, be it visiting a folkloric museum or attending a folkloric display of dancing at the *Chitalishte* theatre, the exhibition or performance was explained as "*Kakto beshe po edno vreme*," i.e. "the way things were at one (in another) time." In talking about folklore as "how things once were," such performances were relegated to another time. The folkloric past was a past encapsulated in a glass case which could be observed but was not reachable. Its contemporary and future relevancy existed only as something representative of a past that had passed.

The fact that folklore belonged to 'another time', meant that while it was clearly associated with state historical goals – by state officials who influenced how, when and where folkloric celebrations occurred – folklore nevertheless had quite a different relation to history from that defined by political activity. This was implied in the wide set of practices which were part of the process of folklore; from the textualisation of tradition to its performance for example as dance. It meant that folklore could involve a broad spectrum of participants – from academic experts in Sofia who wrote about folklore, to villagers in Talpa who performed in amateur vocal and dance groups. Moreover, *survakani* involved villagers, irrespective of their political relation to history, who happily worked together in folkloric activities. The broad spectrum of involvement in folkloric activities was also evident in the location of folklore both in private and public arenas; the *survaknitsa* competition was a process which began in the home and ended in the school/*Pionerski Dom.* Folklore was thus a practice in which anyone could participate and which could occur in almost any location in the village, from the household to the school. This provided an indication of the broad relevance of folklore as a construction of the past, a relevance which neither a politicised history nor tradition could maintain; for the political significance of history lay in the fact that particular historical events had a privileged position to which not everyone could have equal access, while the a-political significance of tradition was also due to its exclusivity (of State officials). Unlike politicised history or tradition, folklore was a past in which anyone could partake, irrespective of whether they were political or a-political figures.

The wide-ranging nature of the folkloric past and its manifestation as a collection of aesthetic objects, for example as *survaknitsi* in a competition, attributed to folklore the power to unify. As a past taken out of a traditional context and placed within a new state one, folklore broke the particular religious/ethnic/territorial delineations created by tradition. We see this in the *survakani* competition where only a part of the custom – that commonly performed throughout Bulgaria, namely the decoration of the *survaknitsa* – was taken up and made a focus of the competition. The differing appearance of the folkloric *survaknitsi* (using various decorative materials dependent on agricultural livelihood)

created regional distinctions. Such distinctions were known however only in terms of the whole, that is, regional folkloric delineations held national importance. Delineations between regions – rather than differences within the region – were comprehensible only at the national level of consideration. Those aspects which served to create demarcations in traditional terms were rejected in the folkloric competition. The unifying role of folkloric celebrations was therefore one that had consequences for a state-determined conception of Bulgarianness. As cultural objects which had national significance, folklore provided a state-influenced notion of Bulgarianness, one which contributed a sense of ethnic unity in contrasting terms to those provided by tradition. I discuss this further in the final section.

In summary, folklore was a construction of the past which had associations with both history and tradition and yet was like neither. The means by which tradition was taken up by state officials and reformed into folklore, was a process which I call re-contextualisation. For analytical purposes, this may be thought of as consisting of two parts; the taking of particular practices out of one context and then establishing them in another state-controlled context. The state played a fundamental role throughout this procedure which involved the rejection of certain traditional qualities and the selection of others which were maintained and placed in a new state-influenced context as folklore. A folkloric past was constituted as devoid of religious or mystical beliefs; it revealed man's relation to nature to be one which was in the control of man and not at the mercy of supernatural forces. This occurred through the structuring of organised and state-controlled events which had educational significance. The non-exclusive involvement of participants in folkloric celebration, its practice in both the public and private domains of village life and its linear context cyclic content, defined the mediatory position of folklore as retaining elements from both a traditional and historical past. These features were also the source of its uniqueness as a construction of the past; folklore was ultimately a time-less past, one which was distinct from both history or tradition because it had contemporary relevancy only as representative of another time. In this sense the state successfully relegated a traditional past to the irrelevancy of another age. This was evident in the form taken by folklore as performances on a stage and objects of artistic value. Folklore was the particular way in which the state appropriated tradition for its own hegemonic purposes; the process involved the transformation of both temporal and spatial traditional characteristics which were reconstituted as folklorically significant. In the following two sections, I focus on particular facets of the tradition to folklore and folklore to history associations, in order to develop further the understanding of folklore presented above.

The Significance of Folklore

a) Folklore and Tradition

The appropriation of tradition through a process of re-contextualisation was a means by which the state addressed the traditional conceptions of humanity perceived to be at variance with historical goals. Re-contextualisation resulted in not only a formative transformation of tradition into folklore, but correspondingly involved a change in the meanings conveyed, meanings which contrasted with traditional notions. In this section I focus on the relationship between folklore and tradition, with a view to attaining a further understanding of a characteristic of folklore identified above – the relation folklore, as a construction of the past, upheld between man and nature. To do this, a topic discussed in the previous chapter, namely funerals, is explored; in this case looking at those aspects – the biographical speeches conducted outside the *Chitalishte* – which were the state officials' input to the funeral proceedings.

Since the funeral eulogy was part of a celebration which also involved traditional practices, it provides a valuable opportunity to discuss the way in which state representatives countered tradition. The significance of the funeral speech was greatly amplified when considered within the context of the entire funeral rites, since it is from this perspective that its contrast with traditional conceptions of death and nature become apparent. Indeed the speech may be viewed as a way in which officials responded to the traditional practices carried out in a funeral. Although villagers did not explicate the speech in such terms – that is, as a response to tradition – they did recognise it as the 'more official part of the funeral'. Thus while the funeral speech itself was not folklore, it shared a similar position, due to the fact that both were state-determined. I have more to say on this towards the end of the section where the similarities between *survakani* and the eulogy are explicated more fully in order to draw conclusions from the eulogies which enable further insight to be gained into folklore. To begin, however, I turn to the part of the funerals over which the state had influence.

It may be recalled from the previous chapter that the funeral procession (on the way to the cemetery), stopped at the plaza, outside the *Chitalishte*. Here a village official, usually a senior teacher or the mayor's secretary – that is, a representative of the state holding a Party, government or educational position – and preferably someone who had been acquainted with the deceased, read a five to fifteen minute speech about the deceased

regarding her/his life, achievements, interests and activities. One such reading is cited below. It was the eulogy read at a funeral in 1965 for a *Baba* Mita Pencheva[11].

17 November 1965 – *Baba* Mita Pencheva

Dear Meeting, Relatives of the deceased, Comrades,

Death is a sure thing, the hour is unknown. Everything that is born, dies. Whoever is born grows, succeeds, _____ grows old and dies[12]. That is the unchanging law of nature. There is nothing better than nature, but there is nothing worse either. She gives birth, guards, destroys, kills, matter goes from one form to another. Knowledge uncovers and makes use of the laws of nature. It uses the goodness of mankind but there are such low people who use these laws not for happiness and good but for bad reasons and for death. When will come the time for peace on earth? Today all reasonable people on earth are fighting for equality in life, happiness and to be successful. And there are many millions of workers, villagers, people in the arts and sciences, people who know the value of a life. People who are fighting for eternal peace. A world without war and arms. At the head of these fighters is the great USSR which today is celebrating 48 years since the great October Socialist Revolution.

Comrades, the life of the deceased *Baba* Mita Pencheva was not peaceful. She did not have a happy childhood or youth. She was born in the village of Gradina and at the age of two months she was brought here to Talpa, where her mother married Ivan Marchev. The father of *Baba* Mita died of _____ sickness. She came into a big and poor Bulgarian family. She spent her childhood in _____ and poverty, in part because in those times there were more children. She finished primary school here in Talpa and her parents sent her to learn a trade - tailoring - in Nekilva. When she finished she worked land both in Gradina and Talpa for years on end while the long trained hand used the machine to warmly clothe the villagers. She finished much hard work putting in a lot of effort.

She married Pencho Penchev from a poor village family and went to a mother and father-in-law, whom she acted well towards and respected greatly since that's the way she was brought up by her parents, to value the human being. With her mate Pencho, who was injured during World War II and became unable to do any physical work, she unceasingly – day and night – put in work at others' yards and vines and in this way she was able to feed her family. There was no other way. They had to fight for their lives, which the elite capitalists had _____. She put in much effort and work until her body was exhausted and used up.

The 9th of September 1944 came, a new time. Capitalism was overthrown. The people were in power. The workers and villagers were freed and two to

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11 During my fieldwork I obtained a collection of these biographies which were written by Naymov, who had presented the eulogies during the period 1938-1970s when he had served in a variety of public posts, including most importantly, *Chitalishte* head and director of the School.

12 The blank spaces denote words I could not transcribe from the taped recordings made of the speech.

three years later when the TKZC was organised, they became members and put their work and effort to the common good. *Baba* Mita worked in the _____brigade, while from three to four years ago she worked in the _____ brigade. She helped the TKZC as she helped in the home, with her family in the fields.

From a year ago she became seriously sick. Her close family, husband, son and daughter-in-law, sought medical help not once, but a cure was not found and last night at 23 o'clock her heart stopped beating. And it happened that last night she said in front of me, 'Georgi I soon will die, but I want to die quickly, not to suffer. I want an easy and light death'. Well she is not very old, sixty-seven years, she could have lived another fifteen to twenty years to spoil her grandchildren, great-grandchildren. To live a joyful and happy life. But the hardships, the hard living and deeds use up the organism.

Comrades, here in a few words is the life of this modest, quiet and unnoticed in all her work comrade. She is an example for her hard work and humanness. After ten to fifteen minutes the cool grave will swallow the cold body forever. The black mound of earth will rise the autumn wind and spread the yellow leaves, and will bring silence. In the name of the Fatherland Front, I give my deepest sympathies to those close to the deceased, who will always be able to take pride in her modest life. May her memory live on forever.

From the speech we may note two important points: firstly, that it was a way in which an individual's life was located in history; secondly and related to this first point, the speech presented by a state official may be viewed as addressing traditional views of nature and death (raised in Chapter 3). These points are considered in turn.

In the biographical reading, the individual's life was both constructed as a history and located within history. The eulogy was the documentation of the deceased's life, a written speech which textualised her lived past into a linear, chronological order, into a historical phenomenon. That is, the speech constructed the deceased's life as a historical succession: from the miseries and poverty that she suffered before socialism, to the advent of the socialist state and her participation in its building, through her support and membership in the TKZC. The example provided above was a typical pattern of the readings, which all noted the hardships faced by the deceased during fascist rule, then moved on to indicate how socialism had led to the betterment of their lives and the particular role the deceased had played in supporting and bringing about this new socialist world; for example, by holding certain positions in state organisations including membership in the TKZC. The funeral speech was not only a biography, but the very means by which the construction of the deceased's place in history occurred; a way of referencing her life and experiences in terms of a Marxist-Leninist history. In this manner, the funeral eulogy politicised the life of the deceased.

The presentation of *Baba* Mita's life as a history recognising her contribution to historical goals throughout her lifetime, was an important documentation of state views about nature and death. In the eulogy readings, nature was constituted as a linear phenomenon, progressing in the one direction and could not be reversed or repeated; as noted in another eulogy from 1965, "the laws of nature are irreversible." As an irrevocable process, it was defined in a contrasting way to traditional rites, where natural occurrences were structured as cyclic phenomena, rhythmically repeating themselves over time.

Nature was also presented in *Baba* Mita's eulogy as comprised of 'unchanging laws' which were, however, not static in any sense. Rather, the laws specified continued evolution and change, so emphasising the impermanency of life and its structured linearity. Moreover the laws were unrelenting phenomena, with which humanity could not negotiate or mediate by any means, including presumably through any religious or mystical force. Both these points may be noted from the eulogy of another woman's funeral in 1965 where it was written that "...nothing is in the position to change the greatness of nature; everything is born, lives and dies. Everything evolves and changes. Nothing is permanent." From this viewpoint, death cannot be avoided but must be accepted as a natural law. Nature was therefore given the ultimate position of dominance; and nothing was stronger or more powerful, nor was anyone perceived to be in a position to change this situation. The stance clearly rejected the traditional influence of nature via religious forces and belief in afterlife.

While nothing could change nature, its portrayal as a set of laws defined it as an order over which humanity could have some influence. Human knowledge was attributed the power of being able to increase its understanding of nature and, in doing so, influence natural elements and determine them within limits (set by nature). Thus death could not be avoided, but through knowledge, life could be prolonged in some instances, although this was not possible in *Baba* Mita's case, where medical help provided no cure. The portrayal of nature as a set of laws which may be discovered not only characterised it as an ordered secular system detached from any mystical or religious qualities, but also redefined it within the realms of limited human control. The view enforced by the speeches was that it was through knowledge that the laws of nature may come to be understood and even overcome. Knowledge allowed humanity some influence over nature: for example, in *Baba* Mita's eulogy, it was stated that "knowledge uncovers and makes use of the laws of nature." It was as a result of knowledge that the demystification of nature occurred.

The educational system was the formal site at which knowledge about the laws of nature was conferred and further discoveries about the laws could be made. The attainment of an

education was therefore of vital importance. Thus in an eulogy reading from 1962 it was said of the deceased, *Dyado* Taryanko, that he "...gave up everything so as to see his grandchildren – Radka and Stoiancho – with a good education, because he liked education and he knew only with knowledge that we can progress and go forwards. He did not fool himself with religious beliefs, with heaven and hell. Communism came and turned into dust their century old lies..." The quotation established the importance of education through its association with knowledge and as a precondition for the realisation of historical goals. In addition, education was opposed to religious faith, and consequently provided contrast to the traditional view of man's relation to nature. Nature was not an unknown force which could be influenced only by the mediatory dependence on supernatural beings, but an ordered secularised system upon which humanity could increasingly have impact, through attainment of a better understanding of the laws governing the system. Through a faith in education, the eulogy established man's relation to nature as one not under the domination of supernatural forces; instead humanity had direct influence over to nature.

As a result of knowledge of the laws of nature, death was located firmly within the social domain rather than being relegated to the mystical 'other world' (as in the case of tradition). Death was portrayed as an inevitable law of nature which could not be escaped. As noted in *Baba* Mita's eulogy, "Death is a sure thing, the hour is unknown. Everything that is born, dies." As a natural law, death was understood to be a final and permanent act. This clearly contrasted with traditional beliefs of death as a phase in the cycle between birth and afterlife. There was no such 'other world', or conception of afterlife in the funeral speeches. All readings portrayed the social achievements of the individual as the aspect that will live on in everyone's memory, instead of invoking some eternal spiritual presence. For example, in the given reading, it is noted in the final paragraph "...she is an example for her hard work and humanness...," and the point is made that it is for these qualities that she must be remembered. Other examples may also be given; at a funeral of an outstanding citizen who was a socially and publicly active figure: "...Take heart. You know he'll be eternally amongst you and us. His deeds, his musical talent will not ever be forgotten with time" (1964). Again, in 1960, "...we will long remember in our hearts the memory of the good public servant Vasil Seber Burborkov, who wanted to see eternal peace for humanity." And finally, from the same reading cited in the previous paragraph (1962), "...Comrades, we'll long remember in our hearts the memory of *Dyado* Taryanko, who wanted to see humanity in eternal peace..." All speeches finished in the standard way, 'May the memory of her/him live on forever'. Thus we see the aspect that remains eternal and not forgotten with time was the deceased's contribution to society. In this way, the

traditional-religious concept of the afterlife was rejected in the eulogies, which instead located any belief in afterlife firmly within the social domain – there was no world other than the one of the living in society. Any sense of immortality was attained as a result of the contribution individuals made to history, in their participation in the development of the socialist state.

The location of traditional funeral practices contributed to their significance; the site at which the state-sponsored eulogy was read was similarly important. The eulogy was presented outside the *Chitalishte*, an important centre of village historical celebrations. More precisely, the funeral procession stopped in front of the war memorial (which was located directly outside the *Chitalishte*) erected to those who had died fighting for the socialist state during World War II. The site was thus appropriate for the reading of an eulogy, which was essentially an historical account of an individual's life, deeds and achievements. It was even more significant that 'true communists', such as the deceased Arian Pashev, were placed inside the *Chitalishte*, where all villagers and important visiting state officials filed past his body. Subsequently he was returned outside the *Chitalishte* to the war memorial and a long biography was read. This occurred in Arian Pashev's case because, as a 'true communist', he was a true 'master' of linear time, of history. It was only participants intimately involved in the construction of history during the 1940's, – and in Arian Pashev's case also the 1920's – as respected political figures, who were carried into the heart of the *Chitalishte*. The placement of exceptional state officials within this building acknowledged their commitment to state goals and correspondingly their rejection of traditional beliefs about death. Ordinary individuals whose contributions to the realisation of historical goals were less morally and teleologically significant, were located outside the *Chitalishte*.

The redefining of death as a concern of the social rather than religious (traditional) domain, was evident in other ways. In the Talpian cemetery, the more recent tombstones had either a cross or red star, which indicated the person's location in her/his life as either a religious believer or communist. Such an identification of the deceased's social position after death as either a communist or traditionalist was clearly of significance. In the same vein, at the main cemetery in Sofia, people were buried in certain areas, according to their position in society during their lifetime. For example all the top Party officials were buried in the one area, all writers in another, all painters in yet another. That is, location in a burial site was determined by the social contribution the deceased had made to the development of historical goals. Further, the tombstones themselves made a statement about the deceased's role in society; a poet had some of his poetry engraved on the sides of

the stone, a writer's tombstone carried a sculpture of an individual writing a book. Each tombstone was individually designed, no two being alike.

The maintenance of social differentiation after death was another means by which traditional beliefs of death and afterlife were rejected. We may recall that through the unification of all deceased in the other world of eternal life, traditions eliminated any differentiation between people after death, at the same time denying all social constructions of the earthly life. That is, the traditional notions of death upheld a conception of afterlife which denied the social distinctions of the mortal world. A state-advocated position contrasted with the traditional stance. For a deceased's identification after death with a specific social profession and the maintenance of her/his individuality (as evident from the unique tombstones in the Sofia cemetery), or indeed a simple display of identity as communist or not, as occurred in Talpa, was a way of upholding the relevancy of social differentiation, of social categorisation after death. The part of the funeral which involved state officials, maintained the relevancy of social uniqueness after death through the eulogy which constructed the deceased's unique role in history and through individualised tombstones which conveyed the importance of her/his contribution to history.

By location within the social, rather than the traditionally supernatural or religious domain, death was construed as a permanent, non-reversible phenomenon, which appealed to linear time. Thus the traditionally-held beliefs in death as cyclic in nature, in the sense that the person did not die as much as continue life in a new realm of eternal life, was replaced by a conception of death which was grounded firmly in the social domain controlled by state authorities. In the latter case, the maintenance of a person's social position in respect to her/his historical contribution to society was the aspect identified as eternal. Religious (traditional) concepts of death were appropriated and made socially – not traditionally or religiously – relevant. The mourning family did not need to turn to traditions to explain the unknowable and problematic aspects of death, but could take comfort in the social relevancy and social immortality of the deceased in society. We may therefore note the converse way in which the theme of death was constructed by the two differing temporal orders; traditions defined a notion of humanity that unified all individuals after death via a belief in afterlife, while historically-influenced practices created diversity after death, through the maintenance of the relevancy of social uniqueness.

The funeral speech was not folklore since it was not re-contextualised and so based on a temporal and spatial stage distanced from everyday life; rather it was a relevant part of the funeral rites. However, as the state's 'voice', the speech clearly indicated the means by

which traditional notions were addressed in a way which I believe was also relevant to an understanding of *survakani* and more generally of folklore. *Survakani*, as a folkloric custom, held a similar state-supported position to that put forward in the speech; most importantly, both demanded reflection upon the past, from the perspective of state-supported historical goals – *survakani*, by taking up once-traditional practices which were unquestioned parts of everyday life; the speech because it required one to reflect on past activities and practices of the deceased. Further, both were enacted within a state-defined and dominated structure, which was controlled by state officials and was located in the public domain, in areas predominantly under state control – the former being carried out in educational institutions of the school and *Pionerski Dom*, the latter inside, or more commonly, outside the *Chitalishte* in the central plaza. Given the similarities, I believe it valid to draw some conclusions about *survakani* on the basis of the discussion of the eulogy readings.

It has already been established in the discussion of *survakani* that folklore represented the relation between man and nature as one in which humanity had the upper hand (previous section). The eulogy also advocated such a relation. Both revealed the direct influence humanity had over nature, rather than its dependence on religious forces. By way of discussion of the eulogy, we attain more information about this state-sponsored view of the man-nature relationship. Nature was espoused as linear, impermanent and not able to be determined by any means – including supernatural forces – except by way of its greater understanding through knowledge. This represented a direct movement away from a traditional construction – which structured natural occurrences as cyclical and as a force which could not be understood or reckoned with except by the mediation of religion – and towards an appreciation of nature through knowledge. In constituting nature as laws which could be learnt, knowledge and the means by which it was conveyed – by state-run educational institutions – enabled humanity to come to terms with nature, if not control it. Unsurprisingly, state officials aligned with educational institutions had an active part in the organisational control of both the folkloric *survaknitsa* and the eulogy reading (which was written and read by a state official). The educational institutions were part of the process by which traditional practices such as *survakani* were established as folklore; they provided the context through which people could learn about the traditional past and know it as folklore. The location of the eulogy outside and sometimes within the *Chitalishte* (which we recall from Chapter 1 was an historical site in which educational programs were held), and *survakani* in the school and *Pionerski Dom*, attested to the valued role of education in both these state-sponsored activities. Ultimately, the importance attributed to education in the eulogy and folkloric *survakani* celebration, was in respect to the means by

which man's relation to nature was established as being in the control of humanity through a faith in knowledge and education, rather than at the mercy of supernatural-religious forces.

The movement away from the religious and towards the social realm of relevancy was also evident in the funeral practices in respect to the maintenance of social differentiations after death, which thus rejected the unifying effect of religious notions connected with afterlife beliefs. The act of distinguishing between *survaknitsi* in the competition served a similar purpose. An important part of constructing a folkloric *survaknitsa* was the assumption that it was different from other entries in the competition; this was a consequence of the structure of the competition, which created the necessity for the selection of one *survaknitsa* as having more appeal than the others. (Indeed by definition, if all entered *survaknitsi* were the same, the event would not be a competition). The importance of constructing a folkloric *survaknitsa* which was visibly 'authentic' and at the same time unique, contrasted with the situation of the traditional celebration where although the *survaknitsa* would never be exactly the same as any other – to begin with, no two branches from the cornel tree could be replicated – there was, nevertheless, a relatively less pronounced difference of appearance between the *survaknitsi* used traditionally. They were all very similar in appearance simply because, to recall *Baba* Grigora's words, "...in the old days they never made the *survaknitsa* so fancy, they just tied some dried fruit and bits of lolly paper on the branches." The slight attention paid to the traditional *survaknitsa* meant that little substantial change was made to the appearance of the natural cornel branch. In the same way as social differentiation maintained a socialist form of 'immortality' after death, so the visible differentiations existing between the folkloric *survaknitsi*, also encouraged a way to undercut a unity set up by traditions. In the case of the folkloric *survaknitsa*, elaborate decorations served to distract attention away from religious acts and meanings associated with the traditional practice. The centre of attention was the folkloric *survaknitsa* itself, as a concrete object which held aesthetic appeal and artistic value. Of course 'difference' in the case of the folkloric *survaknitsa* was encouraged only in a particular way; delineated by the necessity for individual expression via emphasis on visual presentation according to guidelines of authenticity discussed in the previous section. (Otherwise it could not have served its unifying role as representative of a region).

The concern with the aesthetic appeal of the cornel branch and the fact that differences between *survaknitsi* were acceptable (within limits), enabled a degree of creativity and individual expression. Creating a socialist sense of the folklorically aesthetic was valued in terms of the socialist determined goals of the project, which in the case of the

survaknitsa was to attain the authentic 'reproduction' of tradition. Socialist creativity was thus dependent on the artistic endeavours of an individual striving to build and contribute an aesthetically pleasing object which was 'beautiful' precisely because it served the needs of socialist historical goals; namely the re-contextualisation of the traditional past. This was equally true of the state-supported views of burial; what was memorialised in the unique and artistic Sofian tombstones and in the eulogy readings was an individual's statement about her/his distinct contribution to the state. Such a contribution was not only memorialised, but also provided the basis on which socialist citizens were attributed immortality. On the other hand traditional funeral practices created a commonality between humanity in terms of a belief in the afterlife – an immortality of the *doosha* in the 'other world'. A rejection of human difference was also upheld in the traditional *survaknitsa* where creativity, a sense of the traditionally aesthetic, was not in human control, but was embedded in the religious activities associated with the tapping of the shoulder of an adult and the speaking of a verse which conveyed happiness, health and success. The child was the conveyor of such fulfilment but not the source, which was beyond human determination. The relocation of traditional notions away from the religious and into the social domain, was achieved through the emphasis of social differentiation, that is, through a notion of immortality and creativity which was not rooted in religion but in society. Religious notions of immortality expressed in terms of *doosha* were transformed into a socialist immortality which was based on an individual's contribution to historical goals. It was the memory of an individual's contribution to the socialist state which was immortalised. Again, a traditional sense of the aesthetic, dependent on a religion which provided fulfilment and determined humanity's needs – be they success in agricultural ventures, happiness, health, matters of life and death – was replaced by a socialist sense of the aesthetic, as folklore, which represented humanity's own determination through its creative endeavours. In this way *survakani*, as folklore, had a social rather than religious relevancy and therefore overcame traditional beliefs which were perceived to be a threat to state historical goals.

b) Folklore and History

The following addresses the relationship between folklore and history, or more specifically, looks at folklore through its relationship to history, using the *Chitalishte* Centennial event as a basis for the discussion. The Celebration, which marked the 100 year anniversary of the foundation of the village *Chitalishte*, had both historical and folkloric significance (this provided a source of contention, which is central to the concerns in Chapter 6). Here, the interest is primarily with the location of folklore within the event; accordingly, this aspect is given prominence. The national *Chitalishte*, as the centre of cultural and political activity, played an important role in the nation's history – as a central site in the struggle for Bulgarian freedom from the Turks and later from the fascists, both crucial events through which Talpians defined themselves as 'Bulgarians' (see Chapter 1). As a commemoration of the Talpian *Chitalishte's* historical past, the Centennial event was therefore also a commentary on and celebration of the villagers' identity as Bulgarian. Significantly, folklore played a prominent part in these festivities. The occasion therefore provides an opportunity to explore a function of the characteristics of folklore brought to attention in the first section – that as a dimension of socialist culture, folklore contributed to an understanding of Bulgarian identity.

The celebration marking a hundred years since the foundation of the *Chitalishte*, took place on the 5th December, 1987, commencing mid-morning and attended by many state officials, including the newly-elected Federal Minister for the region, the Federal Minister for Culture and other officials from Sofia, the regional capital of Turnovo and the district capital of Nekilva. The ceremony began with a thirty minute speech by Matov, the head of the Talpian *Chitalishte*, in which he reflected on the past and present activities of the Institution and on its role in the future. Following the speech, awards were presented to those who had been most active in the *Chitalishte's* past and congratulatory letters were read from Zhivkov (who had been invited but was unable to attend) and other Sofian, regional, district and village officials. This part of the proceedings concluded, the stage was cleared and the second half of the celebration began – the musical program, with items from Nekilva, Turnovo and Talpa. The program consisted of patriotic poem and song recitals, classical performances of opera music, folkloric songs from the Talpian vocal group, folkloric music played by an orchestra from Nekilva and finally, a children's folkloric ensemble also from Nekilva.

To begin with a general point: the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration gave recognition to a large number of people and their activities which had contributed to the historical

development of the *Chitalishte* over a long time span – from its earliest beginnings to the present. No activity, period or person, was given particular emphasis relative to that of any other in Bulgarian history; equal attention was paid to all in the main speech (by Matov) and in the musical program. Thus in the speech, recognition was given to villagers – both living and dead – who had contributed in a variety of ways at different times to *Chitalishte* activities. Acknowledgments began with the identification of the founding members, who had created a school for the elderly, a library and organised theatrical activities. This was followed by the identification of subsequent contributors, in turn: the main *Chitalishte* activists, such as Arian Pashev, involved in the 1920's struggle against the fascists and those active in the 1940's (including Pashev, Mikanov and Matov) who were involved in a youth *Chitalishte* group which performed plays, celebrated festivals and carried out other politically-based activities. An instrumental group formed at this time was also mentioned. The list included Naymov, who had contributed to the institution for over 40 years, then continued on to the main contributors since World War II, members including Boteva who had been involved in a singing and dancing group in the 1970's, Petrova who had preformed in plays during the same time, and Rusev who, as the first paid librarian, was currently responsible for the reading collection. Since 1944, numerous external lecturers had also spoken at the *Chitalishte*, while the museum, which had been opened in 1976, was an additional responsibility of the *Chitalishte*. Acknowledgment was also made to the contemporary participants in the vocal group led by retired professional musician, Andre Pashev. The same pattern was followed in the entertainment, where the past, from the Turkish period to contemporary times, was celebrated through music, poetry and dancing. This covered a wide range of activities and performers who were influential in the organisation's historical development over its 100 year existence.

I note the extensive set of activities and people whose contribution was celebrated as part of the *Chitalishte* Centennial in order to make two points. Firstly, in the speech Matov labelled these activities as 'Bulgarian culture'[13]. Bulgarian culture was said to have educational value and was instrumental in the development of the Bulgarian nation. The association between Bulgarian culture and the *Chitalishte* was evident in the fact that the highest state official guest at the event was the Minister for Culture. In his speech, Matov

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13 I use the speech read by Matov at the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration and Zhivkov's writings in order to discuss 'education' and 'culture'. This is appropriate because Matov's speech was an important part of the *Chitalishte* Celebration; it may be viewed as a textualised exploration of the nature of the event. I draw on Zhivkov's writings for additional information, because the Talpian and Nekilva organisers had fashioned the material in terms of that which they believed he and other state officials in attendance would have approved. Drawing on these sources alleviates to some extent the inadequate recording and analysis of folklore, where the visual and sound data, which are a vital part of the significance of folklore – and the other cultural activities – cannot be adequately conveyed.

reminded the audience that "...one of the most important cultural organisations must be our national *Chitalishte.*" The *Chitalishte* was considered to be at the very heart of Bulgarian culture and education; Matov spoke of the *Chitalishte* as playing "...an important role in socialist culture and the education of the people" and again "...It has historical importance and has made a major contribution to the cultural uplifting of our people, for the education and upbringing of our youth." Thus the *Chitalishte's* historical past was celebrated in terms of its being a centre of Bulgarian culture which was associated with education. Secondly, we may note the importance of the past and present in such an understanding of Bulgarian culture. Bulgarian culture had a broad temporal range which began with the foundation of the *Chitalishte* after the successful struggle against the Turks, followed by the confrontation of fascist oppressors in the 1920's and again in the World War II period, and subsequent events in the *Chitalishte* from 1944 to the present. The fact that the *Chitalishte's* cultural activities glorified as vital in the attainment of the nation's freedom occurred within a wide-ranging temporal framework, is a significant aspect in understanding Bulgarian identity, a point to which I return later. But first it is necessary to explore briefly the association between culture – more specifically Bulgarian culture – and educational activities and how folklore as one form of Bulgarian culture, fits into this order.

Culture and education, were both historically-oriented Chitalishte activities. The cultural role of the *Chitalishte* was associated with its contribution to the educational system. As touched on briefly in Chapter 2, the importance of education in historical goals was viewed by Zhivkov as one means of transforming the consciousness of the individual in socialist society. Moreover, education functioned to produce well balanced individuals; it catered to their social development. Zhivkov stated that "It is the purpose of our educational system to shape many-sided – and eventually all round – individuals, capable of fulfilling themselves in life" (1988, p.84;. see also 1986b, p.223), that is, it is "...a process of changing people in and through their work and social activity" (Zhivkov 1969, p.590). Education was the way to attain mastery over socialist knowledge – as was suggested in the eulogy readings in the previous section – over a broad range of knowledge which made up an individual's formal tutoring. "School is the field for expression of the personality, teaching man how to gain knowledge of himself, test and apply his abilities, in a communist attitude to labour, ensuring the mastery of a profession with which he can confidently embark on his life's career" (Zhivkov 1984, p.136). Socialist knowledge was attained through the formalised system; education was primarily an activity located in schools and vocational training institutions (Zhivkov 1969, p.256 and 1988, p.82) and, by policy, made widely accessible to the masses. The *Chitalishte* was viewed as contributing

to the transmission of socialist knowledge, serving a pedagogic function which extended the role of the schools. This was brought out by Matov at the *Chitalishte* Centennial event, in quoting Blagoev as having identified, from the earliest beginnings of the *Chitalishte*, that it was a school for the elderly. In the speech, Matov considered at great length the educational role of the *Chitalishte* and the variety of self-educational programs that had been run in it from its foundation to the present day. The continued educational importance of the *Chitalishte* in the village's present and future was anticipated by Matov in his concluding remarks, when he said that the "*Chitalishte* has increasing influence educationally in the building of socialism..." and finally, "...In its second century of existence it will teach and educate future generations."

When considering the wide variety of disciplines in the educational domain – from science to the arts – culture was but one aspect of a socialist education. An interest in culture was clearly oriented towards educational aims; it was also historically oriented, concerned with transforming the consciousness of the individual and, as Matov noted, provided "...the conditions under which they [the masses] could reach a truly human existence." Culture was thus one facet of the humanising and multi-dimensional nature of the socialist individual. The continued support for cultural activities as a present concern of the socialist society was therefore important. According to Matov: "Bulgaria cannot but continue to evolve as a highly developed, cultural, socialist society ...we cannot increase the standard of living without improving the culture." In the final moments of his speech, he anticipated the continued relevancy of cultural *Chitalishte* activities in the period of *Preustroistvo*,[14] when he concluded, "the national *Chitalishte*, 'Progress', in Talpa has for a century worked for the betterment of villagers' lives and will now have a role in the *Preustroistvo* of socialist society. ... *Preustroistvo* will look closely at the cultural side of the village."

As one aspect of a socialist education, cultural activities were distinguished from education through the former's concern with the 'spiritual' side of socialist humanity. Culture provided a socialist notion of beauty and creativity. It supplied the means, as Matov noted in his speech, to "...enrich the people's spiritual life" and was connected with "...the happiness of the person." This followed Zhivkov's writings, which established the importance of culture as something to "...make our people's life happier, easier and more beautiful..." (1969, p.404; 1986a, p.152,) and again "...Bulgarian socialist culture should...become a source of high spirits and enjoyment of life, of inspiration for work, for creativity, for life" (Zhivkov 1986a, p.301). Cultural activities were perceived as

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14 '*Preustroistvo*', as already noted in Chapter 1, was the Bulgarian equivalent of the Russian '*Perestroika*'

providing an outlet for creative and aesthetic tasks which were in line with historical goals, part of the progress toward communism (Zhivkov 1986a, p.152), contributing to the development of the well-rounded socialist human being. In short, culture was "aesthetic education" in Zhivkov's terms (1984, p.148; 1986a, p.184; 1988, p.61). It was in this sense, that Matov spoke about the contemporary role of the *Chitalishte* as providing the 'spiritual' heart of socialism, that it provided "...the centre of the spiritual life" of the village and that "...it is the means of enriching the spiritual life of the village." Notably, the 'spiritual' development of socialist man was thus connected with Bulgarian cultural-educational activities; it had no religious connotations, (as already implied in the previous section).

The mastery over a particular form of socialist knowledge – that which contributed to the development of a socialist sense of the aesthetic through an individual's creative expression which served to fulfil her/his spiritual needs – represented a specific way in which to engage in history; one which was a publicly recognised step toward the well-roundedness of the socialist character and which was based on the formal attendance at a variety of institutions, such as the *Chitalishte* and school. Various activities, including the plays performed in the *Chitalishte*, the lectures and social gatherings, were all part of the dissemination of knowledge, part of the educational process – but with an educational importance and specificity known as 'culture'. Culture, as 'aesthetic education', provided a state-approved framework for individual expressions of creativity and was, in Mitev's words, "...tied with socialism and the happiness of the person." As a form of knowledge which contributed to the spiritual side of the socialist individual and to the completeness of life in the socialist state, cultural activities such as music, painting, sculpture, architecture, plays and films were restricted to particular sites – the *Chitalishtes*, schools, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, galleries and museums. In this sense cultural and educational activities may be distinguished from each other by the function they served – cultural activities were a particular form of educational activity, being a means to realise historical goals through the development of the creative side of socialist individuals – rather than by the nature of the activities themselves or the sites in which they were located.

Given the understanding of socialist culture as providing the creative dimension to the socialist development of humanity, *Bulgarian* culture may be viewed as those specific creative forms of expression which were used to depict the particular historical development of the nation and which distinguished between territorial sites on this basis. 'Bulgarianness' was a means of distinction, using socialist cultural activities in order to separate an 'us' from a 'them' in a state-approved manner; it was the basis for a delineation, a way for the Bulgarian nation to distinguish itself both from the rest of the world socialist

community and those not concerned with following a socialist path. The distinction was in terms of the nation-state and its understood course of historical development by means of cultural activities which encouraged an uniqueness but only in the service of historical goals. That is, Bulgarian culture was a celebration of the historical occurrences particular to the Bulgarian nation, a depiction of significant incidents and struggles which were part of the overall historical development of the country, portrayed through 'aesthetic' forms of education. Prominent historical particularities were struggles for freedom from Turks and fascists in the specific way in which they took place in Bulgaria. (Chapter 1 identified these episodes as significant in a Talpian understanding of themselves as Bulgarian). This was one source of Bulgarianness; constituted through cultural activities and viewed as an important part of the unique historical progression of the nation which was different from other nations' historical development. Thus Bulgarian culture was a temporal, historical delineation; Bulgarianness was known in terms of cultural activities which referred to the particular historical circumstances that were part of the past of the people – for example involving the Turks and fascists and certain battles and national heroes associated with the struggle for freedom from these oppressive forces. The present, which arose out of these specific historical circumstances and has continued the struggle for historical development, provides another source of what constituted 'Bulgarianness'. That is, Bulgarian culture was more than just the past, celebrated as aesthetic education, but included representations of the present which were also espoused as part of the country's unique path toward historical development.

Zhivkov identified three sources of Bulgarian national socialist culture. The first was Bulgarian heritage accumulated through centuries of oppression by Turkish rule and in this century, by fascist dictatorship. The second was an interpretation of contemporary socialist life, a portrayal through media such as plays and art concerning present socialist heroes – working people striving to develop the communist goal of society. The third source was world culture – especially world socialist culture – which manifested the heights scaled by the human creative spirit. "It is from these three sources that the deep flowing river of our culture springs today. These sources determine its content, its main powerful current and its dynamic flow" (Zhivkov 1986a, p.145, also p.12 and p.298; 1984, p.127; 1986b, p.399; 1988, p.63).

Zhivkov's three cultural sources corresponded to the nature of the material presented in the *Chitalishte* Centennial entertainment program; the celebration of socialist heroes in history, the reference to internationalist culture and the inclusion of activities which, as centuries-old traditional customs, were given folkloric importance in socialist culture. All three emphasised differing dimensions of culture which, *in toto*, made up Bulgarian culture

and contributed to an understanding of Bulgarian identity. To turn briefly to the first part of the musical program of the *Chitalishte* Centennial, we note that the entertainment opened with a patriotic poem about the beauty of Bulgaria that signified the main theme for the entertainment section – a celebration of 'Bulgarianness' through the performance of cultural activities. The two political songs by a youth vocal group from Nekilva, which followed the patriotic poem, firmly established a Bulgarian identity as having a political significance to history. The songs, which glorified past socialist heroes, were about the heroic deeds of World War II partisans. Such cultural activities which held political significance, referring to 1944 events as a momentous point in the nation's past, were important in the conception of Bulgarianness. There followed several modern classical works from the Bulgarian Opera, both solo and duet pieces performed by professional Turnovo singers. As an internationally recognised structure of music, combined with specifically Bulgarian operatics, the items located Bulgarian culture on the contemporary world stage, providing an internationalist facet to a Bulgarian socialist identity. This part of the program paid tribute to present socialist cultural achievements, a contemporary contribution made by Bulgaria to the world cultural stage. I note these cultural activities to emphasise the variety and dimensions of activities which contributed to a notion of Bulgarian culture. Clearly, the politically significant period of 1944 (proclaimed by the political songs) and the present development of internationally-acclaimed contemporary culture (Bulgarian opera), provided two facets of that which constituted Bulgarian culture and therefore two dimensions of Bulgarian identity represented through culture.

The second part of the musical program, delineated from the first by a few minutes' interval, provided another dimension to a Bulgarian socialist identity – neither glorifying World War II events nor relating to contemporary international issues. Instead, it celebrated the times before socialism, through items which were introduced by the two comperes of the program, as folklore. The first two songs, performed by the Talpian vocal group, were about the Turkish period of oppression; the following performances by a folkloric orchestra from the district centre of Nekilva, were musical items using instruments which had been used in Bulgaria for centuries and following musical scores played and heard well before 1878 and the attainment of Bulgaria's freedom from the Turks. In similar vein was the final item by a large children's ensemble (numbering over 50) from the national *Chitalishte* in Nekilva. The children were dressed in brilliant red and white embroidered costumes and performed folkloric dancing and singing which could not be determined as originating in any particular period, except that it was pre-1944.

Below I present the words of one song performed by the Talpian vocal group:

Kade si, vyarna ti lyubov narodna?	Where are you, true national spirit?
Kade bleshtish ti iskra lyuborodna?	Where glow you, spark of love of homeland?
Ya silen plamak ti plamni,	O that a strong flame blazes up for you,
Ta booyen ogern razpali	So that an awakening fire shall kindle
Ha mladite v sertzata	In the hearts of the young
Da trergnat po gorata!	To head for the forest!
Plamni, plamni ti v nac, lyubov goresht	Ignite, ignite in us, a blazing love
Protiv vrazite da stoim nasreshta!	To stand against the enemies!
Da viknem vsichki s glas golyam	To call everyone in a loud voice
Po vsichkiya Kodzha - balkan:	Over all Kodzha mountain:
Golyamo, malko, stavai	Large, small, arise,
Orerzhie zapasvai!	Belt up your weapons!
Za nasheto otechestvo i slava,	For our Fatherland, and glory,
Za nashata svoboda i derdjava	For our freedom and country
Da si proleem vsi krevta	To spill our blood,
Da si dobiem volnostta	To gain our liberty
Ot nashite tirani –	From our tyrants –
Bezverni agaryani!	The unbelieving Turks!

We may briefly note the characteristics which denote the performance of this song as folklore. Firstly, its obviously re-contextualised form; its removal from the context of situations when it was presumably used as a call to arms against the Turks – perhaps sung around camp fires in the forests where partisans hid, or at 'social' gatherings in the *Chitalishte*s where Bulgarians met and organised their resistance to the Turks – to its textualisation and performance on a stage in Talpa which had had no collective involvement in the battle against the Turks and which was temporally and spatially quite separate from the song and its origins. Secondly, we observe the involvement of both state and non-state figures in its presentation; the Talpian women performers – many of whom were not Party or state officials – and the participation of high level state officials as the approving audience. Further, it appealed to the glory of the country and national spirit, not to the glory of God; indeed there is no reference to religion in this patriotic song despite

the important role of the Orthodox church in resisting Turkish domination. Finally, the song's origins and authorship remain unknown, unlike some of the politically significant items in the first segment of the entertainment program and unlike the opera which had identification with a particular composer in contemporary Bulgaria.

The last issue points to the song's broad relevancy, helping to establish the Talpian villagers' identity not in terms of the village or even district, but in respect to events which united and were defined to be of common concern to all 'Bulgarians'. The re-contextualisation of the song resulted in its lack of specificity; it was a message directed to a general populace – to all Bulgarians, those for whom freedom from Turkish oppression held historical significance. Thus, the song recorded above, which was a call to arms to all those who wished to do battle with the Turkish oppressors, could be performed on any *Chitalishte* stage throughout Bulgaria. It could conceivably be presented on a variety of occasions (for example celebrations relating to the 3rd March which was the date of the overthrow of the Turks) and in a number of places, including schools and *Chitalishtes.* The song would have had significance in all such situations. As with *survakani* and the other folkloric items from the musical program, the song held a general relevancy which focussed interest upon non-political historical events, providing unification at the national level. A Bulgarian identity founded on folklore was based on something available to all, a re-contextualised set of past practices which could be performed on a variety of occasions and in which everyone could participate in the creation and appropriation of cultural activities and objects. This meant that while Talpa had no traditional songs (for reasons outlined in Chapter 3), it did not deter the village vocal group from singing folkloric songs at the *Chitalishte* Centennial. Nor did it stop the group from wearing the folkloric costumes from the region, despite the fact that the costumes had little traditional significance to the Talpians. Indeed, the star soloist in the Talpian vocal group – who sang with the group in the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration – was a Turk, but neither her political nor traditional ethnic alliances excluded her from participating in Bulgarian folkloric culture.

The past which the song – as folklore – represented, differed from the other cultural activities of the program and was separated by a few minutes' interval. The folkloric song was different with respect to the time period to which it referred. It did not make any reference to the World War II period, to events or heroes connected with the advent of the socialist state, nor did it relate Bulgaria to the contemporary international stage. Rather, the song as folklore, concerned the pre-1944 period; in this case it was about the freedom from the Turks, that is, about pre-1878. However, it was not that the folkloric performance related to the pre-1944 period – the time identified in Chapter 3 as the domain of tradition

– which was its most significant feature, but that as folklore it was about 'another time'. The performance of the re-contextualised song established it to be about a distinct, non-modern time. The clothes worn helped visually locate the Talpian singers as folkloric performers. The other folkloric items in the program also used dress (typically colourful and embroidered), in addition to particular language or types of dance movements and musical instruments, all immediately recognisable as 'not modern'. This denoted the second part of the program as folkloric; that is, as culture which had contemporary significance as a representation of that which had now passed. A folkloric contribution to the musical program attributed the pre-1944 period a relevancy as representative of another time, which as non-modern culture, had a place in contemporary Bulgarian culture. It was on these terms that folklore could be immediately distinguished from the other cultural activities – the fact that it represented a temporal distantiation between the traditional past and the contemporary socialist world. The other cultural proceedings which made up the entertainment program differed from folklore in this regard – the dress of the opera singers (in currently fashionable, mainly black and white formal attire); the type of instruments used such as the piano; and the content of the songs – contributed to the visual and audible location of the cultural performances as being of 'this age'. The political songs and opera were about historic issues, issues which therefore had contemporary relevance; unlike folklore, they were not temporally separated from the socialist present.

This brings us to the issue of the importance of temporality with respect to Bulgarian culture, on which a socialist notion of Bulgarian identity depended. Bulgarian culture, considered as a whole, covered a broad temporal range, since all temporal periods were relevant in its celebration. (Zhivkov's three cultural sources and the speech and musical performance at the *Chitalishte* Centennial event reflected such a broad temporal perspective). It is here that a differentiation between cultural and political dimensions of history can be made. While both cultural and political activities were historically based and part of the process of realising history, the former created a different relationship to history from that of politics. Political activity was defined in Chapter 2 as founded on an individual's successful association with the morally and teleologically most significant historical events – those focussed around 1944 and the advent of the socialist state. That is, political activity was determined in terms of a relatively narrow definition of history, one which gave privileged status to certain events within the historical past. On the other hand, cultural activities made relevant a much more broadly-defined history, one which did not refer to specific historical events as pre-eminent. Those who participated in cultural activities engaged in a more generally defined history. The past, from a cultural perspective, was not one which elevated 1944 to any privileged position. Instead, 1944

was set contextually within the many events which had come before and after it and which were established as equally relevant in the celebration of the *Chitalishte's* past. Cultural activities defined a broadly significant historical past, one which gave an equal role to a variety of historical occurrences – from the Turkish to the contemporary socialist period. Thus both politics and culture – the two dimensions of *Chitalishte* activity – were considered part of the historical development of the village and a necessary part of the realisation of socialist goals; yet each gave a slightly differing emphasis to history. Politics emphasised an exclusive conception of history which gave a privileged location to 1944 events, while cultural activities referred to a broad history which gave equal relevancy to all historical events.

In revealing the broad basis of the past and present from which Talpians could draw an understanding of themselves as 'Bulgarian', we note the primary importance of temporality as a factor in understanding such national cultural activity. Bulgarian culture included a number of dimensions, one being activities which referred to a historical present and past. This dimension of culture included celebrated political activities and portrayals of present socialist life as cited and experienced since 1944, including ties to other socialist countries. Such cultural activities were historically relevant, creating a relatedness between the socialist present and past. Folklore provided the other dimension of Bulgarian culture – as set up in the 100 year *Chitalishte* ceremony – which focussed on the pre-1944 period, that is, the country's traditional past, Folklore was distanced temporally from the other cultural performances, it presented a former stage of Bulgarians' own existence, one from which the socialist state had arisen but which was currently invalid or non-relevant except as a display of what had been. That is, folklore was a state-approved way of presenting that which was 'non-socialist', a means to set up a temporal distance between the traditional past and socialist present. It represented the state's reworking of the traditional past in a way which made it acceptable for incorporation into a socialist identity – converting traditional practices into Bulgarian culture which was then performed on occasions where socialist identity was at issue. The traditional past was thus incorporated within a present socialist identity but only on the state's terms – as folklore. Contemporary villagers were provided with a way to both distinguish themselves from, and yet relate themselves to, their traditional past in a state-approved way – through its re-contextualisation as folklore. Thus folklore attributed a socialist understanding to the pre-socialist period and, in

including the latter as an aspect of Bulgarian culture, incorporated it within the terms of historical goals[15].

In the process, this folkloric Bulgarian identity broke traditionally-delineated notions of ethnicity, both territorial boundaries and the religious base. Folklore did not constitute ethnicity in terms of religion, but was firmly grounded in history through its educational-cultural value – as a state-determined performance given artistic appeal as 'Bulgarian culture'. A folkloric Bulgarian notion of ethnicity was defined in terms of a unifying identity relevant at the national rather than village level, thus rejecting the lower order (territorial and religious) distinctions characteristic to tradition. Folklore reconstituted ethnicity founded on a notion of 'Bulgarianness', that is, of regional-national significance – a unifying identity which was historically significant and delineated on the basis of (non-religious) educational-cultural aspects. This represented an incorporation of the traditional within contemporary Bulgarian culture and identity but only in an a-temporal form, as folklore.

Conclusion

Folklore was a construction of the past, established through a transformational process which attributed a historical dimension to an a-historical past. As the state appropriation of tradition for its own hegemonic (historical) purposes, folklore was a temporal construction rooted in tradition, but largely determined in terms of a state-influenced historical context. The fact that folklore was based on traditional customs designated as historically significant, determined its character as influenced by tradition and history and yet remaining essentially distinct from both.

The mediatory location of folklore in respect to the other two constructions of the past, was evident in respect to its specific characteristics identified in the first section, via a discussion of the *survaknitsa* competition. Primarily, the *survaknitsa* competition, as folkloric, represented a past which involved the removal of customs from their traditional context and their institutionalisation in state-controlled arenas (schools, festivals, museums) by state officials. The institutionalisation included the documentation of the traditional past, its dissemination in textualised form and the re-creation of it in a new

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15 It is only since the period of 'post-Stalinisation', that any sense of national identity was encouraged in Bulgaria (as implied in Zhivkov 1986a, p.137). Non-coincidently this was also the period when folklore 'arose'.

context as folklore, in a variety of state-run sites. The re-location of tradition into state-determined contexts was a process which rejected certain traditional characteristics – for example religious – while giving greater importance to other aspects which had little traditional significance, such as the concern with the aesthetic appeal of traditional objects. The new folkloric context of the *survaknitsa* represented a major shift of significance; from practices which would bring about certain desirable conditions in life via religious means, to the aesthetic appeal of folklore as objects of artistic value. The alteration in meaning involved the maintenance of a traditionally cyclic content combined with a linear context – this dislocation between a cyclic content and linear context rendered folklore a time-less construction of the past. Its a-temporality permitted folklore to hold wide-ranging influence: anyone could participate; and it was performed in both private and public arenas. It also meant that the contemporary value of folklore was through its representation of something that 'was'; its temporal relevancy was restricted to an unattainable past which was dislocated from any present or future significance, except on the basis of its representation of the traditional past, as passed.

The two following sections focussed on certain consequences of the characteristics of folklore which I viewed as particularly important when considering its nature as a state-appropriation of tradition – namely attention was given to the implications folklore had for the traditional domain of relevancy (religion) and for traditional views of ethnicity.

A discussion of the part played by state officials in the funeral rites, indicated the way state policy addressed traditional beliefs in respect to man's relation to nature and death. The rejection of religious (Christian or pre-Christian) notions about death and afterlife through maintaining death as an irrevocable occurrence and the value of social differentiation after death, relocated traditional religious views within the concern of the social realm. It was on the basis of the high value placed on education and the gaining of knowledge about nature, that traditional beliefs of death were re-determined as state social(ist) concerns. Education was a way in which the religious relevancy of tradition was rejected and authority over traditions achieved. The similarities between the folkloric *survaknitsa* and the eulogy part of the funeral, suggested that folklore more generally, as a state-controlled phenomenon, acted as a critique upon traditional-religious practices by attributing social relevancy to practices which previously held religious significance; through espousing a faith in education rather than religion.

The last section focussed on the role of folklore in the *Chitalishte* Centennial Celebration, in order to explore a dimension of folklore's educational character as an object of cultural interest, and therefore as a dimension of Bulgarian culture. As a widely-defined inclusive

past which attributed no special significance to any aspect of the past or present, culture had far-reaching relevancy. Within this framework, folklore represented a specific notion of Bulgarian culture which contributed to a conception of national identity on the basis of its reference to pre-1944. Its re-contextualised a-temporal order and significance as aesthetically important, set up folklore as a cultural object relevant to a state-determined national identity. It was a controlled and approved way in which the traditional past was modified to serve the nationalistic purposes of the socialist state. The unifying role of folklore at the national level (achieved through the re-contextualisation of traditions) provided state opposition to the disunifying tendency of ethnic identity defined in traditional terms. A folkloric Bulgarian identity was no longer dependent on religious demarcations, but delineated in terms of educational-cultural performances, displays and exhibitions which reorganised traditional ethnic differentiation in state terms. Ethnicity defined by folklore was attributed value as a historically-oriented educational-cultural phenomenon and was experienced as a series of cultural aesthetic objects by which Talpians could know themselves as Bulgarian. In this way folklore, in subsuming the traditional past in the hegemonic purposes of state identity, countered a traditional notion of ethnicity; it represented a state critique of tradition.

The designation of folklore as 'another time', was also the source of its contrast to the other two constructions of the past – history and tradition. For unlike both a politicised-history and tradition, folklore constructed a past as distant and re-contextualised, existing only as a time-less, dismembered set of practices controlled by state policy and outside a traditionally meaningful context. (This explains the source of the difference between folkloric museums and the historical museum in Talpa. The latter was not similar to folkloric museums because the exhibits had contemporary, political relevancy. The whole purpose of the Talpian museum was to establish the contemporary appositeness of political history, which villagers achieved by putting on display their shared past with Zhivkov. The position was exactly the opposite of folkloric museums, where there was no question of the viewers and exhibits existing in the same temporal zone; they existed in two distinct times. The issue is pursued further in the Concluding Chapter). This constituted folklore, above history or tradition, as most appropriate in upholding an identity of 'Bulgarianness'. For politicised-history was exclusive in the sense that it was pivoted around the significant date of 1944 and only those who could establish an intimate involvement in the events of this period were successfully incorporated as political figures. Traditions were also exclusive: their religious nature defined their unacceptability for support by state officials and they created delineations not only within regions but also within villages. Therefore, neither a political history nor tradition could constitute a sense of unity on the basis of

national identity, because they were mutually exclusive constructions of the past. Nor could they accommodate the wide consonance that any conception of 'Bulgarianness' required. As a public phenomenon available to all, folklore was not exclusive – anyone could participate in its performance – nor were folkloric performances as restrictive in terms of spatial delineations. In this sense folklore had a greater range than historical celebrations, which were almost without exception located in the *Chitalishte*; or traditions, which could not be performed in historical sites and which remained separate from the state. As a feature of Bulgarian identity, folklore was able to cut across the spatial and temporal distinctions created by either traditional practices or historical celebrations. Its re-contextualised position granted it potential congruity for all. Folklore was thus able to incorporate all villagers – historical and traditional – under the banner of 'Bulgarian'.

As a collection of cultural objects, folklore had national unifying appositeness because it could be exhibited, displayed or performed in a wide-ranging number of locations and on many occasions. The re-contextualised nature of folklore, which designated it as representative of 'another time', allowed it to be easily incorporated within a variety of state-controlled contexts such as the media and tourist market. Folklore was thus able to be commoditised and sold; souvenir shops were stocked with Bulgarian cultural goods including music, Bulgarian-style embroidery found on clothes, Bulgarian-style pottery and leatherwork, and many other items. The many folkloric festivals and folkloric groups (from those at the professional international level, to the amateur village collectives) were all folkloric displays of 'Bulgarianness'. In its importance as Bulgarian culture, folklore represented the state's response to the traditional construction of the past; it was a state attempt to restructure the people's perception of the traditional past and neutralise its relevancy through creating a temporal (and spatial) dislocation of the traditional past from history. Folklore created a temporal distantiation between contemporary socialist society and its traditional past.

Chapter 5 The 'Model Village'

Introduction

Three constructions of the past - history, tradition and folklore - have been discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, together with their conceptual interrelation (insofar as this provided further insight into any particular construction of the past). In this and the following chapter, I analyse how the villagers themselves shaped relations between history, folklore and tradition. In order to explore a Talpian construction of the relationship between the three, the discussion directs attention to the *Obraztzovo Selo* (that is, 'model village') competition. This occasion presented an opportunity to explore the way the past was structured in a manner in which Talpians (or individual Talpians who represented state interests) believed the state would wish them to act. It was to the benefit of all village administrators to present one unified interpretation of the past - the state-approved version. The 'model village' competition was therefore about villagers' particular relation to the past, as structured by Talpians in agreement with their understanding of the monolithic state view. I examine the temporality of the event and how history, folklore and tradition were brought into a particular configuration to conform with a Talpian view of what the state officials held to be a 'model village'. The state-approved construction of the past was emphasised by the Talpians during the 'model village' competition as being the dominant one in the village. (This interpretation of the past is rendered problematic in the next chapter, where a more contentious past is explored).

The 'model village' competition was held annually to select the most exemplary village in Bulgaria. While in Talpa preparations for the competition extended over a number of years, the climax occurred on the day that the officials arrived to deliver the title to the successful village. Focussing on this latter event allows me to concentrate on the monolithic construction of the past presented on the day – when it was important that the villagers portray themselves as a unified body, involved and committed to state ideology – rather than on a construction by those who stood to benefit the most from such an

occasion[1]. It is because I am interested mainly in this monolithic and uncontentious rendition that I do not discuss the individual villagers who were most involved in the preparatory functions leading to the event [2]. I speak of 'the Talpians' having constructed or participated in the 'model village' event because on the actual day that the officials inspected the village and formally announced its success in the competition, the villagers presented themselves as a unified body, harmoniously working together to realise state ideological goals.

The general (rather than specific) guidelines for the competition were set by state officials from outside Talpa. Consequently, the participating villagers had a choice as to the way in which they could prepare the village and structure the event; that is, they had some freedom in the manner in which they rendered themselves as 'model'. The occasion resulted in a display of the aspects of state ideology which Talpians considered significant; the most important features from which they drew and inflected back to state officials in order to present Talpa as a 'model village'. It was a purposeful and explicit construction by the villagers of state ideology as they perceived it. Relevant background on state ideology as espoused in Zhivkov's writings is presented in the first section, followed by a brief description of the day when officials inspected Talpa and formally conveyed to it the title of 'model village'. Further sections consider the important themes of administration, class relations, morality and identity; these four aspects of the 'model village' event were chosen because they were the concepts through which Talpians chose to construct their understanding of state ideology. Through such means, the villagers reflected back to the state officials during the competition their apparent participation in state historical goals and in so doing defined themselves as 'model villagers'. However the particular way in which they represented themselves as 'model' – through the metaphors they used and the inclusion of particular village sites and the exclusion of others – was an inflection (rather than replication) of state ideology, in a specifically Talpian way.

As 'model villagers', Talpians fashioned themselves as serving the development of the socialist state towards its historical goal of communism. Every aspect of the villagers'

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1 Concentrating on the day's events allows me to bypass problems associated with data collection; firstly, the fact that the greater part of the planning for the occasion had been carried out well before my arrival in Talpa, secondly, many of the arrangements which occurred during my stay, were made at informal meetings between individual state officials or in closed Communist Party meetings to which I had no access.

2 Squabbles may have occurred between the central organisational figures, but I was not aware of them; nor were they at all obvious on the day of the event, when activity was, as noted above, aimed at displaying the uncontentious and harmonious nature of village life.

lives – their administrative relations, the nature of their productive activity and therefore class relations, their morality and identity – was a display of their commitment to this historical goal. In such a portrayal of themselves as 'model villagers' acquiescent to state ideology, the past was reflected upon and presented in a specific way; Talpians conferred a certain value to history, folklore and traditions, expressed as a configuration between the three, which gave primary importance to history. That is, the 'model village' event was a Talpian construction of state ideology, articulated as a configuration between the three constructions of the past.

State Ideology

"Socialism," said Pashev at the Annual Village Council meeting, "works by plan"[3]. Indeed, planning played a big part in the running of the village, at least as presented in the meetings held by the parties, government and mass organisations. Such meetings were centred on the discussion of 'itineraries', providing the villagers with guidelines for the future – passed down from higher state levels – and reviewing the successes, failures and general assessments of present operations. The 'model village' event was no exception to this, but exemplified the quality and character of the organised socialist village. It was the culmination of years of preparation by the villagers. The smooth running of the project and the way in which villagers were able to carry out successfully the organisational work in a disciplined and designated manner, was indicative of the success of the 'model village' in a socialist society. A high degree of planning was in accordance with the definite, conscious beliefs and goals espoused by Bulgarian state officials and held as its aim the goal of communism. Centralised planning in order to develop socialist society established an element of reflecting upon life in the socialist state, upon the view of the state and upon nature and proper human action within this context. It involved a high level of organisation and deliberate actions in order to realise correct human relations in all realms of socialist life, from production to administration. Such guidelines were a schema of operations, proposed ways of reaching a set of objectives by performing in terms of specific and explicit historical goals.

The leading figure in the state planning process for the development of the socialist state was Todor Zhivkov, the head of the Bulgarian state for most of the period of socialist government. Zhivkov was influential in both Party and governmental circles, in

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3 The meeting was in relation to the year ended 1986 and was held on 3rd March 1987.

determining the direction of the administration of both the government and the Party, in formulating foreign and military policy and in carrying out the ceremonial tasks of the head of State. At the structural pinnacle of the Bulgarian State, Zhivkov was spokesperson for the Party and the whole nation. He was the personal embodiment of a specifically Bulgarian brand of socialism. As one author wrote of Zhivkov "...If at a given time in history it can be said that a country is nearly fully reflected in one single personality; if one person can, with all his being and existence, become the spokesman of all the major and important issues in a country – then this is what Zhivkov's personality means for present day Bulgaria" (Maxwell 1985, pp.10-11). As the most prominent Bulgarian official who led in the development of the historical goals of the state, he was the state's most significant figure in the production of state ideology. His works both designed and developed strategies to bring about historical goals, strategies which underpinned Bulgarian state ideology. Zhivkov was a prolific writer; the publication of all his speeches, lectures, radio and television interviews were a fundamental part of the production and dissemination of state socialist ideology. His works remained true to a Russian brand of Marxism-Leninism but were creatively developed in a specifically Bulgarian line, following the initiatives of Georgi Dimitrov the Bulgarian socialist state's first leader. The considerable media coverage of his writings ensured their wide dissemination throughout Bulgaria. In Talpa, Zhivkov's speeches were read in the national paper (to which the majority of villagers subscribed) and were also watched and heard on prime-time television and radio. Various village organisations, such as the Teachers' Union, met regularly to discuss socialist works bearing on current problems in society, relying largely on Zhivkov's publications.

The 'model village' event was highly structured, designed by the villagers specifically to impress and please the state's representatives – the official adjudicators – and the head state figure, Zhivkov. One incident will suffice to indicate the extent to which pleasing Zhivkov was a motivational force behind the villagers' planning arrangements. I happened to arrive one day at the mayor's office when a meeting planning the event was under way. It was attended by Pashev, Ivanov and Novikov. At one point Pashev noted that some of the fields surrounding the village had not yet been ploughed. He said that although they had little right to interfere in the running of the TKZC, someone must speak to Ivo Gradenarov about this matter, for when Zhivkov came he would notice and wonder why it had not been done. (Zhivkov was not part of the 'model village' official group but was expected in the village around the same period for an unrelated matter – the celebration of 90 years since the foundation of the village Communist Party). It was obviously important

that the TKZC should present itself as working 'to Zhivkov's plan' and that any 'sloppiness' was an inditement of the rest of the village.

The great importance of Zhivkov in Bulgaria as the leading state figure in the creation and development of state policy and the significance Talpians themselves attributed to him in the 'model village' competition through their historical associations, explains the heavy reliance on Zhivkov's works in this chapter. In Talpians' rendering of state ideology as portrayed in the 'model village' event, fundamental importance was given to Zhivkov as the primary source and leading figure at the centre of all state policies and their promulgation. His important role in influencing state ideology warrants the considerable use made of this prime figure to whom Talpians themselves referred, in constructing their understanding of humanity and its future directions. If state ideology is viewed as concerned with the role of the government and Party in bringing about historical goals, then I must distinguish analytically between three different constructions of this central ideological 'core': that which was explicitly articulated by Zhivkov as Bulgarian state ideology; my own interpretation of Zhivkov's work based on the assessed aims of this study; and finally my explication of Talpians' construction of state ideology (which is a second order rendition since the Talpian construction incorporated and was closely associated with Zhivkov's). The latter is the central focus of interest in this chapter; that is, I am not analysing state ideology, but Talpians' construction of state ideology as a relation between history, folklore and tradition. Nevertheless, given the importance of Zhivkov's writings as the basis of a Talpian construction of state ideology, this section provides an interpretation of his works.

Zhivkov wrote about ideology as a specific domain of socialist life, one firmly in the control of the state. He designated the role of state ideology when he noted that ideological work was "...one of the most important sectors of the Party and state activity, as a powerful factor in the development of socialist consciousness in the inculcation of a communist world view and habits in shaping the character of the builder of socialism" (1969, p.607). This defined state ideology to be oriented explicitly towards historical goals and to be a vital part of the shaping of a new socialist man. Often state ideology was presented in rather mechanistic terms as being faced with the task of smoothing over problems associated with the infrastructural and superstructural relations of socialist society (Zhivkov 1970, p.67) – where ideology reflected changes in the 'economic base', and variations in economic relations led to ideological changes. In Zhivkov's terms, ideology had a particular, practical significance dependent upon objective productive relations. Zhivkov wrote, "...The degree of activity of the masses in social, economic and cultural life is the main criterion for the effectiveness of the work done on the ideological

front; in other words, the degree to which the ideas, the political line and decisions of the Party are transformed into a material force" (1969, p.610). Ideology was thus an expression of Party-supported productive relations, which arose in the very organisation of production[4]. Participation in socialist society at whatever level – infrastructural or superstructural – was taken as a successful achievement of ideological work, an indication of how successfully Party directives had been realised in concrete form as mass participation in the historical development of socialism. State ideology played, according to Zhivkov, a significant role in the conversion of Party policies into a concrete reality.

Since ideological activity was rooted in the very organisation of production, greatest importance was given to the consolidation of the material foundations of socialism; to the productive relations and correspondingly to class structure as determinants of the state's ideologically progressive nature. State ideology recognised the working peoples' ownership of the means of production and control over it via their representation in and the leading role of the Communist Party (in conjunction with the BZNC). Of vital importance was the public character of socialist ownership; Zhivkov wrote of two forms of socialist ownership – public (state) and cooperative ownership – which reflected two distinct classes, the working class and cooperative farmers (Maxwell 1985, p.200). The increasing socialisation of the means of production through the establishment of large-scale cooperative farms and agro-industrial complexes, was a way in which the latter class was developing and becoming increasingly compatible with the working class. The two classes were aligned in a non-antagonistic relation (because of their joint form of socialist ownership of the means of production) which, unlike class relations in capitalism, were not of an exploitative nature but worked in a relation of mutual assistance in the building of the socialist state. As Zhivkov notes "...Under socialism...there are classes and class distinctions but these are classes of a new type with new inter-relations. Under socialism there are no exploiter classes, but friendly classes where the working class plays the leading role" (Maxwell 1985, p.199). Agricultural production based on a cooperative organisation heavily dependent upon the use of modern technology and industry, was seen to be decreasing the distance between all working people. The development of agro-industrial complexes which were increasing the pace of transformation of productive

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4 The association between ideology and productive relations explains why ideology in Zhivkov's view was a central point of capitalist-socialist contention. Zhivkov (1985b, p. 144) wrote, "...Imperialists are now making attempts to force on us peaceful coexistence in the sphere of ideology. They would like to see us renounce our ideas, communist ideology, which is our sharpest and irreplaceable weapon. They know very well, if we give up our powerful class political weapons, if we renounce our communist ideas, goals and endeavours, we will inevitably adopt bourgeois, imperialist positions and no longer stand on our socialist, communist positions."

relations in the village, were the means by which an increased homogeneity of the Bulgarian class structure could occur. This would eventually involve an alliance between the working class (whose leading position in history was an objective law in the construction of socialist society) and cooperative farmers (Zhivkov 1970, p.82). A view that both classes would inevitably be done away with, followed the correct and objectively valid historical view of Marxism-Leninism which predicted the construction of a classless communist society (Zhivkov 1970, p.82). Communism provided the ultimate objective of state historical goals and represented the convergence of cooperative and state forms of ownership into that which Zhivkov termed a unified form of public ownership (Maxwell 1985, p.201).

The aim of class unity extended beyond patriotic boundaries and incorporated proletarian solidarity at the internationalist level. Internationalism demonstrated working class goals of the proletariat throughout the world; it denoted respect and devotion to the liberation struggle of the working class and all working people (according to Zhivkov 1986a, p.143). Yet "Internationalism...implies a sense of national pride..." (Zhivkov 1986a, p. 135) and one cannot exist at the expense of, or to the detriment of the other, although state ideology attributed prominence to one over the other. Thus, "Ardent patriotism is one of our people's greatest virtues" (Zhivkov 1981a, p.6), but "...patriotism should always be subordinated to proletariat internationalism, to the common tasks, since we are a socialist country; we are building a socialist society...this is why we should prevent the national spirit from prevailing over the international..." (Zhivkov 1986a, pp.140-141). Thus while national unity and a sense of Bulgarian identity were encouraged in state ideological writings, such a consciousness was always subsumed to historical goals which placed greatest importance on awareness of working class interests and solidarity. The latter provided a socialist identity which was given priority over any nationalistic concerns.

More than dictating a notion of socialist identity, state ideology defined the very nature of humanity, or rather the particular form or relations historically desirable in communist society. Socialist morality provided a blueprint about how the state was to achieve its historical goals through a desirable set of relations in respect to men and to nature, in the truly humanised communist condition. Any notion of state ideological morality was founded in the historical goal of communism; "...there is no such thing as a morality that stands outside human society; that is a fraud. To us, morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle" (Lenin 1966, p.140) and again "...Communist morality is based on the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism" (Lenin 1966, p. 144). Any divergence from this ideology was a misrepresentation of reality and a distortion and dehumanisation of man's existence (capitalism represented one

such case from the viewpoint of socialist state ideology). Socialist state policy, as revealed in Zhivkov's works, instilled an awareness, involving a deliberate plan to realise the moral goal of communism. "...Our whole ideological front is called upon to inculcate in every working man, in the people and especially in the young, the features of the new man..." (Zhivkov 1969, p.609). The features of the 'new man' were the desired relations in which the socialist individual was engaged, and through which she/he was constituted as human. A facet of the task of state ideology was to raise the socialist consciousness of the people, and give them a historical awareness. Of this 'new man' and his qualities, Zhivkov wrote that he "...becomes ever more emancipated from the selfishness and individualism of the past and begins to feel that he is an integral part of society. Highly conscientious, idealistic, with a broad intellectual background – these are the typical features of the builder of socialism..." (1969, p. 599). The new socialist man was thus perceived to be someone who was communally spirited, a well-rounded and educated person who held communist goals as all important.

The development of the socialist state through its class, moral and productive relations, was a process which was subordinated to objective historical law. Zhivkov wrote that "...the construction and development of the socialist society is a law-governed historical process..." (1974, p.45; 1969, p.499); and again "...the construction of the advanced socialist society is an objective and historically necessary process governed by the objective laws of development..." (Maxwell 1985, p.196). Such a view maintained the scientific nature of socialism based on a Marxist-Leninist history which was understood to be an extrinsic appraisal of mankind, its past, present and future. The role attributed to the 'scientific system of government' in state ideology (as termed by Zhivkov 1969, p.557) was to recognise these objective laws and attempt to increase the pace of development of society towards them. The administration was assigned the task of planning and overseeing the development of the socialist state and was organised in a manner viewed as most appropriate to the achievement of historical goals. State ideology demanded reflection upon public administration and on how best it could be organised to bring about communism most effectively. Many of Zhivkov's writings were concerned explicitly with public administration and how to organise and improve the system in order to effect the desired state goals[5]. Such a perfecting of the system of administration was determined by the objective stage of the country's development, by the general economic and social processes and by the level of its relations with nature (1969, p.501). Reciprocally, it was

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5 The concern with improvement of administration stems from Leninist influence. Zhivkov acknowledged this when he wrote that they are guided by Lenin, who pointed out that "...socialism is inconceivable without a planned state organisation..." (Zhivkov 1969, p.496).

the task of administration to identify the stage of development of the country and to master the laws by which further development could occur. The more thoroughly the laws governing the development of socialist society were mastered, the more appropriately could relations between the various fields of social life be regulated and coordinated, therby permitting, it was believed, the more harmonious functioning and development of society as a unified social organism[6]. This in turn, it was expected, would lead to a more effective Party and state leadership (1974, p.46).

The whole purpose of state planning was to encourage the progression of society towards its historical goals through determination in all areas of socialist life – administration, morality, identity and class. Zhivkov noted "The construction of the socialist society is not a random process. Banking on Lenin's formulation that socialism is the product of the conscientious effort of the masses, our Party carries out vast work for raising the educational, scientific and cultural standards of the Bulgarian people" (1986a, p.291 and 1984, p.128). Socialist society was about constructing relations which were in a progressive state of historical development (Maxwell 1985, p. 195). The 'model village' event provided a concrete instance in which Talpians specifically set out to portray their relations to be not only in line with, but actively involved in the realisation of state ideology. By engaging (successfully) in the 'model village' competition, Talpians showed that they were working towards state historical goals. Below I focus on how this was achieved.

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6 The introduction of agricultural-industrial cooperative complexes in villages in the late 1960's can serve to illustrate the extent of administrative planning involved. State officials perceived that the implementation of new agricultural procedures would lead to fundamental corresponding transformations in administration, and would require a re-assessment of the administrative sector - of the village organs and their relation and functions with respect to each other. In writing about these changes, Zhivkov recognised the need to create a Party within the productive TKZC unit itself which would "...coordinate and direct all socio-political work within the territory of the complex..."(Zhivkov 1970, p.61). This granted the TKZC relative autonomy from the central village Party. Such a development, Zhivkov wrote, demanded a re-assessment of functions of the local village Party organisation (1970, p.62) and throughout the village and district Party levels. It was also expected to have repercussions on the role of the council and the functions of the village mass organisations - including the trade unions and Fatherland Front. In order that villagers could be made aware of the changes and why they were being carried out, the *Chitalishte*, schools and other places of political education were mobilised to disseminate information (Zhivkov 1970, p.70). Thus, such a re-structuring by means of which it was hoped to bring about greater class unity, was given state consideration with respect to all aspects of village life (Zhivkov 1970, pp.60-66).

The 'Model Village' Event

The following is a brief recounting of the circumstances and happenings associated with Talpa receiving the state award of *Obraztzovo Selo*, or 'model village'.

The 'model village' contest was a nation-wide, state-sponsored annual competition held to determine the cleanest, most orderly and well kept village, judged initially within and ultimately between regions. At the regional level, there were three awards – third, second and first position. The first in the region then became eligible to compete against the leaders in all other regions, the overall winner being chosen as the best in Bulgaria. There were a number of monetary and other prizes given to the winner, not least of which was the official title, 'model village'; a sign to this effect was displayed at all roads entering the successful village.

The Talpians had been planning and organising for the competition for months, indeed years, before the state award officials finally arrived in May 1987. I was told by Pashev that at one of the first general village meetings, certain tasks were put forward and accepted as necessary to be carried out in order that the village could be considered '*obraztzovo*'. These tasks were: improving the water supply; improving Post-office facilities (including the installation of an automatic telephone exchange); repaving the central plaza area; renovating the restaurant/tavern as well as the kindergarten and school; asphalting the remaining gravel streets; and the restoration of the village museum and *Chitalishte*. These activities were carried out over a period of several years and many had been completed (for example, the plaza paving and telephone exchange) before the end of 1986 when I first arrived in the village. As specific tasks were completed, various commissions – initially from the village and then from further afield – came to check that the work had been accomplished. This was part of the preparatory judging carried out to ensure the validity of Talpa as an entrant. It meant that much of the actual 'judging' for the title had been performed well before the day of the 2-hour visit by the 'model village' officials, who were there to satisfy themselves that the village was worthy of holding the title, and officially to present the award.

Most villagers were involved in some way or other in the preparation of the village, prior to the day of arrival of the officials. Individual villagers contributed voluntary aid or put in hours of community labour as a means of working off council fines. They participated in the paving of the central plaza and beautifying it with flowers, renovating the restaurant/tavern and generally cleaning up the village. All villagers were held responsible for the tidy presentation of their own households.

On 21st May 1987, officials from Sofia, Turnovo and Nekilva arrived outside the stereo assembly plant and were met by the village entourage, comprising all important village Party, government and mass organisation functionaries, including the Party head (Pashev), the mayor (Ivanov), the Agricultural Cooperative head (Gradenarov), and the Fatherland Front head (Novikov). In attendance as part of the welcoming committee, were also the village doctor, Andre Pashev (conductor of the vocal group) and Tzela (Party secretary).

Three village school children, dressed in *Pionerski* uniforms of the children's political organisation, presented flowers and pinned a badge on each of the guests. The badges marked 90 years since the foundation of the Communist Party in Talpa. The guests were then shown through the factory, and told about the different aspects of the assembly process by the head of the plant. Having completed the tour, they moved on to the top of one of the streets where the vocal group conducted by Andre Pashev sang several political songs. School children and villagers lined the streets as the party of officials walked some way down to two designated houses.

At the entrance to each house stood two school girls, dressed in folkloric costumes. They held silver trays on which were placed nails and hammer. These were offered to a nominated guest, who nailed the sign 'model home' to the frame above the door. The visitors were invited into the homes, where they wandered freely around the gardens and exteriors of the two houses before being seated at outside tables and offered a variety of cooked foods.

The group proceeded to the central plaza, to which final touches had been made only that very morning – lines delineating the middle of the road and parking zones had been painted. It was one of the rare occasions when the drinking fountains in the centre of the plaza had been turned on. Unfortunately the fountains worked only intermittently, water squirting a metre high one moment, then only a few centimetres the next; consequently they had been turned off again before the guests had arrived. The entourage was guided through the small village museum, the old surgery of the late Mara Marlaueva, which had been restored to appear exactly as it had been when she worked there as a doctor. The official party then grouped together at the central plaza, where it was announced that the village had been awarded the title of 'model village', receiving the first position in the region.

The visitors and some of the village officials boarded a bus and were driven the short distance to the Agricultural Cooperative where they were greeted by the workers. Less attention was given to the TKZC than to the plant; there was no scheduled tour of the

Agricultural Cooperative, instead the visitors stood outside one of the main buildings – the veterinary clinic – which provided a view over the surrounding complexes and more distant fields. Here they were offered snack foods (biscuits) and soft drink. After a few minutes' stay, the visitors thanked Talpians for their hospitality and returned to the bus which took them to the nearby town of Nekilva where they had a luncheon engagement.

Administrative Relations

The fundamental organisational principle guiding the operation of state bodies, was democratic centralism (Zhivkov 1969, p.496)[7]. Democratic centralism formed the basis of the manner in which state ideology was applied to the state structure – to the Party, government and mass organisations – in order to realise the goal of communism. Democratic centralism established the proper combination of centralised (hierarchical) leadership and socialist democracy; the balance between the two was seen as vital to the successful development of socialism and was a fundamental concern of state planning[8]. Democracy was achieved largely through the leading role of the Party in the state. The Party was the "...universally recognised leader of the working masses in the country..." (Maxwell 1985, p.207). This was crucial to a socialist notion of democracy; the belief in the working class as the most progressive and revolutionary class, which led the quest for emancipation and democracy and the role of the Party in organising and representing the working class. "Under socialism," wrote Zhivkov, "any democracy is inconceivable without the leading and directing role of the Communist Party..." (1969, p.496)[9]. Democracy was therefore the participation of the people through their representative, the Party. Party directives were activated and coordinated by the government bodies, which through elected representation or direct participation of the working people in mass organisations, ensured that the democratic process was followed through. As Zhivkov

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7 The origin of this fundamental principle of socialist state organisation was attributed to Lenin (see Zhivkov 1969, p.496; 1974, p.52).

8 Zhivkov wrote "...Democracy in Bulgaria is developing and can only develop, not in conflict with centralism, but in a correct and organic combination and interpenetration of the principles of democracy and the principles of centralism; only, that is, as democratic centralism. Disregard of either centralism or democracy leads to a violation of the nature and essence of our system" (Zhivkov 1986b, p.40). According to Lenin, the advantage of this system is that it ensured the stability and continuity in work and saved duplication or excess effort. (Lenin 1971, Vol. 5, p.483).

9 And again "...Without the Communist Party, without its leading role, there is no dictatorship of the proletariat, there is no socialist democracy, there is no socialist construction and no socialist society" (Zhivkov 1986b, p.41. and also p.180).

noted, "...An advanced socialist society can be built only provided there is close and organised interaction between all the elements of the system of public administration" (Maxwell 1985, p.217). The general system of government, the existence of various organisational bodies and maintenance of a particular relationship between them, was part of the conscious goals of state ideology. "...In our efforts to improve public administration, we must find a proper place for each of the organisations, define their character, functions and tasks, achieve coordination and purposefulness in their work" (Zhivkov 1974, p.144). Democracy therefore also necessitated the active participation of everyone, not only via their representative Party, but through their role in other state bodies and the fulfilment of the specific role of each of these bodies in a unified, coherent way. This twofold notion of socialist democracy was balanced with a centralised organisational structure, which attributed a hierarchical form to the state, unifying all state bodies in a framework which subordinated lower levels of Party, government and mass organisations to those above.

The coordination and integration of the workings of the state system at the village level was a central aspect of state ideology as portrayed by the Talpians in the 'model village' event. The harmonious working of the three village bodies – the Party, government and mass organisations – involved in organising and planning the presentation and in the carrying out of their specifically delineated functions, was a facet of the way in which Talpians established their democratic nature.

The leading role of the Party was established at the beginning of the event with the pinning of badges on the guests, commemorating 90 years since the foundation of the Communist Party in Talpa. Thus the villagers, from the outset, established themselves as having a Communist Party which was amongst the oldest in Bulgaria. The importance of proclaiming this age lay in the fact that it revealed the village Party as having played an important role in history, one which extended well beyond its politically active past during the World War II period.

If the badge presentation served as a way of introducing the visitors to Talpa's historically active Party, then the tour through the museum extended this process. As specifically a monument to Mara Marlaueva, the (late) wife of Zhivkov, the museum provided an excursion into the very roots of Talpa's involvement in political-historical activities by way of their close ties to the highest communist in Bulgaria. The museum established Talpa as having been a sanctuary for Zhivkov, who was hidden in the village from the fascists in 1938-9. The visit to the museum indicated the villagers' ties to history through the political activities of specific village Party members, who had had associations with Marlaueva and

her husband in the period leading up to 1944. Photographs in the museum attested to this close association, an association based on the activities of current village Party members who had worked with Zhivkov during fascist times. Particular Party members were therefore given prominence in the 'model village' event through their association with Zhivkov – the photographs of Marlaueva and Zhivkov with Talpians Pashev and Matov, gave authority to these two figures within the village Party. The museum established not only the means by which particular villagers defined their close relations to Zhivkov, but also served to emphasise the significance of events in a special period – 1944. The importance of the time spent by Zhivkov in Talpa, communicated by Talpians in the event through the museum, demonstrated their association with him in the politically significant historical past. This past was also given privileged position in the songs performed by the village vocal group. The two renditions were political songs, as termed by the conductor Andre Pashev; that is, songs celebrating the happenings of 1944 and the heroic activities of anti-fascist fighters. The themes of the songs, about the hardships faced by those locked in struggle against the fascist government and their brave activities during the period, clearly marked a concern with the events which led to the foundation of the socialist state in 1944.

While the badge presentation attributed a general historical prominence to the Party, the museum denoted and stressed, in a distinctly Talpian manner, this importance. The Party was given emphasis in terms of certain villagers' ties to Zhivkov; that is, its leading role was constructed in relation to those Party figures who had close bands to Zhivkov, ties founded in the politically significant events of 1944. This was the specific way in which the Talpians justified the leading role of the Party and of some of its members. They therefore positioned themselves in line with a state ideology which viewed the Party as the appropriate body to "...theoretically sum up and give meaning to the historical experience of the past and of the present and also discover the future developments in our country, [to] apply Marxism-Leninism creatively and develop it further..." (Maxwell 1985, p.188). It was through their links to Zhivkov and their exclusive rights over politicised history, that the village Party and a certain number of its members legitimated the position of this organisation as the backbone of the administrative system. At the same time these members established their own dominant position in the Party and therefore their control over the future development of socialist society. This was the distinctive way in which the village Party members legitimated their role in setting the 'blueprint' of societal development; making an objective examination of reality and formulating the policy at each stage in the construction of socialism and interpreting the development of the historically objective laws to the citizens of socialist society.

In constituting their Party as politically active in history, villagers were also portraying their democratic nature. As Zhivkov acknowledged: "...The more fully the leading role of the Party is implemented, the more successfully is the socialist society being built and at the same time social conditions are brought about...for the development of freedom and democracy" (1969, p.565). The recognition of the leading role of the Party created the conditions in state ideological terms whereby democracy could flourish – where the raising of the role of the Party represented the increase of democracy and reciprocally as socialist society became more democratic, the authority of the Party would increase. Although Talpians clearly established the ideologically-approved position of the Party and its leading role in history, they did this in a way not stipulated by state ideology; that is, through the association of particular village Party members with Zhivkov. This represented a specifically Talpian twist to state ideology which attributed to the Party an administrative significance in terms of the political activities of some of its members in history. The importance of the Party as a fundamental part of socialist democracy as constructed by the villagers in the 'model village' event, was defined in terms of the Party members' role in a politicised history determined through their associations with Zhivkov.

Both the government and mass organisations were attributed a different role in history, one less significant in terms of a village politicised-history (as discussed in Chapter 2) and yet also perceived as necessary in the making of the 'model village' in quite a distinct way. A delineation of authority and tasks was established between the Village Council and the Party in the concluding part of the 'model village' event, when the guests were taken to the Agricultural Cooperative. At this point Pashev, unlike the mayor and the Fatherland Front head, did not accompany the entourage. As leader of the central village Party, Pashev's official authority did not extend to the TKZC. This differed from the position of Ivanov, for the Village Council had administrative jurisdiction over all the village territorial unit, including the Agricultural Cooperative. The council's responsibility in the coordination of the whole event and the Party's role in leading, but no overstepping its bounds, was expressed through Pashev's absence from the TKZC part of the proceedings. The delineation of such tasks was also evident in the preparations for the 'model village' event. It was only the mayor who could threaten to fine any villager who did not clean up her/his nature strip. He did just this at a village meeting some months before the event, when he threatened that the Council would form a commission and any household which was untidy, would be fined. While the Party could lead and direct, it was not invested with these powers; the Council was the only state organ accredited with such authority. As the government body, the Village Council was organised to facilitate the efficient carrying out of Party directives; the separation between the two bodies was fundamental in establishing

the state's character as democratic – between "...the Party as the policy making body and the government as the formal agency of administration..." (Skilling 1966, p.147). The government was expected to follow the policy of the Party, its general directives and the struggle for its implementation, since only in implementing Party policy could government bodies ensure that they operated in the interests of the working class and within the bounds of objective historical laws. The role of the Village Council in the coordination of the event followed state ideology which viewed the importance of the Councils in the "...coordination of nation-wide and local interests..." (Zhivkov 1969, p. 264), by attributing to them "controlling functions" (Zhivkov 1969, p.568) in applying state plans and goals to the specific requirements of the territory.

The largest mass organisation, the Fatherland Front, was represented in the event by its leader, Novikov (also the School Director). Novikov's attendance in all aspects of the 'model village' event signified the participation of the working people in every aspect of the making of the 'model village' by providing the man-power enabling the completion of many of the tasks that were performed in the village and TKZC. While the officials could not know of the great amount of voluntary labour contributed by the villagers, the large number of tasks completed and the general tidiness of the village, were an indirect indication of their participation and indeed of the type of participation. The national shortage of manual labourers, a chronic and common problem throughout Bulgaria, left no doubts as to the important contribution of the voluntary village force. The presence of the leader of the Fatherland Front, the doctor and other communal figures in the 'model village' official group was a way of revealing to the state officials the significant contribution of all villagers in making the village 'model'.

The importance of the mass organisations resided in the fact that they represented the inclusion of working people in administrative tasks; the people were mobilised in the implementation of Party policy and in activities which gave socialism its truly democratic character. Disciplined participation, that is, activity within the defined limits of any particular state body, was an important part of the democratic process; socialists were expected to be involved in the construction of the state, but in a specifically assigned way, dependent upon an individual's membership in a state organisation. The role of mass organisations in events such as the 'model village' competition, was to provide participation in the realisation of historical goals largely through their provision of manual labour. This was one way in which the people could be involved in the realisation of state policies. The importance of mass participation was noted by Zhivkov, who recognised the vital role of mass organisations in the "...enlistment of the working people in the government..." (Zhivkov 1969, p.580). Indeed this was viewed as a distinguishing feature

of the socialist state: "...This is what characterises, what is new about the socialist state – Bulgaria in this instance. Practically all the population participates in the different organisations and forms. You would hardly find a Bulgarian who is not a member of any of these organisations. And this does not happen through administrative measures or in any other enforced way, it is completely voluntary" (Zhivkov 1986b, p.139). In turn, mass participation provided an indication of the general level of progress in the country: "...the higher the consciousness of the working people, the more they participate in mass and with competence in the solution of state affairs, the stronger the socialist system is and the better it manifests its advantages" (1986b, p.293).

The 'model village' event was thus constructed as a procedure which was truly democratic in terms of state ideology because it involved the balanced contribution of Party, government and mass organisational bodies. Each had played a role in the making of the 'model village' in its own distinct way; through the political-historical leadership of the Party, the coordinating role of the government and the participation of mass organisations in implementing the Party-government directives. The three were shown not to impinge on each others' duties, but rather to be working together in creating the 'model village'.

While state organs were delineated through their differing roles in the event, they were also rendered as working in a harmonious and united manner[10]. By ensuring that the state officials were met by all the prominent village figures – including the doctor, the head of the TKZC, the mayor, secretary of the Party and the head of the Fatherland Front – Talpians presented the united nature of village state bodies, harmoniously involved in the process of constructing a 'model village', in the development of the socialist society. This relationship was further enhanced in the glossing over of usually evident tensions such as between Ivo Gradenarov and Tsonu Pashev and between Ivanov and Pashev (the former frequently felt overshadowed by the latter). Such display of cohesion was expected from all Party members (Maxwell 1985, pp.192-193); it was also expected of all state organisational leaders. The harmonious portrayal of the Government, Party and Fatherland Front leaders was an exhibition of the unified working of the administrative system.

The unity presented to the outsiders was not only between the leading government, Party and mass organisation figures, but was also depicted to exist between all villagers and state officials. The general support was visually constructed by the good attendance of villagers

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10 This was not a new aspect of socialist ideology: "Lenin pointed out that it was an important condition for the proper construction and functioning of the socialist state to delineate the functions of the Party and state organs and at the same time to guarantee their unity of action for the attainment of the common goal." (Zhivkov 1969, p.565).

and school children (brought from the school) who lined the streets to greet the official guests. Their presence was part of the conscious planning of the event, designed to show all Talpians as interested and active in the construction of the 'model village'. The presence of the people was a form of participation in the event and, in terms of state ideology, it was also an expression of support. In fact, Andre Pashev commented, when I asked him why he had chosen political songs to be performed by the group, that "...these seemed appropriate to the occasion, as it was the Party and workers who had made Talpa into a 'model village'..." With such a statement, the conductor of the group expressed the belief in the harmonious relationship between all Talpians in the making of the 'model village' and in the united support of all villagers for Party initiatives in the 'model village'. (The importance of the term 'workers' to describe the villagers will be discussed in a following section). Such a unification reinforced the view expressed by Zhivkov, who noted with apparent satisfaction (at the time of the nation-wide discussion of the draft program of the Bulgarian Communist party) that "...the overwhelming majority of them [the people] are permeated with a high consciousness of unity and devotion to the ideas of our Party and the cause of socialism and communism" (Maxwell 1985, p.192).

The harmonious interactions which occurred between all villagers, including village officials (through their appropriate attendance and absence at various stages of the proceedings) was a deliberate display of their unity in working towards the realisation of historical goals. Talpians depicted themselves to be democratic through demonstrating the unified structure of the village as every organ accomplished its specific task in the presentation. The 'model village' was constructed as if democratically realised through the unified efforts of all villagers, through the organisation of their village on democratic principles, invoking the unification of Party, government and mass organisations. All three delineated bodies played a role in the construction of the democratic village; the Party was shown to have played the leading role in history, the government coordinated Party historical directives and the masses were participants in their realisation. The distinctly Talpian inflection of state ideology was evident in the political importance individual village Party figures attained through their associations with Zhivkov. This contributed to Talpians' particular construction of their village as democratic.

In fashioning their village to reflect what they believed and understood conformed to state ideological views, villagers were acting in terms of a state organisational structure which was hierarchical in nature. The villagers welcomed national and regional officials, including representatives from the national ministry, Fatherland Front, National Health Commission and Regional Municipal Council. They accepted their judgement on the appropriateness of the village as 'model'; any decision as to the truly 'model' character of

the village thus being out of local officials' hands. In building their village in accordance with what they considered would please outside adjudicators who had the power to determine the success or failure of the village as 'model', Talpians were working within the hierarchical structure of a centralist state. They showed acquiescence for their position within the lower levels of the hierarchy and for their administrative subordination through a hierarchy of command to the central bodies[11].

In a socialist democracy with centralist organisation, the ideological concern was to hand over authority to the working people and to its representative, the Communist Party. Given the role of the Party as representative of the working class, the increasing development of democracy was "...unthinkable without the further consolidation of the hegemonic role of the working class and without enhancing the leading role of the Communist Party in the entire system of public life" (Maxwell 1985, p.207). With this increasingly democratic process, the Party of the working class was turned into a Party of the entire people (Maxwell 1985, p.8). Socialist democracy was thus also fundamentally concerned with class relations; with the dominant form of productive relations, and their historical development. In constructing a state ideology organised along such democratic lines, the 'model villagers' were indicating their concern for the fundamental importance of class relations. It is to class relations as an aspect of state ideology, established as important by the villagers in the 'model village' event, to which I now turn.

Class Relations

In a speech to the Young Communist League in 1969, Zhivkov asked "Who is now the central figure in our farming? The machine operator. He is the new type of farmer, combining in himself traits and qualities which bring him close to the worker in town" (1985b, p.184). We note not only the association of 'the worker' with 'the town', but an implied association between the farmer and the village. The distinction between village agricultural and town 'worker' activities, provided the basis of the importance of the village machine operators, who were believed to be eliminating the difference between the two. Indeed, as workers who used the most advanced technology, they were sometimes singled out in village meetings, where their opinions were specifically sought. For example during

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11 Therefore "...the decisions of the higher organs are binding on lower ones and the strictest obedience of all members is required. A synthesis was thus achieved...reconciling democratic participation and centralised voluntary discipline" (Skilling 1966, pp.62-63). This observation was made generally for Eastern Europe by Skilling, but was also valid for the Bulgarian situation and more specifically realised by Talpians in the 'model village' event.

question time at the Annual General Village Meeting of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union (10th March 1987), one participant tried to entice comments/questions from the audience by asking the machine operators what problems they faced, telling them to speak out since they were the most important people in the village after Pashev, Gradenarov and the mayor. The status attributed to machine operators in the TKZC can be understood in terms of their specific role in agricultural production as users of modern technological equipment. I return to this point below.

The inclusion of the stereo assembly plant and the TKZC in the 'model village' proceedings, was due to the importance of these as centres of village production. The nature of production in both the TKZC and the plant was clearly dependent on technology, industrial processes and specialised knowledge, although differences also existed. In the course of the day's event, the Talpians established their activeness in both centres of production which represented two forms of relations to the means of production and therefore two classes in socialist society – working class and cooperative farmers[12].

Cooperative ownership of the means of production remained a distinct form of socialist organisation, which provided the basis of the 'second' socialist class, the cooperative farmers. The formation of the agricultural cooperative represented the liquidation of private ownership of land which placed, Zhivkov wrote, all people on an equal footing as regards the means of production and provided the main condition for the establishment of socialist equality (Zhivkov 1984, p.98). This happened precisely because socialist Bulgaria had eliminated "...the forms of private ownership over the means of production that have constituted the economic basis for the exploitation of man by man, for the different forms of social injustice" (Zhivkov 1984, p.99). The state was the owner of the means of production, both in agricultural and factory enterprises and in both instances the work force was viewed as the "manager of socialist property" (Maxwell 1985, p.384; Zhivkov 1987, p.5)[13]. This meant that in the TKZC, the head and the workers held identical class positions vis-a-vis the means of production (Zhivkov 1986b, p.119). The cooperative form of ownership, however, differed in one basic way from the means of production, characteristic of the working class: the formation of the agro-industrial complexes involved not only purely state ownership of the means of production, but

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12 The two forms of ownership representing the two socialist classes, working class and cooperative farmers, would eventually be unified. "What we have in mind is the gradual convergence of the cooperative and the state forms of ownership which will result in their fusion in the future into a unified form of public ownership" (Maxwell 1985, p.201).

13 Labour was the 'universal measure' of incomes, rather than the extent of property ownership or class affiliation (Zhivkov 1984, p.99).

combined this to differing degrees with a mixed form of ownership[14]. That is, in some cases the agro-industrial complexes were set up on the basis of one form of ownership (state) and in others on a mixed form. The latter type included state ownership of land with 'personal auxiliary farms', which allocated state-owned land for personal use, allowing the application of modern TKZC machinery on the personal farms and the production of inexpensive fodder for animals which were the personal property of the cooperative farmers, rather than of the state. Such mixed ownership was viewed by Zhivkov as a necessary supplement to the purely state-owned type of cooperative farm (1969, p.359). In Talpa, a mixed form of ownership existed. However, this was not emphasised in the 'model village' event; the visitors were not taken to the state land allocated for personal farming, but remained in the central, purely state-owned sector of the TKZC.

One characteristic of agricultural production, unlike other (working class) enterprises under state ownership, was that TKZC productive activity was viewed as being much more closely linked to and influenced by nature. Zhivkov commented, "A typical feature of agricultural production is that it is immediately connected with nature and is under its influence. Powerful natural factors produce an impact on it, some of which help to increase the fertility of the soil and production, while others exercise a negative influence" (1970, p.85). Agricultural production was therefore an activity largely dependent on seasonal and climatic changes, many of which determined the success or otherwise of productive output. In this context, the importance of modern technology was that it provided a means to achieving greater domination over nature, a way to allow humanity greater control over an area in which they had had little control in the past (Zhivkov 1970, pp.86-7).

Technology provided the instrumentality for organising productive activities; it was the basis of socialist domination over nature. Villagers consciously recognised the use of technology as the way of influencing production and of bringing about a transformation in village life, involving a utilisation of humanity's knowledge which allowed nature to be dominated. Further, it was recognised by the villagers as important in increasing production output which was itself a vital goal in the future planning of any productive activity. Calls for an increase in productivity through scientific and technical progress were regularly heard at various Talpian gatherings. Such calls were also made by Zhivkov

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14 The mixed type of agro-industrial complexes in 1986 accounted for about 40% of the total of all agricultural cooperatives in Bulgaria (Zhivkov 1986b, p.70).

(1984, p.233; 1974, p.87, p.215)[15]. At a teachers' gathering in the village school, which met regularly to discuss various issues of socialism based on pre-defined readings, it was emphasised that tertiary education must be encouraged in order to ensure the continuation of the technological revolution, which was said to depend on the increasing level of education and the development of technology. The same point was stressed by the mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Village Council for the year ended 1986, (held on 3rd. March 1987). At this gathering, he identified the plan to be fulfilled for the following year in the Agricultural Cooperative. The list of objectives included: technical progress; the increase of the qualification of the workers; a higher quality of production; and the use of new technology in agriculture. Increased productivity resulting from the application of technology was a goal also expressed in the rewarding of workers who were considered the most productive. For example, at the 9th September village celebration (discussed in Chapter 2), monetary prizes were given to the best workers in a variety of Agricultural Cooperative areas: the worker who had achieved the highest results in the husbandry section; the most conscientious worker; and the best tractor driver. These awards indicated the importance of technology in agricultural production and consequently the significance given to those who worked with this technology.

The value of technology in agricultural production was emphasised in the 'model village' event at the TKZC when the officials met the most prominent workers and exchanged brief conversation with the experts – veterinary surgeons, economists and tractor drivers. These workers had specialised training and dealt with the most modern and technologically advanced techniques, machinery, medicines and chemicals. Their collective gathering denoted their relationships of mutual cooperation. Unlike the situation before 1944, agricultural production was not an individual enterprise but a cooperative effort which involved the working of common land by a whole team of educated specialists and farmers. Technology and specialised knowledge provided the basis for the new form of cooperative relations constructed between villagers in agricultural production. Indeed technological utilisation was an indicator of the progressive nature of the village's TKZC: technology was an important part of the development of historical goals, and a mark of the villagers' progress in respect to history. State ideological figures frequently expressed this view to Talpians. For example in an open Party meeting in December 1987, a guest lecturer, whose sole task was to speak about communism at political meetings, came to present a talk entitled, "The Foundation and Development of Socialism in Bulgaria." He

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15 The importance of technology in socialist development was maintained by Lenin, who wrote that increasing labour productivity through the application of technology was an indicator of the superiority of the socialist system. (Cited in Kolakowski 1978, Vol.2, p.519).

spoke of the general satisfaction with progress in the country, by contrasting the present situation with the situation 40 years ago, "...when 80% of the people in those times ate with wooden spoons. In 1944 we could not make the simplest items such as nails; today we sell ships to Japan and make technology for space."

The visible use and positive effects of technology in agricultural production were presented in the 'model village' as evidence of an improved standard of living, achievement in reaching a level of modernisation in the village and a measure of the village's success in advancing toward historical goals. The improvements in the village offered facilities which in the past had been available only in the towns; for example, a reliable water supply and efficient communication equipment. The effort the villagers made in their preparations for the 'model village' event, such as fixing the drinking fountains and the painting of lines marking the centre of the road in the plaza, both of which seemed functionally unnecessary, conveyed an urban-like image through the implied abundance of running water and automobile transport. In showing that they had facilities similar to those available in the towns, Talpians were depicting their village as modern and urban. State ideology espoused this same view; that the increasing productive level was an indication of success in achieving the historical goal of society. Zhivkov urged "...The main thing is to step up scientific and technical progress in all spheres of socialist construction, to create ever-improved pre-requisites for the communist education of the people and of the youth...This is the principal yardstick for measuring the correctness and effectiveness of our activity" (1974, p.87). In the 'model village' event, Talpians emphasised the nature of their technology and labour productivity, since this served as a 'yardstick' for measuring their historical progress.

By exhibiting their technologically efficient TKZC – in part through the attendance of its tertiary educated workers – villagers were trying, in their terms, to become "more like towns." At the 9th September celebrations in 1987 (see Chapter 2), Novikov, who made the main speech in his capacity as head of the Fatherland Front, talked about the importance of technology in bringing about deep changes in village life, in transforming the villages into "little towns." This, he said, could be evidenced from the presence of electricity, asphalt roads and medical services. Such aspects were identified by Zhivkov as indicators of the progress of the villagers in reducing the differences between themselves and the towns: "...the process of the urbanisation of our villages has been very rapid in recent years...modern new buildings, restaurants, stores etc. were erected in the centre of nearly every village...many of the villages have their own re-development plans which reflect the general economic and social progress of our socialist village" (1969, p.354). The rendering of the village as 'model' through modernised, technical and industrialised

productive agricultural activity, was the visual evidence which marked it as being "like a town." To become "like a town" was to display a certain form of agricultural productive organisation which was becoming increasingly state-owned and of a high educational and technological level.

By implication, in attempting to be 'model', villagers indicated that which they saw as characteristic of 'towns'. Towns were distinguished in their level of technological and educational facilities, opportunities and resources; the standard of living was higher than in the villages in terms of the greater level of consumption of material goods and in the better medical and entertainment facilities available. Towns had modern public buildings, restaurants, stores, as well as the very basic services such as running water and electricity. These factors were all ultimately consequences of the nature of productive relations in the towns, which were focussed on non-agricultural activities, usually of a highly industrialised form – and therefore less determined by natural forces than in the villages – and on the basis of the means of production being purely within state ownership. In short, the towns represented, through their productive activities and lifestyle, a relatively progressive form of existence.

The discourse of difference between town and village was essentially a concern with class relations and the elimination of discordance between the two represented the greater unification between classes. The class-based nature of the town/village dichotomy was identified by Zhivkov; "...a large number of our young people leave the villages and enter the ranks of the working class..." (1985b, p.184). Here he identified "leaving the village" with the means by which one may enter the working class, thus associating the town with the working class. The nature of the other class, which was presumably represented in the village, was also identified, "...The two main classes of our society – the working class and the *class of the cooperative farmers*...are increasingly drawing closer with regard to their place in production, the nature of their work..."(Zhivkov 1985b, p.181; my emphasis). The class relation was expressed by the villagers themselves in terms of the town/village contrast. Indeed, villagers did not consider their productive activities in a conscious way as reflective of class activities, as much as of an expression of town-village differences. Thus when Talpians called themselves 'villagers', or said they 'lived in the village', they were locating themselves within conceptions associated with a specific class position in respect to the town dwellers. However, in calling themselves 'workers' who laboured at the Agricultural Cooperative or the assembly plant, they attempted to overcome the class differences associated with their location within the 'village'. We may recall Andre Pashev's comment that it was "the Party and workers who made the village into a 'model

village'." His use of the word 'workers' rather than 'villagers', was a levelling statement about the class position of the Talpians in relation to the working class town dwellers.

The use of technology and industry in the TKZC was a way of decreasing the distance between the villages and towns not only because it represented the greater domination of nature, but also involved a transformation of the form of productive relations to one more compatible with that of the workers in towns. The role of the TKZC in the 'model village', was to portray the nature of village agricultural productive relations as specifically socialist in organisation. Indeed, the successful formation of the agricultural cooperative was a vital aspect of state ideological planning. It was viewed as the basis of the establishment of new socialist relations of comradeship and mutual assistance, founded on a cooperative, rather than a private form of ownership. Secondly, the setting up of agro-industrial complexes heavily dependent on the use of industrial machinery and specialised skilled workers, for example veterinary surgeons, agronomists, combine operators and economists, introduced a division of skills based on technical knowledge of various aspects of agricultural production. These were the two principal means by which Zhivkov believed villagers, now the class of cooperative farmers, would continue to socialise their relations and eventually be unified with the working class (1970, p.82). The villagers signalled the importance of the cooperative organisation of agriculture by taking the officials to their TKZC.

The prominence of the machine operator in the village resided in the fact that her/his occupation represented the 'new type' of agricultural worker, one which drew the villagers closer to the productive relations exemplified in the towns – to the working class. The respected position of these workers arose from the fact that they were instrumental in increasing production and therefore raising the standard of village life to become closer to that of the towns. In doing so, they established new productive relations which reduced the gap between themselves and the town. The cooperative farmer was becoming increasingly aligned to the working class, the village to the town, and it was the machine operators in the agricultural cooperative who epitomised the amalgamation and led the unification. The operators' presence at the TKZC as part of the 'model village' event, along with educated specialist figures, was therefore no coincidence. Machine operators were part of "The great achievements in raising the living standards of the cooperative farmers, in the economic and social development of the Bulgarian village ... giving them a new and modern look ... [as] ... part of the general and steady process of gradually overcoming the difference between town and village inherited from the past" (Zhivkov 1969, p.354).

The alliance which Talpians depicted as existing between themselves and the town working class, was given greater strength in the 'model village event' by the inclusion of the stereo assembly plant. This plant was not strictly under village administrative authority, being controlled and funded by the regional capital of Turnovo. Therefore its incorporation in the presentation constituted a particularly important part of the villagers' rendering of themselves as 'model'. Visiting the stereo assembly plant served to emphasise the town-like nature of village productive relations. The plant provided a form of work not usually available in a village concerned with agricultural production; factories were rarely the kind of organisations found in villages. This plant, it was said, was built at the initiative of Zhivkov, who was concerned about the loss of youth from Talpa. The establishment of the plant, it was hoped, would keep the youth in the village and stop them moving to the town, thus reversing the normal migration processes between the two. (This was another feature of 'towns' as characterised by the villagers; that is, the association of youth with the towns and the elderly with the villages). In terms of the above associations between 'town' and 'village', 'working' and 'cooperative' classes respectively, the plant provided a forceful way in which Talpians affiliated themselves with the town working class goals in a distinctly Talpian manner, not available to most villages. Meeting the guests outside the assembly plant and taking them through it, gave Talpians an opportunity to respond to questions about the existence of the factory, by saying it was built at Zhivkov's directives to stop the out-flow of youth from the village. This emphasised the special relationship Talpians had to Zhivkov. The plant served as evidence of Zhivkov's attempt to preserve the village from the same effects of industrialisation which had led to the demise of many other villages. The inclusion of the plant in the event was not only an implicit reference to the villages' favoured relationship with Zhivkov, but also an indication of its desired working class nature. The fact that the building was established under Zhivkov's instruction both contributed to the distinctiveness of the way in which Talpians constructed their working class alliances and reinforced the view of the village as progressive.

The plant represented a different kind of organisation from the TKZC. The association of the plant with 'the town' – its working population coming primarily from outside the village (as opposed to the TKZC where most workers were villagers), its ties to Zhivkov, the fact it was controlled not locally but from Turnovo – linked it more closely with working class interests. In the event, Talpians portrayed their closer affiliation to productive relations represented by this characteristically town-like operation rather than by the TKZC, through the greater attention paid to it. The officials were led through the plant, (but not through the TKZC), where they saw for themselves the assembly lines in

which stereo apparatus was being put together with the use of technical equipment. Further, the association of historical activities with the plant through the presentation of badges outside the building, implied a connection between village history and the plant which was less obvious at the TKZC, where no such explicit reference to history was made. The alignment of village history with the plant, the towns and therefore the working class, rather than with cooperative farmers at the TKZC, enabled Talpians to display the future progressive direction of the village through their preference for a particular type of productive activity. Moreover, the leading village historical figure, Pashev, attended the plant (as did all the village officials) but a smaller number (excluding Pashev) went to the TKZC. Since participation in state-approved activities was in ideological terms a means of support for the state, Pashev's absence from the TKZC part of the proceedings in the 'model village' event, indicated more than the delineation of administrative duties (as noted in the previous section); it also implied a closer alliance of the working class to history, a closer affiliation to one form of socialist production over another. The inclusion of the plant in the event was a specific way in which Talpians were able to construct their preference for the working class interests. By way of the symbolic importance of the plant as an organisation of production typical of the towns and as concrete evidence of villagers' friendship with Zhivkov, working class productive relations were established as the preferred form of village productive organisation.

One of the seemingly more trivial activities carried out at the TKZC, located this form of productive relation in respect to the more advanced mode represented by the assembly plant, and to a third one, represented by the households. For the second time in the event, the officials shared food and drink with the villagers, the first occurring in the households as part of the folklore performed. The difference in the type of food offered on the two occasions was significant. That provided at the Agricultural Cooperative did not include products from the TKZC (fresh fruits for example), nor was it food recognised as 'Bulgarian cuisine', as was that presented in the households; rather, it was processed and packaged, a product of the food industry. That is, the serving of processed modern foods distinguished the TKZC, as a centre of agricultural production, from the kind of agricultural production found in individual households – where produce was grown mostly for private needs. The differences in the type of food offered, reflected the manner in which the TKZC and its particular form of productive relations were portrayed by the villagers as being distinct from household production – which was privately controlled. It also distinguished both from the purely state-owned means of production of the plant – where no offering of food was made at all – as this was not concerned with agricultural production but was most closely associated with historical progress. (Why not offering

food was a more historically progressive position is addressed in the section on Identity). The TKZC represented a mode of production more technologically and historically advanced than that practised in the private households (which was relatively uncontrolled by the state) and yet less historically advanced than those productive relations existent in the working class plant.

The Talpians displayed the significance of class relations in the 'model' village by their participation in two forms of productive relations – cooperative and working class – both of which were socialist forms of organisation, heavily dependent on industry and technology. However, their portrayed preference for the latter rather than the former, was in line with state ideology which advocated a future unification of the relations to the means of production through the transformation of a cooperative organisation into a purely state-owned form. In terms of state ideology, it was the villagers – as more backward – who were expected to 'catch up' to the townships – which were leading and were the more progressive. Zhivkov stated an important aim of state ideology was "...to strengthen the civic outlook of the farmer in attitude toward the place and role he takes and plays in agricultural production" (1970, pp.69-70). This was achieved largely via the use of technology, "Under socialism the automation and cybernation of production make it easier...to raise rural standards to the level of urban ones" (Zhivkov 1984, p.229). Talpians revealed in the 'model village' event that they were doing this, through the privileged attention they gave to a form of productive relations which was historically progressive (working class) in nature and in the visual reduction of differences between town and village through facilities and services offered in the latter. According to Zhivkov, "...conditions will increasingly be created, more closely approaching those in industry...It implies that the cooperative farmers...will increasingly raise their technique and general culture, their qualifications...It also implies that our villages will become wealthier and better laid out; urban conditions of life will increasingly be created in them." And in case there are doubts as to the ultimate aims of this process, Zhivkov continued: "The difference between the class of cooperative farmers and the working class will be gradually ironed out with the further development of the Bulgarian village...As Lenin predicted, the peasants will turn into workers" (Zhivkov 1985b, p.185)[16]. While in contemporary socialist conditions the cooperative farmers constituted a distinct class from the working class, this difference was portrayed as one becoming less significant as cooperative production becomes increasingly dependent upon technology and state

16 Zhivkov noted that certain differences between town and village are to be expected and indeed are acceptable, as long as they are non-antagonistic to the historic task. (Zhivkov 1974, p.108; Maxwell 1985, p.199).

ownership. In showing their technical prowess in productive relations and with their emphasis on working class rather than cooperative production, Talpians were 'bridging the gap' between themselves and the towns. The particular manner in which they displayed their preference for working class interests by way of the plant, was again based on an emphasis of their relations to Zhivkov. It was through their apparently privileged standing with Zhivkov that the villagers portrayed their advanced, town-like qualities.

In short, Talpians showed they had ironed out, as far as technology allowed, town-village differences – thus establishing themselves as 'model' villagers striving for the classless situation. The desirability for this process was expressed in a speech by Zhivkov, who stated: "...many of the big villages in our country have grown into settlements of an urban type, while others have become outright towns. This positive process will continue in the future also" (1969, p.354)[17]. The unification of cooperative farmers and workers resulting in their equal relatedness in respect to the means of production was a precondition for the achievement of communist society. In displaying their relations to the means of production as cooperative and preferably working class in form, Talpians were striving to come into harmony with the working class town inhabitants, so exhibiting their progress towards the historical goal of communism.

Morality

According to Zhivkov "...Some are quite right in saying that if you lack a scientific materialist world outlook...then you lack a soul" (1985b, p.123). State ideology thus grounded a conception of humanness within relations which were historical in character. The very essence of 'humanness', of what it is to be human, was established through actions effecting the historical transformation of society. Those relations which were constitutive of Bulgarian socialist state conceptions of humanness, I term morality.

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17 That unification was occurring was indicated in statistics provided by Zhivkov on the eve of the adoption of the second socialist constitution in May, 1971. He wrote "...The social and class structure of our society has undergone radical revolutionary changes. If at the time of the adoption of the first socialist Constitution, industrial and office workers accounted for 25 per cent of the country's population, on the eve of the adoption of the new Constitution they account for 69 per cent. Or take the number of peasants. In 1947 they constituted nearly three-quarters of the population and at present they account for less than one-third. Moreover, while only 4 per cent of our peasants were cooperative farmers at the time, today the class of cooperative farmers, builders of socialism, works in the countryside." (Maxwell 1985, p.215).

The museum was an important element through which Talpians defined their sense of morality. Matov, the head of the *Chitalishte*, led the guests through the museum which commemorated the life of Mara Marlaueva, and spoke of her time in Talpa and her friendship with Talpians. The restored museum replicated the cottage exactly as it was when Marlaueva was in Talpa in the late 1930's, except for the room which had once served as a waiting room. In this room, chronologically arranged photographs were hung, tracing her life: a few childhood and early family shots, her role as wife of the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party from the mid 1950's and their family – until her untimely death from cancer in the 1970's. There were also photos of the times Marlaueva had spent in Talpa both in the 1930's and again when she and Zhivkov had paid a visit to the village in 1970 in order to view the newly built *Chitalishte*.

A consequential part of Marlaueva's life, portrayed in the photographs, was her role as a family member. The family was held in high esteem in the Bulgarian state in which the woman had a substantial role to play as mother and wife. The importance of these roles was evident at Midwives' Day, with a celebration held in the *Chitalishte* recognising the role of those workers involved in childbirth[18]. The nurse who delivered the speech at the function, spoke in support of families larger than the Bulgarian average of one child per family. The disadvantages of having only one child were outlined. She warned that the child would easily become spoilt and unhappy; and completed her speech by stressing that there was nothing greater than a woman becoming a mother and bringing into the world another poet, writer or whatever. Encouragement for the family by the state, (in part effected through the provision of well-facilitated child care centres), gave particular importance to the role held by women as both wives and mothers. Indeed, Zhivkov was quoted by the nurse as having said that giving birth was a social function of women. The portrayal of Marlaueva in the photographs acting dutifully as both wife and mother, provided one dimension of her moral being, as fulfilling one aspect of her role in society. The photographs attested to Marlaueva as a family person, firstly as a child with her family, then as wife to Zhivkov and mother to their two children. These images reinforced Marlaueva as true to ideological expectations of women, "...Bulgarian women devote their forces, abilities and knowledge to all fields of socialist construction and are timelessly taking care of the bringing up and education of the growing generations, the future of the Bulgarian nation" (Zhivkov 1969, p.586). Bulgarian women were viewed as nurturers of future Bulgarian generations and Marlaueva was shown to be a positive figure in this through the photographs which portrayed her as mother and carer of children.

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18 For a description of the traditional practice of *'Babin Den'* - Midwives' Day, see Lodge (1947). In contemporary times, this custom held folkloric significance in Talpa.

The photographs also depicted the public role played by Marlaueva, who did not neglect her duties to the anti-fascist cause, but participated in communist activities, including the offering of sanctuary to her fiancee before and during World War II. Later, as wife to Zhivkov, Marlaueva had a high profile in state functions. Her medical background gave her a special interest in health issues; photographs in the Talpian museum pictured her attendance at a number of state functions in respect to these and other concerns. Described by Matov in his speech at the museum as Zhivkov's closest ally and supporter, Marlaueva was thus presented as a prominent figure in the development of the socialist state, both before 1944 and thereafter.

The photographs and the preservation of the surgery and living quarters, also made evident the important contribution of Marlaueva in her capacity as a doctor. Her selfless activities as "the peoples' doctor," as she was described by Matov in his speech at the 100 Year *Chitalishte* celebratory speech, was identified as a major factor in the improvement of health conditions in the village at the time of her stay in Talpa. As a hard-working doctor, the officials were told of the conditions she had to endure in the village; of the poverty and disease in the pre-socialist war-affected village and of the many sacrifices she made in order to administer medical help to the villagers. Officials were escorted around the small cottage, their attention being directed to the impoverished and primitive conditions in which she had worked and lived, with no electricity or adequate winter heating. The lack of such facilities, the guests were told, was common throughout the village at that time. Marlaueva battled these hard physical conditions, treating patients and giving lectures on health, well-being and hygiene to the villagers and school children and disseminating information on how to avoid the many poverty-related diseases which were common before 1944. Her role was that of an educator as much as a doctor. Marlaueva was therefore glorified as a communist and doctor who practised for the benefit of the community in curing sickness and disease and in educating villagers on how to overcome such problems in the future.

State ideology advocated morality in terms of collective, socialist interests – this was also indicated to be a central province of the 'peoples' doctor'. As a health worker, Marlaueva was shown to be putting communal goals ahead of ones of self-interest Her communal spirit and concern for humanity was part of a state ideology which espoused comradely cooperation, mutual aid and a conscientious attitude towards work and the public good. Such an ideological stance left no room for selfish interests or individualism, the building of communism was a task to which everyone was expected to give selflessly, without expectations of monetary or other form of reward. In Zhivkov's terms, a true builder of socialism was represented by someone who "...becomes ever more emancipated from the

selfishness and individualism of the past and begins to feel that he is an integral part of society" (1969, p.599). Marlaueva's activities as a doctor, communist and mother-wife, were presented in such a light. She was a social being, concerned with the welfare of society. Every aspect of her life, her career as a doctor, her marriage to Zhivkov and role as mother to their two children, revolved around her socialist regard for humanity. Upholding such a mission through her career, familial and public life, Marlaueva was depicted to have acted in a manner which contributed to the development of the socialist state. Such a display of selflessness and orientation towards communal interests was an important part of socialist morality; it defined the basis of her morality. Any divergence from "socialist principles brings not only material but also moral losses to society" (Zhivkov 1969, p.604; 1974, p.62). In this respect, according to Zhivkov, squandering and stealing from the state were acts incompatible with 'socialist norms', such material losses being viewed also as moral losses. That is, any notion of morality which disregarded a state-determined historical orientation was incompatible with a socialist understanding of humanness. Socialist morality was dependent on an individual's acceptance of her/his responsibility to, and participation in, historical goals.

Humanness was therefore measured in terms of an individual's capacity to fulfil her/his duty to society; that is, to give primary importance to and know the individual in terms of social value, to operate in every aspect of life within this socially conscientious framework, rather than within selfish interests which were at the expense of socialist historical goals[19]. Morality was defined in terms of an individual's devotion in all aspects of her/his life to historical goals. A moral person was someone who contributed in every possible way to historical goals, a well-rounded person whose every act was directed towards the development of the socialist state. Zhivkov wrote of state expectations for the Bulgarian woman as a major contributor to the country's development in terms of her having to be a "mother, producer and public figure" (1969, p.587). The Talpians' presentation of Marlaueva to the 'model village' officials through the museum, established her as an exemplary moral figure precisely because her socially conscious activity extended throughout all realms of her life – as a family member, doctor and public figure. A socialist conception of morality was attributed to a figure who had a "conscientious attitude toward work, toward public interests and toward the socialist state" (Zhivkov 1969, p.599); that is, someone who expressed individuality in terms of fulfilment of social concerns and who devoted every aspect of her/his being to the task of the development of historical goals.

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19 "Man..." according to Zhivkov, was "...a basic component of the entity called nation" (1988, p.104). Thus individual interests were always subsumed in societal obligations.

The museum played an important role in the Talpians' portrayal of themselves as socialist moral beings in the 'model village' event. The fact that the officials' tour took them through this establishment rather than the *Chitalishte* or school (which were also renovated for the 'model village' event and, like the museum, were centres of village historical activity) was a significant facet in the Talpians' construction of their sense of socialist morality; the museum commemorated the life of Marlaueva, whose career, family ties and social contribution was upheld as ideologically desirable and morally unquestionable in socialist society. In using Marlaueva as an exemplar of humanness, Talpians were applying, in a specific way, state ideology which upheld Communist Party members – as those most dedicated to the realisation of historical goals – as morally commendable. "The role of the personal example given by communists should be reinforced. In this connection we should require of the communist strictly to abide by the statutory stipulations: to serve as examples in their work, to guard and try to increase socialist property, to serve as an example in their personal life, to be intransigent toward philistinism, moral laxness and other survivals of the past, most strictly to observe Party and state discipline and socialist legality" (Zhivkov 1969, p.605; 1974, p.63). The museum, as presented to the officials in the 'model village' event, was about upholding Marlaueva and inevitably Zhivkov, as moral exemplars. In this way, Talpians impressed on the officials the socialist morality which was given village support through their friendship with this communist figure and which, through the establishment of the museum, they defined as virtuous and commendable. It was through their historical association with Maralaueva and her husband that the villagers constructed their own morality.

A socialist sense of morality was thus defined and immortalised in the museum as a notion of humanness which emphasised the social worth of the individual and which encouraged the full and total commitment of the individual to state historical goals. That Talpians accomplished this through their relations to Marlaueva and Zhivkov, gave a particularity to the villagers' construction of morality. These moral relations were given visual reinforcement through the appearance of the village. While not explicated by Talpians in such terms, the visual presentation of the village was another medium through which they portrayed their work as a continuation of that initiated by Marlaueva. Visual presentation of the village as an indicator of the morality of the Talpians was suggested by Zhivkov: "...In the process of shaping the new man, the actual social conditions in which he works, creates and lives should be taken into consideration. Man's social consciousness and conduct in a socialist society are fundamentally conditioned by his life in society and by his social environment" (1969, p.599; 1974, p.58). I take this to be a recognition of the

importance of the village environment in influencing the morality of its inhabitants. The visual presentation of the village served as a commentary, a metaphor for Talpian socialist morality.

Preparations for the 'event' involved portraying those areas in the village which were historically most significant as morally positive sites through their hygienic, clean and ordered appearance. That is, those public sites where career, family and community interests were enacted, were also the sites which were visually the most well presented. Greatest attention was paid to the central plaza. This can be attributed to its public character as the focal point of state, communal activities in the village (the significance of spatial symbolism in the village is extended in the following section). As such, this area more than any other, exemplified the 'model' villagers' modernised, clean conditions. Considerable attention was paid to the general appearance of the plaza, its beautification through the placement of flower pots and the sweeping of village streets, especially those close to the plaza. The obvious elimination of 'dirt' by paving the central plaza area and the laying of footpaths in this centralised area was a way in which 'polluting' factors were dealt with in the 'model village'.

Villagers were also held responsible for the orderly display of their street frontage. Boteva and I spent a morning removing rocks from the area between the asphalted road and house (many of the village streets distant from the plaza had no curbs or footpaths). We used rakes to collect together all rocks, leaving only the pebbles, which we then dumped on the other side of the road which bordered a field and was therefore not within the Talpians' conceptual boundary of 'village'. The establishment of such order also included the tidy stacking of firewood (rather than its haphazard dumping), the fixing of broken walls and fences and the removal of rubbish. Villagers were expected to keep their animals under control and penned up, not left to roam the streets, especially near the plaza, where they could cause damage. This became an issue when wandering geese flew into electricity wires, causing temporary blackouts to some village households.

The physical appearance of the village provided an image of the type of relations on which 'humanness' was based. The particular attention paid to all the public sites reflected their commitment to the importance of the public dimension of socialist life. The renovation of the plaza buildings – the school, *Chitalishte*, museum, restaurant – was thus no accident in the 'model village' preparations. In carrying out this work, villagers visually endorsed their interest in, and the great importance they placed on, all areas of socialist life. On the other hand, no time had been devoted to the church, which was one of the few buildings in the village and most definitely the only building located in the central plaza which was left in a

dilapidated state. Its poor condition – mould and damp had ruined the internal icons, paint and plaster were peeling off the exterior and interior walls and there was unrepaired structural damage to the building caused by earthquakes – served as a symbol of the decay of religion in the 'model village'. Outside the church the grass was left uncut and weeds grew through the cracked pavement surrounding the building. The over-run picture presented by the Church contrasted with the neat, clean and orderly condition of all the other plaza buildings, making a clear statement about the kind of relations given village support. The ordered presentation of the historical sites and the decrepit appearance of the church reflected the basis on which Talpian moral relations were founded; relations which had no time for religious (traditional) beliefs and which were, instead, supportive of the historical concerns of the socialist state.

The portrayal of the village (or rather the village historical sites) as thriving and youthful, was also an aspect of the visual appearance of the 'model village'. Youth served as a temporal metaphor for the orderly historical sites. Some years earlier, when Zhivkov had toured the school, villagers had arranged for many more desks to be placed in the classrooms and had brought over 'extra' children from Nekilva, thereby staging a scenario suggesting the thriving nature of the school and village, through the presence of many children. This episode was brought up at a meeting organising a preliminary 100 Year *Chitalishte* celebration, at which some expressed a need to bring outside musicians to Talpa rather than rely solely on the village quintet. Boteva reminded the meeting that on the previous occasion, Zhivkov had not been fooled by the import of extra children and had said so. She pointed out that a similar stunt with musicians would again fool no one. In the 'model village' event, the active participation of the school children as part of the welcoming group outside the assembly plant, in the folkloric performance and in attending the many other facets of the event, firmly established the presence of youth in the village. This contributed to the visual appearance of the village on the day as a lively, youthful place with future potential and importance. Further, since a characteristic of towns was the high proportion of youth who had left the villages for urbanised areas, the presence of youth in the 'model village' event visually reinforced their urban-like character (and therefore their alliance with working class interests). The presentation of the village as youthful and town-like was an aspect of its orderly nature and progressive morality.

Since a dimension of the village's orderly appearance was its association with youth, the sites which were seen as contrasting with state historical goals – that is those sites which encouraged relations of a religious nature or which placed individual above communal interests – were left in a condition of (ageing) decline and decay. Such negatively perceived relations were visually enforced in unkempt areas of the village, locations left

purposefully unclean and disordered. Thus the purposeful neglect of the church presented a picture of disorder. The only visible indication of humanity in the church grounds arose from a few tombstones, overgrown by grass and weeds. This was a means by which the villagers established their opposition to religious beliefs, through showing how relations grounded in the religious past were associated with death and decay and were not relevant to the contemporary village. (The funeral of Marlaueva portrayed in the museum photographs, was a state affair which included no religious ceremony. Socialist death was firmly located in relations devoid of mystical, religious significance). On the other hand villagers tried to hide any buildings which were not in the a-historical 'zones' and which should therefore have been well kept. When the officials left the TKZC, the mayor breathed a sign of relief and said that they had noted three things not fixed, including a broken fence on the way to the TKZC. He also retold how he had tried to divert the guests' attention when the party had passed a run-down house, but the official had noticed it. These sites, which Talpians had not had the time or means to fix (the run down house was owned by an ex-villager now living in Sofia who rarely returned to the village), could not be openly displayed as in poor condition. They were spatially delineated as part of the contemporary socialsit village and thus had to be represented as being in order.

The concern with hygiene and cleanliness attributed order to historical sites, an order which valued the disguising or elimination of any natural elements. Through the importance given to the hygienic, orderly and modern organisation of the village, (also expressed as an association between youth and order, ageing and disorder) Talpians metaphorically marked their concern with moral cleanliness[20]. Cleanliness, primarily in public places but also in individual households, through the apparent elimination of 'natural' polluting elements such as animal excrement and dirt, was a means by which Talpians constructed their moral purity. Conversely, the decrepit and disordered condition of the church as nature increasingly attained control, attested to the type of relations which villagers defined as immoral. Through the neglected state of the church, villagers showed they had left behind such religious-based relations. Such a selective control of nature in some sites and lack of it in others through the maintenance or absence of cleanliness and

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20 Here we can refer to Douglas' work on dirt as 'matter out of place' – as expressive of a symbolic system. One passage I find particularly appropriate and revealing in relation to the Talpian situation: "Reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder...life to death. Wherever ideas on dirt are highly structured, their analysis discloses a play upon such profound themes" (Douglas 1966, pp.5-6). Themes – we note in the 'model village' event – between age and youth served a similar purpose, constituting a temporal metaphor for the spatial delineation between traditional and historical sites, differentiating disorder from order respectively.

order, was a critique of traditionally-religious-based relations and a way to uphold a socialist morality.

Morality was about being active in the process of building socialism and realising communism. Talpians were moral beings because they were actively involved in the transformation and historical development of their village. They showed support for such a socialist morality through the visual display of their village as clean and orderly; for it was through this process of constructing a clean and orderly village, in those sites associated with the development of socialism, that they established the basis of their morality. The visible transformation of the village and improvement of facilities offered by it, provided an image for the rejection of the traditional past, representing a progressive, historical movement towards socialism and towards the moral purification of Talpa. Indeed when I asked *Baba* Grigora what socialism has done for her, she inevitably identified the improvement of living conditions, the provision of electricity, running water and the elimination of sickness and disease.

The visual transformation of the village into a hygienic and orderly place was also depicted in the museum where, in displaying the primitive conditions in which Marlaueva lived before the advent of socialism – with no electricity and heating – Talpians emphasised the importance of 1944 and the rejection of the traditional past. The 'model village' served as a contrast to this pre-socialist past which Marlaueva and others had lived through. Socialist morality – as portrayed by the Talpians in the 'model village' presentation – required active involvement in the cleansing process, in the purification of the village from a past social order which was religious, anti-communal and therefore immoral. Marlaueva was depicted as central to this process, being involved in improving the villagers' quality of life. Through their support of her and her husband, Talpians constructed the terms of their own morality. Thus the village museum was a monument to a conception of humanness which was defined in terms of the two highest level political-historical figures. Such a socialist morality, centred on politically significant figures in history, was constructed by the Talpians through their inclusion of the museum within the 'model village' event and constituted the very heart of the 'model villagers' understanding of a state ideological notion of humanness.

Identity

The final consideration of the Talpian presentation of themselves as 'model', concerns the nature of their identity. In Chapter 4, I interpreted the performance of folklore as associated with the construction of a national identity; in the 'model village' event,

Talpians used folkore for this same purpose – that is, to construct their identity as 'Bulgarian'.

The folkloric practices were confined to activities directly outside or within the two selected private households. Outside the houses, the official guests were met by two of the village school girls, whose appearance signified the beginning of the folkloric part of the proceedings. These girls wore costumes which distinguished them from those children outside the assembly plant who had handed out badges and flowers and who were dressed in *Pionerski* uniforms. They were also distinguished from the rest of the villagers and officials who all wore 20th century formal attire, – most of the men in suits and ties, the women in formal dresses. The costumes of the girls who met the guests at the homes, in contrast, were colourful (mainly red and white), embroidered, pinafore-style dresses worn on top of cream shirts embroidered around the neck and long sleeves (such shirts closely resembled the modes on sale in souvenir shops in Sofia). In their hair, the girls wore flowers. Their colourful attire and particular style of clothing announced visually the folkloric nature of this part of the 'model village' proceedings.

When the guests had accepted from the girls the offered nails and hammers and performed the task of nailing the signs, 'model home', to the outside doors leading into the yards of the two homes (pre-selected by the Talpians because they were both well kept and presentable), the officials entered the properties where outside tables were laden with a variety of foods. Offering of food was the customary way to greet guests who arrived in a home. Tradition necessitated that hosts invite their guests to share in the consumption of food. In turn, the guests were expected to accept the invitation if they did not wish to insult the host. In offering food, the villagers thus established themselves as hospitable and friendly hosts. This tradition had national folkloric importance. In a publicity photograph of Indira Ghandi being met at the airport by T. Zhivkov, the caption read "Welcoming Indira Ghandi with bread and salt by a folk custom" (Neikov and Kozhinkov 1987, p.27). Many foreign dignitaries were met with such folkloric practice, which involved consuming a piece of *pita* bread, which had been dipped into a salt-herb mixture. The traditional act of hospitality had taken on a national significance: instead of being the way a stranger was accepted into an individual's home, it had become a means of accepting foreign dignitaries into the country. A variation of this custom, which simply involved serving *pita* bread, was used in Talpa in the 'model village' event. The folkloric custom was distinguished from the traditional practice by the location in which it occurred – outside, standing or sitting at a table, rather than in the traditional circumstances when a guest would be led inside the home to eat and drink. (Since offering food held both traditional and folkloric significance, the fact that no food was offered to the guests when

they were at the assembly plant defined this area of activity as more historically progressive than either of the other two locations – the TKZC and household).

The traditional custom of offering food was given folkloric significance by the very nature of the food presented. The foods were not pre-packaged (as were those received by the officials at the TKZC, which included soft drinks, cakes, biscuits and coffee), but they were known and served throughout the country. *Banitsa*, a cheese pastry, had both folkloric and traditional importance. *Banitsa* was frequently cooked and eaten on traditional occasions; for example, on new year's day, *banitsa* was prepared with a coin and small cornel twigs inside it. The twigs were distinguished by their differing number of buds, and each represented a particular domain of village life – domestic animals, vines, the house, health and wealth. Those who chanced upon a cornel twig in their own piece of *banitsa*, were said to be ensured health, success with their domestic animals (or other aspects of life, dependent on which twig they happened to find in the piece they were served), in the following year. On such traditional occasions the appearance of the *banitsa* was less important than its apparent main purpose as a carrier of the twigs which would bring luck. Such a significance also meant that more than one *banitsa* with hidden twigs was not made; mass production would have made irrelevant the traditional importance of the occasion since the whole point of the twigs was that some people would 'find luck', others would not. Although on traditional occasions people went to a great deal of trouble to prepare the *banitsa*, sometimes short cuts were taken in the preparation (for example factory-produced filo pastry was used). This was acceptable simply because the significance of traditional *banitsa* was in the luck carried by the twigs found in the food, rather than on its appearance.

Through the way in which it was prepared and presented to the guests (which involved the loss of any magical significance), the *banitsa* served at the 'model village' event was reminiscent of the custom of *survakani* (Chapter 4) – as re-contextualised tradition which had folkloric importance. The *banitsa* offered to the guests was made in the 'authentic' way, no contemporary means of preparation such as the use of factory made pastry was acceptable; it had to be done 'like in the old days', using only hand made pastry sheets. This laborious procedure affected the presentation of the product; the preparation was aimed at making a *banitsa* which was visually appealing. The village women – including Tzela and other Party members who cooked the food – spent much effort for the 'model village' event to produce food which looked good – in this case, browned to perfection, not burnt. Indeed, to safe-guard themselves against failures, several women cooked a larger than required number of *banitsi* and only the successes were presented to the guests. (Unlike tradition, quantity had no affect on the significance of the custom). As in respect

to all folklore, the *banitsa* in the 'model village' event emphasised the appearance at the expense of other traditionally important aspects (such as its belief in bringing good luck). There were no magical associations given to the *banitsa*; instead the effort taken in its preparation and presentation defined its aesthetic appeal in terms of taste and appearance. This was emphasised when the official guests gave admiring comments about the appearance of the *banitsa* before consuming their portions. Nor, in contrast to a traditional *banitsa*, was the timing important. A *banitsa* with folkloric significance could be made on any occasion, irrespective of the time of year; context was not determined by any magical significance supposedly represented by a traditional *banitsa*. Instead, its presentation was determined by those village leaders who had organised the event and the selection of food to be served.

Two other items served – red wine and *pita* bread – were also foods that were prominent in traditional ceremonies, but on this occasion had folkloric significance. These held traditional (religious) importance at funerals and were also part of the *Zarezan* festivity (see Chapter 3). The traditional associations of these two foods at the 'model village' event were denied in a number of ways; not the least because they were prepared and served in a state-influenced event, organised by state officials in order to impress other state officials. (It may be recalled that traditional occasions were not characterised by state intervention). The foods' folkloric significance was also effected through its lack of religious association. While still located in the private household domain, its traditional significance as part of the home funeral rites associated with beliefs about the deceased's spirit, was denied and re-presented in a secularised context as typically Bulgarian cuisine. The foods also attained folkloric importance because they were served in a hotchpotch manner, dislocated from their traditional contextual placement. The three, *banitsa*, red wine and *pita* bread, were never to my knowledge traditionally served together (the latter two were often served on the same occasion but not with *banitsa*). Therefore, from a traditional point of view, the serving of all three foods together was non-sensical, detached from any traditional significance.

The three foods were known throughout Bulgaria and therefore easily appropriated as folklorically significant; *pita* bread and red wine had traditional-religious significance due to their connection with the Church, while *banitsa* was prepared everywhere in Bulgaria at the time of the new year[21]. Their common availability allowed their easy appropriation for state folkloric purposes as Bulgarian cultural foods (despite significant differences which existed in their traditional practice). Indeed the folkloric practices enacted in the 'model

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21 Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1985), *Etnografia na Bulgaria*, Vol.III, p.102.

village' event were frequently performed and seen in various state-controlled festivals and on television. Traditional costumes were no longer worn or seen in Talpa (or for that matter anywhere in Bulgaria) except on stages, at festivals and the like and this contributed to their importance on this occasion as folklore. Women kept such embroidered treasures in moth balls and plastic in wardrobes at home. Food with folkloric significance as typically 'Bulgarian' was served at the many restaurants which had sprung up in city tourist centres. Villagers thus had a pre-defined knowledge of these practices as folklore, as activities which held significance in the recognition of a 'Bulgarian' identity.

The purposeful inclusion of these particular foods provides an insight into the identity established by the Talpians. An identity which was, firstly, one that related back to the time of Turkish domination – *banitsa* and the religiously important *pita* and red wine were foods associated with traditional customs which pre-dated the socialist state. Secondly, the foods chosen were not specific to the region but known throughout Bulgarian and through this Talpians espoused an identity focussed at the national level. On one occasion when speaking to Boteva, I was told that as a guest I would be greeted with *banitsa* wherever I travelled in Bulgaria. She was well aware – as indeed were most Talpians – that such food as used in the 'model village' event was characteristic of all Bulgaria. Tzela who oversaw and organised the cooking for the event, also recognised the significance of the foods presented as typically Bulgarian cuisine. Indeed as a school teacher and Party secretary, she was well aware of the symbolism associated with the folkloric practices. The foods served also contributed a non-religious and non-superstitious character to the villagers' Bulgarian identity. Talpians showed that they made use of state-maintained folkloric practices, which represented "...a truly realistic attitude, completely alien to mysticism..." (Zhivkov 1986a, p.240). The folkloric foods denied regional and religious differences between villages and in so doing denoted an identity capable of unifying the village both internally and externally, in relation to other towns and villages. Making use of folkloric practices – not one of which was a custom indigenous to Talpa – that carried national import, allowed the villagers to de-emphasise their identity as based on a distinct local tradition and establish it as one which held significance at the national level. In serving such a national purpose, in constructing themselves as Bulgarian through the practise of folklore, Talpians displayed an identity which unified all inhabitants within the village and further afield, in terms of a common socialist-approved culture designated as specifically Bulgarian.

The use of folklore and its unifying role in creating a Bulgarian identity was expressed in state ideology by Zhivkov, who urged that "...we should uproot any sense of inferiority and degrading admiration of everything foreign. We must teach every Bulgarian to value his

or her national dignity and worth, to feel proud...of everything created by our people, of what it is creating now – the new socialist life, the new socialist culture..." (1986a, p.136). In this context, folklore "...has performed a remarkable, constructive, protective and reviving role in our people's historical destiny" (Zhivkov 1981a, p.6). Zhivkov viewed folklore as the means by which Bulgarians had successfully preserved a sense of national integrity which endured the 500 years of Turkish rule. This process he saw as part of the country's progress through history. "Ardent patriotism is one of our people's greatest virtues. Forced to defend the freedom and independence of the Fatherland for centuries on end, it knows how to love it and sacrifice itself for it" (Zhivkov 1981a, p.6). Through their inclusion of folklore in the 'model village' event, Talpians exhibited support for such a sense of national unity which tied their present Talpian identity to a traditional past in a particular – folkloric – way.

The fact that they confined the performance of folklore to the household was, however, a specifically Talpian metaphor for state ideology. The household represented a site which in many ways was not directly under state control; it was spatially distanced from public places (the plaza) where political-historical celebrations were always held. In this private domain also, many traditional practices were located (see Chapter 3). In the 'model village' event, the villagers portrayed all other areas of village life – industrial and agricultural production and the centre of social activities, the plaza – as closely associated with the state through a politicised history; only the household remained relatively free from this reference to political-history. The spatial separation of folkloric practices from the public village domain in the 'model village' event and its location within the household represented the increased influence of the state in the private domain. While not reflected upon in such terms by the villagers, folklore in the 'model village' event represented the inclusion of the state in an area which was associated with traditional practices. The performance of folklore in this private domain – representing Bulgarian identity through the denial of any territorial and religious differences – was therefore a way in which Talpians depicted their rejection of tradition and abandoned any identity based on traditional delineations, in preference to a unifying folkloric one. They were 'model villagers' because they had removed traditions from village locations (except the church), confined folklore to the home and therefore gave the state relevancy within the private domain.

In including folkloric practices as part of the 'model village' event, Talpians were involving themselves in the re-contextualisation of tradition, showing how irrelevant the traditional past was in the village, except as folklore. The nailing of the sign, 'model home', conveyed state official approval of the nature of this identity constructed by Talpians and their

support for a socialist conception of 'Bulgarianness'. At the same time, the association between folklore and the household made possible its comparison with the rest of the event, that is, a comparison between the 'model home' and the 'model village'.

The relegation of folklore to the household meant that politicised-history was attributed the dominant position in all public sites. Indeed, to have had girls dressed in folkloric costumes standing outside the plant, presenting communist badges, would have looked extremely out of place to the Talpians. It would have been a way of ridiculing the Party and history, of giving it folkloric status. This also explains why folkloric foods were not served to the guests at the Agricultural Cooperative; there was nothing particularly Bulgarian about a factory or an agricultural cooperative! And again, it becomes clear why the vocal group performed political rather than folkloric songs in public sites. All public sites in the village were constituted as the political-historical domain, while folklore was confined to the household.

The spatial separation made between folklore and a politicised history, in terms of restriction of the former to the private household domain and of the latter to the rest of the village, was a commentary about – indeed a spatial metaphor for – the relation between the two constructions of the past. The specific inflection of state ideology by Talpians restricting folklore to the household and defining all public space as controlled by a political history, was important in delineating the way in which villagers constructed themselves as 'model'. Talpians made a statement (albeit implicit and probably unreflected upon) about the association between folklore and the household on the one side and history and the village on the other, as a relation whereby the former were encompassed by the latter; as the household was one part of the village, so folklore was relegated to being one aspect of the realisation of historical goals. Folklore was ultimately subsumed in and encompassed within history; the former was defined as a small part of the total and dependent upon it. This was an evaluation which introduced a hierarchical relation between them. When perceived from within the village, the household held some importance and influence in its own right. From a perspective outside the village, the household had importance only as part of a larger whole; that is, it was viewed in terms of the entire village. The house-village discourse was essentially one about a hierarchical relation where a politicised-history provided the overall goal, which determined and encompassed folklore[22]. In constructing their village as a 'model' socialist village through

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22 I use the term 'encompass' because I mean to indicate a similar relation between folklore and history as Dumont (1970, p.224) describes in his discussion of India and the way modern changes were subordinated to caste values.

attributing domination to a political history in all public domains, folklore was restricted to the home where it remained distinct from and yet subsumed in the more globally significant (political) historical interests.

If folklore provided a nationalistic dimension to Talpian identity, then it can be distinguished from a politicised-history, which was metaphorically represented by the village and referred to another dimension of socialist identity – a non-national, internationalist aspect. The household and village relationship was a metaphor for a socialist identity which was of dual dimensions, nationalist and internationalist. Internationalism was in Zhivkov's terms a cross-national unification, the basis of this bonding being the common recognition and sharing of historical goals; that is, on a working class bond of solidarity which was not nation specific. "Proletarian internationalism" was "proletarian solidarity" (Zhivkov 1986a, p.135) – the joining of all working class people irrespective of national demarcations, through the sharing of common historical goals. If folklore united at the national level, history unified at the international. A Bulgarian national identity existed in its own right only within the context of the encompassing internationalist goals. Zhivkov urged that "...One should have a correct understanding of the dialectical relationship between international and national aspects, between internationalism and patriotism. Internationalism has nothing in common with national nihilism, with indifference...to anything concerning national interests and national self-esteem" (1986a. p.135). Thus, "...true internationalism must not be at the expense of, or to the detriment of real patriotism..." (Zhivkov 1986a, p.136); yet this is true only if it is remembered that "...patriotism should always be subordinated to proletariat internationalism..." (Zhivkov 1986a, p140). Goals of national interest must always bow to historical aims which are of far greater, international importance[23]. The association in the 'model village' event between folklore and a nationalistic dimension of socialist identity on the one side, against political-history and an internationalist dimension of socialist identity on the other, was spatially represented by Talpians in terms of the the household and village respectively. A socialist identity was therefore constructed by them as having both a national and internationalist dimension; the national remained distinct from and yet subsumed under an international historical identity.

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23 This position was clearly derived from Lenin: "To be an internationalist...one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality" (1968, p.294). Any nationalism not subsumed in the historical task may act to "undermine the unity of socialist countries" (Zhivkov 1974, p.10). The confusion of priorities and attributing greater importance to nationalist issues was at the root of the turmoil in Eastern Europe in the 1960's, for example in Czechoslovakia, at least as the situation was understood at the official level by the Bulgarian Communist Party.

At this level – which was not part of Talpian's conscious construction of the event but my interpretation of the meaning conveyed by it – the relations between folklore and a politicised history, the household and village, and nationalism and internationalism, may be expressed as:

folklore : history : : household : village : : national : international

This relationship describes the nature of the socialist identity to which the villagers showed themselves as subscribing during the 'model village' event. In their practise of folklore, the villagers rejected any identity based on local characters; rather they exhibited a national consciousness, a concern to be 'Bulgarian'. Such an identity did not however conflict with political-historical goals, for while from one perspective the household was distinguished from the village and folklore from a politicised history, from another perspective, folklore was encompassed by political-historical goals. In establishing their identity as nationalistic, a dimension subsumed ultimately in historical, international interests, the villagers portrayed their specific support for state ideological views on identity. Zhivkov wrote "...love of the Fatherland is typical of every people. What is distinctive of the Bulgarian people is the way it combines patriotism with internationalism" (1981a, p.7). In the nailing of the sign, 'model home', to the two houses in which folkloric customs were performed, state officials gave their approval for the identity conveyed by the villagers and for the manner in which they used folklore for this purpose. The Talpians constructed an identity which was truly socialist because it was both distinctly nationalist (rejecting traditional, local qualities) and internationalist (maintaining political-historical goals) and at the same time attributed a pre-eminent position to the latter.

Conclusion

According to Zhivkov, "...man is the architect of the mature socialist society..." (1986a, p.198). In making themselves 'model', Talpians engineered their vision of humanity, one which was seen to create the conditions necessary to attain the ultimate goal of communism. This Talpian interpretation of state ideology focussed on the distinctive display of administrative, class, moral and identity relations within the village. Talpians depicted their administrative structure as comprised of differing sectors of the state – Party, government and mass organisations – working together in a unified and harmonious way in order to realise historical goals. In such a democratically centralist administrative order, Talpians gave prominence to certain village Party individuals who had direct ties to the most important state figure, Zhivkov. The close association between certain village

officials and Zhivkov provided a particularity to Talpians' commitment to the state administrative order. Villagers' class relations were distinguished in terms of two differing relations to the means of production – a state and cooperative form. In the 'model village' event, the latter form, characteristic of all villages (not only Talpa), was shown to be undergoing a process of increasing modernisation through its cooperative organisation and the increasing dependency on technology. The stereo plant, a building quite unique to Talpa, which owed its existence to Talpa's ties to Zhivkov, was a symbol for the villagers' town-like, working class productive relations. In their moral relations also, they established a vision of humanity which fell in line with socialist state ideology. Talpians upheld Marlaueva and their associations with her in their historical past, as exemplary of their morally virtuous relations; a morality which recognised an individual's total involvement with and commitment to historical goals of the state. Finally, Talpians constructed their identity as two dimensional, as having both a nationalist and internationalist element, but attributed greatest importance to the latter. This emphasised their socialist identity in terms of their politicised-historical rather than folkloric interests. Thus the Talpians portrayed themselves as 'model villagers' through their participation in all realms of socialist life and by their commitment to the development of socialist historical goals – to the democratically centralist nature of administration, the convergence of working class and cooperative farmer interests, the communal rather than individualistic morality and an identity which placed ultimate importance on global rather than nationalistic concerns. In such a way they constructed their acquiescence to the basic ideological principles of the state expressed by Zhivkov, who noted, "...The two main classes of our society – the working class and the class of cooperative farmers...are increasingly drawing closer with regard to their place in production, the nature of their work, their consciousness, mentality and lifestyle" (1985b, p.181).

However, a Talpian construction of state ideology was not a direct replication of Zhivkov's writings. The metaphors used by Talpians to create their discourse about state ideology – the town-village dichotomy for class relations; the visual presentation of the clean village by which they expressed their moral relations; and the household-village image, by which they created a spatial metaphor that defined their socialist identity – all provided scope for a specifically Talpian representation which inflected the meaning of state ideology as strictly recorded by Zhivkov. While the former two metaphors were noted in Zhivkov's writings, their portrayal using specific village locations in the event – primarily the assembly plant and museum – allowed Talpians to define their 'modelness' in terms of their intimate and close ties to Zhivkov. That is, the shared historical past between the villagers and Zhivkov, provided the basis for the Talpian construction of their administrative, class,

moral and identity relations; it provided their particular inflection of state ideology through which they defined their 'modelness'. The prominence given to Zhivkov in the 'model village' event was also a way of establishing the importance of events associated with 1944. These Talpian links to Zhivkov gave emphasis to a political history, advocating a distinct (politicised) history as dominant in a specifically Talpian construction of state ideology. Also, the way in which state ideology was given a characteristically Talpian relevancy by claiming close associations with the wife of Zhivkov and with Zhivkov himself, created a situation where it would be hard to imagine state officials refusing to award the 'model village' title to Talpa.

Although not clearly articulated in the 'model village' event, communism provided the underlying goal of village relations. All these relations – striving to attain a democratically centralist administration, a unification of classes, a communal based morality and identity which gave international working class interests prominence – were, in terms of state ideology, part of the process of realising communism. This mission of humanity was identified as communism in formal Talpian meetings (which, as in the 'model village' event, were constructed by state officials to espouse state ideology). For example in the 1987 Annual Report of the Agrarian Union (BZNC), Pashev, the guest speaker, talked of the role of the Communist Party in 'building communism' with the help of the second party. When Talpians talked about the '...building of communism...', they were identifying the purposeful future towards which the village was apparently striving. Indeed, this goal was implicated in their usage (in village meetings) of the terms 'communism', 'fascism' and 'socialism'. If in Talpian conceptions, communism provided the goal for the future, fascism was represented as the threatening and horrific past. A fascist past denoted a less progressive form of existence in which individual interests predominated and where the exploitation of the majority – the working class – occurred at the hands of the minority who owned the means of production. In fact in Talpian terms, because fascism was associated with a dark past, words such as 'backward' were not only implicit references to 'fascism', but also served as insults. Thus, when Pashev characterised villagers who answered their phones rudely, as 'backward' (see Chapter 2), he was making a reference to past fascist times, when people existed in less desirable and more inhuman conditions. This was the past against which, from the early 1920's to the 1940's, the communists had been pitted. The 'model village' event was an important means by which the villagers delineated themselves in accordance with state ideology, as having made a break from the fascist past in a variety of ways, through their administrative and class relations, morality and identity. (The museum, as presented in the 'model village', revealed the most important 'actors' in this process).

In the processional (temporal) frame of reference, with fascism at the one end and communism at the other, socialism existed as an intermediate stage, geared to be always moving towards the latter and away from the former. In this context, Talpians' understanding of 'progressive' had a definite and significant meaning; as a positive indication of the villagers' perceived ever-nearing proximity to the communist goal. To espouse socialist ideology was to be 'progressive' in character, a display of coming closer to the historical goal. The 'model village' event was a means by which Talpians depicted themselves as progressive, through their recognised ties to Zhivkov and by showing how their whole lifestyle and outlook in life and how all their efforts were centered on constructing relations which were part of the process of 'building communism'. The 'model villagers' were an active force in bringing about communist society through the development of socialism. The title of 'model village' was an indication of the village's progressive role in the development of socialist society. Reciprocally, to be progressive, was to uphold the 'model' relations advocated by state ideology.

When Talpians characterised themselves as progressive in the 'model village' event, they displayed their knowledge of state ideology which, as constructed by them in the event, demanded that the past be reflected upon and understood in a certain way. They established their village as a 'model' socialist village through revealing their concern with the past, expressed as three different ways of knowing and experiencing the past – as history, folklore and tradition. These three constructions, fundamental to the Talpians' experience and understanding of Bulgarian state ideology, were articulated in a distinctive configuration in the 'model village' event. With the portrayal of the village as 'model', importance was given to history and (consequently) to the rejection of tradition; indeed the absence of tradition in the event contributed to identifying the village as historical. The privileged position granted to history in the 'model village' occurred via the villagers' close association with Zhivkov; in so doing they gave prominence to a politically significant history. Thus it was not simply history, but a political history which was given dominance. Folklore, as a state-controlled phenomenon, was a significant part of the process of the denial of tradition, while at the same time contributing a nationalistic dimension to the historical village. It was encompassed by a politicised construction of history. This configuration attributed a negative value to tradition and denied it any significance in the 'model village', allocated a positive value to history and placed it in the prominent position; and allocated to folklore both a positive and negative value – positive, because it denied tradition; negative because it was always subsumed in political-historical goals – thus placing it in a mediatory position always secondary in importance to history. Such a configuration was presented in the 'model village' event as uncontentious, a monolithic

representation of state ideology which had the total support of all the villagers. This construction earned Talpa its title 'model village', a title which gave it state recognition as a good historical, communist village, a model for others to follow.

When Talpa won the 'model village' award it received a number of prizes, including money, a red flag and a certificate formally conveying to it the title. These were received by the village mayor at the 9th September celebration, which it may be remembered (Chapter 2), was a historical celebration of the advent of socialism in Bulgaria. That the award should have been presented at this particular celebration was significant in reinforcing the political-historical nature of the 'model village' event and in viewing the award as the official state acceptance of the village as truly socialist. The village also received as part of its prize, a large electric digital clock which was given pride of place on the exterior wall of the Village Council building, overlooking the central plaza. What more appropriate symbol of the village's socialist character but this instrument of the modern age, something by which to measure the progress of historical time?

Chapter 6 The 'Model' Village Contested[1]

The 'model village' event was a means by which Talpians established their acquiescence with state ideology through espousing a particular understanding of the past, expressed as a configuration between history, folklore and tradition. This configuration – representing a past which remained uncontested and having the full support of all villagers – I call 'prescriptive'. In using this term borrowed from Sahlins (1985, Introduction and Ch.1), it may be noted that the previous chapter was about the relationship between history, folklore and tradition as prescribed by the state and constituted in a consciously planned manner by the villagers, through the 'model village' contest. In so doing, they showed their relations and practices to be constructed in terms of the state-prescribed values and beliefs which they understood to be state ideology. Considering the previous chapter in these terms, allows us to turn to a situation where the past was fashioned from a set of relationships which were determined from the way villagers interacted, rather than the villagers' interaction being established by prescribed relations. The former, which Sahlins terms 'performative structure' (Sahlins 1985), arose out of a situation which was not part of the official planning for the event. In using Sahlin's ideal-typical distinction between prescriptive and performative, this chapter focuses on the latter – on how relationships are defined through villagers' acting on their interests and choices and on the systematic relationships created from these activities. The following rests on Sahlins' assumption that "...acts can precipitate social forms..." (1985, p.xi).

To develop the argument, I discuss another occasion through which Talpians were espousing state ideology – the 100 Year *Chitalishte* celebration. As with the 'model village' event, this was an extensively planned, unique historical event. Designed to impress the large number of expected state official guests, it provided an opportunity for villagers to display their commitment to the development of the socialist state through their participation in historical goals. That is, it provided an opportunity for villagers to establish their dedication to the prescriptive configuration of the past. It also included the conveying of a state award, this time to the village *Chitalishte*, for its 100th anniversary and the presentation of a number of other awards to particular individuals from the village

1 In using this title I do not wish to imply that the award Talpa had received was contested but that the configuration of the past constructed as state ideology by the 'model villagers' was under negotiation, that is, I am looking at how the ideology portrayed by the 'model villagers' was contested.

for their services to the *Chitalishte*. The importance of this latter part of the celebration – on which the chapter focuses – was evident in that the issue of who received an award on the day, remained the centre of contention amongst the villagers, well after the actual Centennial observance was over. Since this aspect of the event provided the means by which the pursuit of individual interests occurred, it attributed a differing motivational slant to the Centennial in respect to that of the 'model village' contest, where there was less opportunity for the actualisation of individual concerns.

The awards were a state recognition of the villagers' participation in the historical development of the *Chitalishte*. In seeking to have their own past activities acknowledged by an award, individuals emphasised particular activities in the *Chitalishte's* past as more worthy of recognition than others. The varying significance attributed to the awards by different historical figures represented their conflicting interests in respect to history and provided the basis of a multi-faceted, rather than unified notion of history. The villagers' dissimilar relations to history, I identify to be political, cultural and material in nature. One group of villagers determined their close association with history through advocating an exclusively political interpretation of the awards; that is, based on giving privileged position to events leading up to 1944. They were thus located in opposition to others who upheld a cultural relation to history – one which advocated a more general significance to the awards recognising the contribution of those who had participated in *Chitalishte* cultural activities in the pre- and post-1944 period. In their joint engagement over the significance of the awards, these two groups were unified in opposition to material figures by virtue of the latters' absence from the celebration. Through non-participation, many villagers displayed their lack of interest in not only the awards, but more generally in the event itself. These villagers' interests in history were based purely on their productive activities, activities which required no reflection on the historical past, but rather were present-oriented. The emphasis on specific activities as more historically significant than others, was ultimately an issue about the significance of history and whether political, cultural or material dimensions were the most important in the development of the socialist state. This created a situation where villagers were not unified in the struggle to realise historical goals, contrary to the position portrayed in the 'model village' event.

It is important to note that the differing interests in relation to history – political, cultural and material – were not identified or reflected upon by villagers in such terms. They are, however, a useful construction to assist discussion of how villagers relate to each other and to state historical goals. I am indebted here to the approach used by Sahlins in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (1981) and, like him, I focus on activities which implicated the 'everyday practices' of the villagers. In reality, few aspects of villagers'

everyday practices were not affected by history, whether working at the Agricultural Cooperative, watching television or attending school holiday camps. Such activities were informed by state historical goals which provided the organisational force underlying villagers' everyday life. In Chapter 3, I discussed traditions, practices in which villagers were engaged that were not informed by history. Traditions were one means by which history was disputed; through acts such as placing crosses on tombstones, villagers could indirectly oppose history – indirectly because traditional opposition to history existed at the margins of everyday life; it was not an open contestation of history within the very domain of history itself, but a domain constructed as spatially and temporally distinct. This chapter focuses on how history was challenged within the historical arena itself. We see how history was contestable, if not openly, at least directly within the very heart of the historical domain. While extraordinary (in the sense that it was a unique, one-off occasion), the *Chitalishte* Centennial event brought out tensions which informed everyday activities determined by history. The purpose of the chapter is therefore to show the contentiousness of history and to analyse the grounds around which contentiousness occurred.

The relations established in the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration and the performative configuration arising from it, were not necessarily repeated in other events. In a section entitled 'Other Events, Other Alliances', I discuss briefly two other events with the specific purpose of showing how the categories actualised in any event and the relations constituted between them were of a modulating nature. By placing the performative configuration of the past isolated in the *Chitalishte* Centennial event in context – that is, comparing it to other occasions – I draw out in the conclusion some implications that this has for Sahlins' work as I understand it. Further, it serves as a means of emphasising the importance of the past as the fundamental and contentious domain of village life, through which Talpians negotiated their meaningful reality as distinctly socialist, but not necessarily in the monolithic form presented by state ideology.

100 Year *Chitalishte* Awards.

I have already discussed an aspect of the *Chitalishte* Centennial commemoration in Chapter 4, where I was concerned primarily with the folkloric aspects of the celebration, especially the musical program which was largely folkloric in nature. Here I discuss another facet of the observance – the handing out of certificates and recognitions and some of the occurrences relating to this activity.

The presentation of awards was carried out on the day of the celebration, immediately after the speech read by the *Chitalishte* head and preceding the congratulatory wishes of officials and the entertainment program. They were made before a distinguished audience; important state officials from Sofia, including the Federal Minister for the region, the Federal Minister for Culture, as well as other officials from Sofia, Turnovo and Nekilva. Zhivkov had been invited, but some days before the event, he was forced to decline. However, he had asked the attending Federal Minister to carry a personal letter from him, conveying his apologies and warmest regards to the Talpians. This letter was read to the audience during the event.

The presentations began with an award to the *Chitalishte*. The institution was presented with the highest state award possible, 'The Red Flag of the Workers', which was accepted by Matov. Following this, 12 awards were given for individuals' contributions to the *Chitalishte*. Five villagers were honoured with the highest possible state awards for *Chitalishte* '*delo*' activities; namely Naymov (the previous head of the *Chitalishte*, who had served the organisation for over 40 years), Rusev (*Chitalishte* librarian since 1950), Mikanov (one of the *Chitalishte* council), Matov (the present head of the *Chitalishte*, who had taken over from Naymov in the early 1970's) and Pashev. They received the award of '*Otlichnik na Kometeta za Kultura*', that is, 'Outstanding person of the Committee for Culture', which included a medallion and 80 leva prize money. Lesser awards were made to another seven villagers, plus a special eighth award which was made to Dinekov, who had once been a temporary librarian and more importantly had for many years served the *Chitalishte* by binding all its library books free of charge. The latter eight awards included no prize money or medallions. The celebrationary proceedings then continued with congratulatory speeches and wishes from official guests from the capital, region and from neighbouring villages; and finished with the musical program.

The night before the presentation of these awards, I accompanied Boteva to the *Chitalishte* where we helped make last minute preparations for the next day's event. This was the first time she was shown the list of 12 award recipients. Boteva reacted angrily at seeing the names, asking why some villagers whom she had never seen in the *Chitalishte* were on the list, when others who should have been on it had been omitted. Receiving no satisfactory answer from Rusev, she stormed into the adjoining room where Matov was typing. He, however, sent her away saying he was very busy with preparations for the event and that they would talk some other time.

On the way home, Boteva expressed anger at having been told nothing about the selection of villagers to be honoured with awards. In fact, in her capacity of *Chitalishte* councillor,

she should have been on the panel which normally would have selected the awardees. Boteva voiced some of her objections, "Mikanov has given 3-4000 *leva* a year to the *Chitalishte* when he was the head of the TKZC but apart from this he has not done a thing for the *Chitalishte* except to occasionally beat his fist on the table; he is an impressive orator, that's all. The mayor is a nice boy and he has done a lot for the village, but nothing for the *Chitalishte*. If the awards are for the Village Council, then of course he should get an award, but for the *Chitalishte*, no. Pashev and Mikanov should get awards for Party work, but they have done little for the *Chitalishte* and do not deserve it. And as for Lipava, she has been secretary of the *Chitalishte* and head of the Fatherland Front for less time than either Nelesova or Petrova but the latter two were not on the list. Nelesova has not received one because she is not on the right side of Pashev..." Boteva continued that Nelesova had written one of the two anonymous letters to the municipal council in Nekilva, questioning the use made of a sum of state money granted to Pashev, to restore his house and convert it into a museum. The money had been granted because of the site's historical importance, its original inhabitant in the late 1800's (a relative of Pashev's) having been a progressive figure. While the house had been restored it clearly did not function as a museum, since Pashev still occupied the premises! Boteva speculated that Pashev had found out that Nelesova had been responsible for writing one of the letters. In Boteva's opinion, Petrova also deserved to get an award. Both Nelesova and Petrova had served the *Chitalishte*, the former as a secretary and the latter as the present vice-head[2]. Nelesova had also been head of the Fatherland Front while Petrova was presently active in the organisational work of the vocal group. These were the reasons given by Boteva as to why they deserved to be amongst the prize holders. She named one or two others – including Dinekov – who had done as much if not more than some of the first five award holders and deserved greater recognition.

That night Boteva rang Tzela, the secretary of the village Communist Party to find out who was at the bottom of all this. Tzela said that no one knows who had made up the list of twelve and that Rusev points his finger at Matov and Matov points his finger at Rusev. Tzela also told Boteva in confidence that the major award receivers – and these awards were approved from the ministry in Sofia – were Rusev, Pashev, Matov and Mikanov and that Naymov's name had not even been originally included. The latter received a distinguished award only because a woman from the Committee for Culture in Turnovo had noted that he was not on the list, had investigated and realised how much he had contributed to the *Chitalishte*. She had contacted Talpa to find out why he was not on the

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2 The position of *Chitalishte* secretary had been made redundant some years before my arrival in the village.

list of four and told them that he should be. Apparently in Talpa they had refused to give the needed references, so the woman herself organised and sent them off to Sofia, including his name as the fifth. She then informed the Talpians that Naymov's name had been included and that they should have been ashamed of themselves for not including his name, after all he had done for the *Chitalishte*.

As anticipated by Boteva, on the day of the Celebration after the presentations were made, many villagers were angry with the selections and privately expressed their annoyance. Petrova said to Boteva that this was it, she would go no further, implying that she would contribute no more communal work to the *Chitalishte*. That night I dined with Milka who had once been active in *Chitalishte* affairs and had herself received one of the twelve awards. She commented that "all hell's going to break out over the awards and that some people are planning to go to Nekilva to question the whole thing."

Villagers' Differing Relations To History.

Awards held an important place in many village historical and some folkloric celebrations. Usually in the form of certificates and/or monetary prizes, they existed at all levels of the state hierarchy and in all areas of socialist life. Presented by state officials, they were given to an individual, collective or even village for active participation in and contribution to the development of socialism. That is, awards were prizes presented by state officials to those perceived to be actively involved in the process of realising the historical goals of the socialist state. This was as true of the 'model village' event – when it was 'the village' which received an award – as of the *Chitalishte* Centennial, when awards to the *Chitalishte* and to individuals were made. The criteria of participation in historical goals were explicitly noted at the *Chitalishte* Centennial, when a Turnovo official from the Regional Council congratulated the Talpians for receiving the award which was for "...the 100 years that it has supported the Bulgarian spirit, for its support of Party truth and socialist culture." This award was thus clearly acknowledged as a state recognition to the *Chitalishte* for upholding state historical goals. The quotation suggests the significance of the award to be both political and cultural in nature (an issue of central importance, discussed below).

The value of the award was emphasised by a Nekilva official specifically assigned to help and guide the Talpian's organisation of the event, largely because of the expected attendance of Zhivkov. He told them at one of the organisational meetings that "Your *Chitalishte* has been given the award of 'Red Flag of the Workers'...which is quite

something; not everyone gets it. The Sofia guests will present you with the award." He thus clearly underlined to the Talpians the great honour involved, partly because all *Chitalishtes* celebrating their 100 year anniversary were not bestowed with such an award and in part because it was to be presented to them by officials from Sofia, the nation's capital, rather than from the district or regional capitals.

The latter two factors placed in context the general importance given to the individual awards, which were presented immediately after that conferred on the *Chitalishte*. The value of the 12 awards was further emphasised in the considerable interest associated with them, especially with respect to the top five. While these first five awards involved no great financial benefit, they were described by Tzela to Boteva as '*golyama rabota*' meaning 'a big deal'. Indeed in being described in such a way, their relative value was immediately established, 'golyama' being a term which denoted their political importance. The term is better understood when it is recalled that the hierarchical arrangement between '*vajzhen*' and '*golyam chovek*' ('important' and 'big man') and '*istanski komunist*', that is, 'true communist' indicated the relative level of political figures in the state structure, which corresponded to the nature of their participation in the historical past considered the most morally and teleologically significant (see Chapter 2). Therefore, when Tzela acknowledged these awards to be '*golyama rabota*' – literally 'big work' or the work of big men – she was implicitly identifying the value the awards held as a recognition of the contribution made by individuals to historical goals. That they were conveyed by high level state officials, indicated that the awards held considerable political consequence. (It does not necessarily follow that they were intended for those who had made a political contribution to history). The fact that the awards were approved by the Ministry of Culture in Sofia, attested to their degree of importance.

The selection of those who would receive an award, clearly had considerable consequence. Political careers were based on individuals' relations to the historical past. Beginning with acceptance as a legitimate historical figure through Party affiliation, a member was free to pursue her/his chosen ties to history. Movement up and down the political hierarchy was reliant upon the nature of these ties (see Chapter 2). Whether a villager led a mass organisation (for example, in the case of Novikov and Boteva), the government (Ivanov) or the Party (Pashev), depended on an individual's relationship to the historical past. Awards provided a concrete means by which figures could validate this all-significant relation to history. The desirability of the awards was due to the fact that they were a public and state recognition of an individual's involvement in state historical goals through her/his participation in history. Awards were both a means to establish the precise nature of commitment to history and a public and legitimate recognition of this commitment; the

degree of the commitment was '*golyama*' and it was legitimate because it was sanctioned by the highest state bodies in Sofia. This meant that the awards were vital to the career prospects of a villager. They were a means by which individuals could publicly validate their contribution to historical goals; the more awards accumulated, the greater was the contribution to history. Awards therefore provided an avenue by which villagers could gain respect as historical figures and thus further their careers.

That they were deserving of the awards, who had spent the longest period serving the *Chitalishte*, appears to have been an accepted fact amongst villagers involved in the event. During the presentations, the first secretary of the Communist Party in Turnovo read the relevant part of the Bulgarian Constitution, noting that an award to a national *Chitalisthe* was given for long term 'activity' and must be granted in 'rounded figure years' (for example, 50, 75 and so on). In so doing, the terms for the 'Red Flag of the Workers' award to the *Chitalishte* were verbalised. The importance of length of service to the *Chitalishte* was also a criterion for the individual awards. This was explicated by Pashev at a village meeting which had gathered in early October as part of the planning for the event. He stated that "...the matter of the medal awards is not a light issue, some have given 50-60 years of their life in helping." Here, length of service (contribution) to the *Chitalishte* was an undisputed criterion for receiving an award.

However the differing understandings of what were valued 'services', came under contention. That a divergence was possible was due to the object of their celebration – the *Chitalishte* – which was an historical site in which both cultural and political events occurred. The discrepancy was evident in an instance concerning the Nekilva organiser and the village vocal group a few weeks before the event. The organiser had told the group that he wanted them to sing two songs as their contribution to the musical program. (It may be recalled from Chapter 4 that the village group sang folkloric songs). Veleva, who was in the vocal group, mentioned this to her husband, Pashev, while they were lunching together and she added in an indignant tone that both the songs were to be folkloric and one of them based on traditional humour. "There should be more for the '*razdene*'" replied Pashev. (Literally translated, '*razdene*' means growth period, a term used occasionally in reference to World War II and the advent of the socialist state). Veleva answered that when they had suggested this to the Nekilva official, he had said to the group that it "...was not a political event but an event for the *Chitalishte*." She added that, "Here the Party does not have a say in the choice of songs." Pashev replied, "Don't we? We lead (rule)." (In support of the connection discussed in Chapter 2, we note the explicit association made by the official between the events leading to the advent of the socialist state and an understanding of politics). Veleva's comment implied that Party authority was

in a position of conflict with the views held by the Nekilva organiser, who chose to give prominence to folklore and other cultural activities. Pashev rejected the emphasis given to cultural activities by reasserting the leading role of the Party. The issue under contention was between two different perspectives of what should have greatest prominence in the musical program; and correspondingly, two interpretations about the significance of the event as holding primarily political or cultural value. The Nekilva official tried to disengage the Celebration from any political significance, saying it "...was not a political event but an event for the *Chitalishte*." The significance he gave to the event was one of cultural importance – through the performance of folklore and other cultural items. This debate about whether the occasion was cultural or political, carried over to the awards.

The dual role of the *Chitalishte* was emphasised in the award presentations themselves, when the Turnovo Party leader presented the *Chitalishte* with its major award, but a representative from the Turnovo Committee for Culture presented the individual awards. This suggests that individual awards should have been presented on the basis of each individual's cultural contribution to the *Chitalishte*, not political activities. Nevertheless the presentation of the award to the *Chitalishte* by the Party, the leading force in political activity, also recognised the *Chitalishte's* overall political importance. The fact that the first award was presented by the Party head and the individual ones by a cultural head, was important in identifying the double-faceted nature of the awards and more generally of the celebration. Although not explicitly recognised by the organisers, the *Chitalishte's* role in history as having both political and cultural significance, set the context in which it became possible for various villagers' interests to be expressed and differing interpretations of the awards to be contested.

The complaints by Pashev that there should be more in the entertainment program about the '*razdene*' period was crucial to his view as to who should receive the awards. On his terms, the awards had to be given on the basis of an individual's personal involvement in the bringing about of the socialist state during World War II. The importance of this period was noted in the speech presented during the Celebration, where Matov read out "...The most interesting period of the *Chitalishte* was in the 1940's..." By bringing attention to the events of the 1940's, the audience was asked to focus on this time as the most relevant in *Chitalishte* history. Indeed, we may understand this comment to mean that Matov and Rusev, who wrote the speech and Pashev, who performed most of the editing, viewed the 1940's as the time most filled with interest – their own. It was to the advantage of Pashev, Mikanov, Rusev and Matov, as once anti-fascist fighters and therefore central figures in the events leading to 1944, to give this period and those who

contributed to it, greatest recognition through the selection of the awards. By doing so, they emphasised their own role as participants in the making of history.

In the speech, Pashev and the other political figures were identified as having been actively involved in *Chitalishte* history; mention was made of the youth *Chitalishte* group (eventually made illegal by the fascist regime) in the 1930's-1940's of which Pashev, Matov and Mikanov were identified as members. They were said to have carried out educational deeds, celebrated festivities and other activities related to political work. This period was given particular emphasis when it was noted that Zhivkov and Marlaueva had lived and been active in the *Chitalishte* from 1938-39. Matov mentioned that Zhivkov had performed in several *Chitalishte* plays and had been the village's delegate at the 19th Congress of the Union of *Chitalishtes*. Marlaueva had presented papers at meetings on the subjects of health, hygiene, diseases and their prevention. This period was also given attention in the entertainment part of the program where World War II socialist heroes were glorified in some of the songs. The years leading to 1944 were thus not only established as a significant time in the historical development of the *Chitalishte's* past, but unlike other historical figures in Talpa, Pashev and his counterparts were identified in the speech as having had personal involvement in these events. Their contribution in the *Chitalishte's* past was through their politically significant acts, leading to the advent of the socialist state.

The close ties of Pashev, Mikanov, Matov and Rusev to such a history, were reflected in the senior positions they held in the Party. Since the Party had the leading role in the historical past and in events resulting in the advent of the socialist state (see Chapter 2), then those who had been leaders in this period also occupied its prominent positions. Indeed the importance of such historical figures was noted by Zhivkov, who posed the question "...Which is the most salient feature of the composition of *the Party's leading bodies*? The cadres working in them now are people whose ideological and political maturity has been tested in life; they have actively participated in the struggle against fascism and capitalism and in socialist construction" (1984, p.208). In recognising the worthiness of such political figures to lead the Party, a Marxist-Leninist history as interpreted by Zhivkov gave Pashev and his counterparts justification for their prominent position. Their privileged standing was evident in the considerable control they had over historical activities in the village. The fact that they led and organised all political celebrations in the village, were in charge of interpreting and reproducing history at the village level by way of the museum, *Chitalishte* and at political meetings, provided evidence of their close ties to a politicised-historical past. Their position was reflected in the fact that Pashev, as the leader of the Party, was the most appropriate figure to produce

a book on the subject of the history of the village Party (which he was doing as a response to another work in which he had been called a coward). The other three men, Matov, Mikanov and Rusev, occupied the formal posts in the *Chitalishte* – the central village site for political events – as its head, *Chitalishte* councillor and librarian respectively. The former was also in charge of guiding visitors through the village museum, another important political site. These figures who revealed themselves to have most directly and intimately participated in the historical events of World War II and who had since become senior Party figures, were the keepers of history at the village level. Their control over village history was an important factor in their success in attaining the awards.

Since a main and explicit criterion for the awards was long term service to the *Chitalishte* and since the *Chitalishte* function was indeed political as well as cultural, then to uphold and emphasise their political contribution to the *Chitalishte's* past was a valid basis on which to show worthiness for the awards. It was in the interests of Pashev, Matov and Rusev to have their political contribution to the *Chitalishte's* historical past recognised; and they were justified in doing so in terms of state historical goals. Their Party seniority, which represented their already established and privileged position in history, enabled them to reinforce their own role in the *Chitalishte's* past as a significant historical contribution. It allowed them to effectively by-pass the proper channels of the *Chitalishte* selection committee and have the awards conveyed to themselves (the fact this had to be done secretively is an issue I discuss below). This in turn ensured their continued domination of the village political sphere, providing justification for their senior positions in the Party[3]. Pashev and the other three men therefore had the organisational means to monopolise the awards at the expense of other historical figures who had a less privileged role in the historical past.

Pashev, Matov, Mikanov and Rusev offered an interpretation of the awards which conflicted with that of other historical figures. Boteva and Tzela, unlike Pashev and his counterparts, believed that any who had contributed to the *Chitalishte* – who had partaken in its running and helped organise events – were valid contenders for an award, irrespective of their political contribution to the *Chitalishte's* historical development. Boteva's argument for the appropriateness of Petrova and Nelesova to receive awards was based strictly on their actual contribution to the everyday running of the *Chitalishte* and participation in its educational and cultural activities. She pointed out that both had been secretaries at the *Chitalishte* and that Petrova was an active member of the vocal group and

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3 This is one occasion of a number in this chapter, where it becomes appropriate to draw attention to the tautological nature of the society.

as such had contributed much more in time and effort to the *Chitalishte* than the mayor, Lipava or a number of the senior Party figures – specifically Mikanov and Pashev. Significantly, both Petrova and Nelesova's contributions to the *Chitalishte* had been made post-1944, since these two women, as Boteva and Tzela, had been children at the politically significant historical period of 1944. They therefore had not participated in *Chitalishte* activities at the time of the advent of the socialist state.

Naymov too, was viewed as an appropriate figure to receive the award. His name was one of the few Boteva failed to identify as an unworthy recipient. It is through having no objections to Naymov receiving an award, his assumed worthiness, that we can most clearly see the significance placed on the awards by Boteva and Tzela. Since the length of the serving period determined how worthy an individual was for an award, Naymov was a clear contender. He was an 85 year old pensioner who had been a participant in public affairs and member of the *Chitalishte* in the village both before and after 1944, spending a large proportion of his service as the head of the *Chitalishte*. His contribution to the *Chitalishte* was therefore far greater than Matov's, Mikanov's, Rusev's or Pashev's, simply by virtue of the length of time of his involvement – in all, over 40 years' service, spanning a period which began two decades before 1944 and which ran well into the post-foundation times of the socialist state. This, combined with his occupation as school teacher and then school principal, meant that Naymov had made a long and important contribution to the cultural and educational growth of the village. However he was not a Party member. As already noted in Chapter 2, this was because in working as a teacher before 1944, he had been required to run fascist-sponsored activities. His lack of involvement in politically significant historical events and indeed his association with fascist forces during the period of the foundation of the socialist state in the 1940's, were activities which tainted the rest of his public life in socialist society (although it did not dampen his daughter's or son-in-law's prospects, the latter being a senior Party official in Sofia).

One consequence of his lack of Party membership, was that Naymov had no legitimate relation to history. Any official recognition Naymov could attain for his role in the past as historically important therefore required the involvement of a Party figure who worked on his behalf. Indeed, it was only because someone else who had Party membership took up his cause that his past activities were acknowledged as historically significant and worthy of an award. Had the Turnovo official not interfered in the selection, Naymov, it seems, would have been overlooked in the Centennial celebration. As already noted, the woman from Turnovo, herself a Party member, acted on behalf of this non-party citizen, including his name amongst the top five award recipients and thus also opposing the 'final' decision

of those in the village who had made the selections[4]. Her location at the regional rather than village level, gave her the power to intercept the selection process by virtue of her placement at a higher level in the administrative hierarchy. (Not being a senior Party figure, she did not have, however, the authority to eliminate those she probably saw as undeserving of the award. In any case Pashev's friendship with senior Turnovo Party officials acted to protect him from any such eventually).

The fact that much of the organisation for the celebration was in the hands of the Turnovo and Nekilva officials, who were not political-historical figures and had, by virtue of their district and regional level administrative positions the capacity to override any decisions made at the village level, suggests why Pashev and his counterparts did not operate openly but in a covert manner. The regional and district officials presented awards to individuals' for their cultural contribution to the *Chitalishte*. We may recall that the individual awards were handed out by an official from the Committee for Culture and the top five recipients were bestowed with the title, 'Outstanding person of the Committee for Culture'. The individual rewards were clearly intended for people who had made a cultural contribution to the *Chitalishte*. This conflicted with the political ambitions of Pashev and his three colleagues whose only means of avoiding conflict with the higher-order officials' interpretation was to act in a covert way; their success in realising their political interests could be achieved only through operating in a secretive manner.

Returning to the issue of Naymov's inclusion as an awardee, we note that there are two facets of importance when considering the position of Boteva, Tzela and Petrova (the latter had made her views clear to Boteva after the Celebration), all of whom supported his receiving an honour. Firstly, they were involved in historically-oriented activities which were cultural and educational in nature. All three women were currently teachers at the village school and had been or were presently involved in cultural activities at the *Chitalishte* – in plays and in the vocal group. Such activities, we may recall (Chapter 4), contributed to the realisation of history through a specific form of education which was seen as developing the spiritual and creative side of the socialist individual. As school teachers and participants in *Chitalishte* performances of music and plays, Boteva and her counterparts were engaged in the 'aesthetic education' of villagers. Naymov, too, had

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4 We may assume that the Turnovo official was a Party figure because of the fact that she had a government position with the Committee for Culture (government positions were rarely given to non-Party figures unless of a menial nature). I was unable to discover how the Turnovo official found out about Naymov; the fact that Tzela had confided in Boteva and in turn Boteva had spoken to me in confidence, made it inappropriate to pursue the issue further with Tzela. For the same reason I was unable to discover which Talpians the Turnovo official had reproached in regard to Naymov.

made a similar contribution to historical goals, and it was because of his past educational-cultural contribution to the *Chitalishte* that he was considered a worthy award recipient. The person behind his nomination, the Turnovo official, was also associated with such activities by way of her official position in the Committee for Culture. These people's involvement in the historical development of the *Chitalishte* was thus not politically, as much as culturally significant – as participants in activities in the post-1944 period; and in Naymov's case, also the pre-1944 period. Their contribution to the *Chitalishte* was therefore not on the basis of an association with any particular period of history.

Secondly, those who supported Naymov's award – Boteva, Petrova and Tzela – represented a sector of the Party whose membership was 'junior' in the sense that they held no senior Party position. All were historical figures, members of the Party (indeed in the Party bureau) and thus had more prominence than 'ordinary' members. Their leadership positions, however, at the time of the 100 year *Chitalishte* Celebration, were restricted to prominent posts in the mass organisations, except for Tzela who was Party secretary. Petrova once headed the Fatherland Front and, at the time of my fieldwork, along with Tzela, was a leading organisational figure in the vocal group. Boteva was deputy head of the Fatherland Front and head of the Teachers' Union. Before the death of her husband, she had also conducted the vocal group.

The ties of Boteva and her counterparts to history, were reflected in their political positions as junior Party figures who led the mass organisations. Their close affiliation to the Fatherland Front established the particular way they engaged in history as having been a contribution confined to the post-1944 period. We recall from Chapter 2 that this organisation in Talpa was defined as politically of lower significance than the Party, because it became an active force only after 1944. The involvement of Boteva and her colleagues in such institutions and their more junior positions in the Party structure, revealed their less significant contribution to the politically important historical period of socialist development. Further, the non-exclusive nature of the organisation, in which a broad range of participants – Party and non-Party – had membership, made it widely accessible to all villagers, irrespective of their political status. The women's location within the political hierarchy reflected the position which they took in the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration: that Naymov had a right to an award, irrespective of his role in the advent of the socialist state or his Party status. Boteva included service to the Fatherland Front as justification for a person's worthiness in receiving an award – recall her comments about Nelesova's eligibility for an award partly on the basis of her leadership of the Fatherland Front. Clearly, involvement in the mass organisation rather than in any other administrative body was viewed by Boteva as a worthy factor when considering

eligibility for awards. The difference therefore between Boteva's and Pashev's views could be expressed not only in terms of differing activities – cultural and educational in the post 1944 period, rather than anti-fascist during World War II – but also as one between advocating the prominence of the Fatherland Front rather than the Party.

Both cultural activities and affiliation to the Fatherland Front reflected the dimension of history sponsored by Boteva and Tzela. By arguing for the worthiness of Naymov, Petrova and Nelesova as deserving awardees, Boteva and Tzela were advocating an interpretation of the awards which defined and emphasised the history of the *Chitalishte* in a broad sense, which recognised and rewarded those who had contributed to the cultural and educational dimension of the *Chitalishte* irrespective of Party status or the particular period in which services had been performed. Because of the nature of their contribution to history (through educational and cultural activities) and of the broad temporal basis on which such a contribution was considered, I regard Boteva and Tzela as upholding the cultural dimension of history (discussed in Chapter 4). Their stance (and also that of the Nekilva and Turnovo officials) distanced the Centennial from historical activities of World War II, but not from history. Such an affiliation with and contribution to history, by way of educative and cultural activities, both pre- and post-1944, served to define their relationship to history as cultural. It was in the interest of these women, as leading participants in mass organisations, but of relatively low Party rank, to advocate such a broad history, so rendering their own contributions as historically significant. (This was not, however verbalised as a conscious purpose of their actions). The cultural-historical figures did not deny the importance of an individual's contribution to the advent of the socialist state during World War II, but attributed to it less importance – not only by rejecting Party membership or involvement in the World War II period as significant criteria for receiving an award – but by restricting it to the sphere of Party concerns. As Boteva expressed it, had the awards been for Party work, both Pashev and Matov would have been entitled to be award recipients. But she viewed the *Chitalishte* as the domain of culture and those who had made a political contribution to history deserved no acknowledgment in this sphere. Again, in the Nekilva official's terms, the means to avoid creating a celebration with a politicised flavour was to de-emphasise the '*razdene*' period: not by eliminating songs about partisans and heroes of World War II in the musical program, but through the contextual inclusion of such political songs alongside other pre-1944 and post-1944 cultural activities. This denied prominence to politically active historical figures, while acknowledging other historical figures on the basis of their cultural activities.

Behind-the-scenes Boteva, Tzela and Petrova voiced discontent over the affair. In respect to the situation, Boteva commented that the awards would always be a source of anger to the people: "...there has always been and will always be bickering and fighting attached to such an event." More precisely, Boteva, Tzela and Petrova expressed their opposition in respect to Pashev and the others who advocated a political significance to *Chitalishte* history, in terms of dissatisfaction over the particular selection of candidates for the awards and the way in which the process had been conducted. Boteva resented the fact that the whole selection procedure to decide upon the list of twelve, occurred through an un-official process conducted by some of the Party members and that no use had been made of the proper state administrative structures. It was not decided by the Party in any meeting; and the Party as a body had not been involved in the process of determining the awards. Boteva confirmed this with Tzela, even though as observed by the former, one-half of the twelve awards appeared to be given to those for Party rather than *Chitalishte* activities. Nor did the selection process go through the proper committees of the *Chitalishte*. Contrary to convention, no *Chitalishte* meeting was called to decide the awards. The appropriate committee to deal with the matter was the *Chitalishte* council. However Boteva, a member of the council, had known nothing of the matter. Although she had missed a couple of meetings in the 12 months leading up to the event, Boteva felt sure that had the issue been discussed through the proper channels, she would have been consulted. Instead, selection was determined privately by the top communist figures in the village – Boteva suspected a conspiracy between Rusev and Pashev; it seems likely to have been some combination of the four top award holders.

Boteva and her colleagues viewed the candidates selected, presumably by the top four Party figures, as unacceptable in terms of the dictates of state historical goals. As Boteva said, it was only those on "...the right side of Pashev..." who received awards. Thus Nelesova, who had brought to the attention of the Nekilva Municipal Council Pashev's questionable use of state money, had little chance of being supported by Pashev for an award. Boteva suggested that by defaming Pashev, showing his present activities to not conform with historical goals, Nelesova reduced her own career prospects. The political authority of the senior Party officials allowed them to successfully deprive Nelesova and Petrova of awards. Their political domination also explains why Boteva, Tzela and Petrova did not, to my knowledge, openly express their views to Pashev. Indeed, the only time any confrontation occurred was the night Boteva initially discovered who were to be granted awards and angrily demanded an explanation from Rusev and Matov, both of whom turned her away. As a more junior Party member who had played a politically less

significant role in history, Boteva had less political clout. Under such circumstances, Boteva and the other cultural figures were not in a position to press their own viewpoints.

Little wonder that political figures were seen as enforcing their own interests and halting the advancement of career opportunities of any villagers who acted against the interests of the former. A similar situation arose in respect to the 100 or so certificates presented to the villagers, also on the occasion of the *Chitalishte* Centennial, at a separate, preliminary celebration held one week prior to the events described in this chapter. Boteva again expressed her annoyance over those selected to receive a certificate. She said the *Chitalishte* Council had not been called together even once to discuss the 100 recipients, the information had been withheld from her until only a few days before the event when, of course, the recipients had already been chosen. One such award of certificate was to Nedela Spasova, a journalist who had lived in Talpa for a total period of 4-5 months. However in that time, Nedela had written an article about Pashev. Boteva said that for this she was presented with an award while others, who had given years of service to the *Chitalishte*, had received nothing. By establishing herself on the 'right side' of Pashev, through using her position as writer to help publicise his politically significant historical activities, Spasova obtained in turn a certificate for her supposedly historically significant contribution to the *Chitalishte*. This award served a positive purpose in her own career ambitions. However it angered Boteva, who viewed the incident as evidence that Pashev's self interest in his political career was a fundamental factor in the selection process of the Centennial awards – both the preliminary and main events. It was an opinion shared by an ex-TKZC head who once commented to me in respect to the awards given for the 'model village' building program, that "...those friendly with those giving out the documents received an award, whereas many people who deserved them, missed out."

Getting on the 'right side' of political figures – for example receiving patronage from Pashev – was one way in which historical figures who had no close ties to the political dimension of history could receive an award and so enhance their political status. Another instance of this was the mayor, who was considered by Boteva to be an undeserving recipient for a *Chitalishte* Centennial award. He had, by his own admission, contributed little to the historical development of the *Chitalishte*. While the other award recipients had at least served as *Chitalishte* councillors and secretaries for various periods, he had made no such contribution to the *Chitalishte*, according to Boteva. During the preliminary *Chitalishte* celebration – at which he received one of the 100 certificates for his services to the *Chitalishte* – Ivanov responded to my congratulations in an embarrassed tone that his contribution had been restricted to participation in two plays. The following week, at the main Centennial celebration, he received one of the 12 main awards.

Ivanov's selection as one of the recipients of the 12 main awards, created an affiliation between the dominant political figures and the mayor, who held relatively less political significance in the historical past and no senior Party position. The mayor was, however, publicly supportive of Pashev by his attendances at historical celebrations and his verbal expressions of interest and admiration for heroic fighters against fascism and unquestioning readiness to follow Party directives. To some extent the position of Ivanov was similar to that of Spasova, another junior Party figure who, by establishing her closeness to Pashev, successfully pursued her own career interests. Their inclusion, along with some of the 12 other award recipients, (including Lipava), was seen by Boteva as an act serving political figures' purposes. However, as much as it was in the interests of political figures to encourage and create such patronage (the awards providing a system of incentive and payment for their supporters), it was equally in the interests of the mayor and his counterparts – who otherwise had concerns more compatible with cultural figures, since they had not had an active role in 1944 activities and held administrative but not senior Party positions – to have an alliance with political figures. The patronage given by Pashev to the mayor defined the latter's relationship to history through his affiliation with political figures. It provided a means by which cultural figures could relate themselves to the political dimension of history and so enhance their prospects for a successful political career, a career dependent on the favours of political figures.

The affiliation of the mayor with political figures implied that the senior Party members had some control over his career, as an official of the state. Indeed, the influence Pashev and the other political figures exercised over him was evident at other times and was commented upon by some villagers. When I asked Boteva why Ivanov did not wish to continue in his position (the villagers were due to elect a new mayor in early 1988), she told me that it was because Pashev takes over all successes as his own. That is, all achievements ended up being attributed to Pashev, although it was the mayor who carried out the ground work. Evidently Pashev's political authority over Ivanov was considerable, not only at the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration but also on other occasions. Boteva commented that Pashev always overrode the mayor, although the latter should have been the head of the whole village, while the role of the Party leader was only to make suggestions and critical comments. The best arrangement, she concluded, occurs when both work together in 'unison'[5]. In voicing such an opinion, Boteva was again critical of

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5 Such a unified front was portrayed to be the situation during the 'model village' event. However, the problem observed by Boteva of a relatively weak governmental structure in respect to the Party was also acknowledged by Zhivkov, who recognised that the National Assembly and its council bodies did not have enough power and control in the state political system. (1969, p.273; p.568).

Pashev, whose acts were not perceived to conform with her understanding of historical goals. In her view, Party and administrative bodies should have more equal status. The relative weakness of the mayor was seen as evident in his inability to claim credit for his work, which Pashev successfully appropriated in his own name, for his own interests.

The success of one group's monopoly of the awards over the other, maintained their opposing positions in respect to state historical goals. Boteva and her colleagues' alignment with the cultural dimension of history, set them in opposition to historical figures who had, in effect, determining control over the awards on the basis of their political activities. In monopolising the awards, political figures publicly reinforced and justified their position as historical leaders and ensured their continued dominance over history, giving little opportunity to cultural figures to improve their public careers. The granting of four out of the five awards to political figures, defined the 'junior' Party members as having had no active role in *Chitalishte* history, at least none acknowledged by the state-conveyed awards, despite the fact that they supported those who, in terms of a Marxist-Leninist history, had played a genuine role in its development. This reproduced the location of Boteva and her counterparts as holding cultural but not political significance in history. Political figures on the other hand, may not actually have greatly contributed to the overall development of *Chitalishte* history, as reportedly Mikanov and Pashev had not, but nevertheless their 'participation' was recognised through receiving an award. (Boteva singled out Pashev and Mikanov as being undeserving of the awards, rather than Matov and Rusev who, while in close alliance with the former two – on this occasion – were serving the *Chitalishte* through their respective posts of head and librarian. Their current contribution to the *Chitalishte* made them more deserving of the awards from a cultural figure's perspective). The success of political figures in determining the award selections, enabled them to reinforce their political importance in history, while cultural figures' lack of access to this particular history was enforced; and therefore their contribution to the development of historical goals was officially denied.

Conflict over the selection of award recipients was ultimately a discrepancy between two differing interpretations of the past – a cultural and political dimension of history. The contrast was between a history constructed exclusively around active participation during World War II (the political interpretation) or a broader interpretation of history which emphasised the importance of cultural-educational activities carried out in the pre- and post-1944 period (the cultural interpretation). These two interpretations constituted two differing relations to history; a vying for the legitimation of one interpretation over the other – between a history which held significance to all people involved in cultural activities, as opposed to history as a means over which certain individuals could assume a

privileged and controlling position in the village, based on political ambitions. It defined their conflicting pursuit of interests: between the concerns of the political figures to uphold the primary role of the *Chitalishte* as a political organisation and therefore their own primacy in its historical development; and those of cultural figures who emphasised the cultural role of the *Chitalishte*, thus making it possible for their own activities, past and present, to be considered historically important. While the cultural dimension of history was acknowledged in areas over which the Nekilva official had control, for example the entertainment program, they failed at least in one area - the award selection and presentations.

Despite the difference in interpretations of the awards between culturally and politically aligned historical figures, *both* were involved in the interpretation of state historical goals in terms of their own interests, which was to establish their own interpretation of history as the legitimate one. That cultural figures were as involved as much as were political figures, was indicated in a comment made by Boteva. In referring to Pashev and Matov, she said that "I cannot be angry with them and make a fuss about the awards for then they'd think I was after an award for myself." The remark indicates that both cultural and political figures had a basic interest and willingness to engage in history and did so, each in a different way and with varying degrees of success. The very basis of their participation in the event assumed an acceptance of the fundamental terms of engagement, which were centred on the nature of the historical past, their relations to and in it, although this relation and their interpretation of the historical awards differed considerably.

In being actively involved in the event, political and cultural figures established themselves in opposition to those who did not participate; that is, those who took no part and had no interest in the *Chitalishte* Centennial. Inactivity in the historical celebration represented a relationship to history different from that determined by either political or cultural involvement. While the former two categories of villagers were engaged in preserving their interests in respect to the state historical past, the latter pursued their concerns by showing no interest in the historical past, thereby locating themselves in opposition to the two participating groups.

Ivo Gradenarov appeared quite disinterested in participating in any political or cultural historical events in the village and did not attend unless protocol demanded his presence. In the *Chitalishte* Centennial, Gradenarov did not engage in endeavours to associate himself more closely with the historical past. His absence from the *Chitalishte* celebration and the fact that he received no award – to my knowledge he held no political or cultural recognition of any kind – established his disassociation from and contrasting position to

Party figures with interest in the historical past. Gradenarov therefore represented an alternative way of engaging in history.

Ivo Gradenarov's relationship to history was based on his position at the TKZC. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Agricultural Cooperative was established in 1947; consequently as a political institution, it played no role in the morally and teleologically significant events which led to the advent of the socialist state. As a figure involved in the development of agricultural production – which was an important part of state historical goals – his established relation to history was based on his contribution since 1944, that is, on a present orientation towards historical goals, rather than one based on the historical past. His absence of relationship to the historical past and his obvious disinterest in cultivating such relations, including any patronage from a political figure (unlike the mayor) marked his political position as that of a negative moral figure. The fact that Gradenarov was seen as inhuman, called the 'moral murderer' of Boteva's husband, was rumoured to have bribed villages to vote for him in elections and reputed to have had a number of extra-marital affairs, were all indications of his morally degenerate position in the political dimension of history; it confirmed his relation to history as lacking any positive political foundation.

Nor did Gradenarov engage in history on the basis of cultural activities, although he was an educated person, having completed tertiary training in Sofia. In Chapter 4, education was defined as the process of gaining mastery over socialist knowledge through participation in school or vocational training institutes. This represented a specific way of engaging in history – based on formal attendance at school and the successful attainment of socialist knowledge. Recognition of success occurred through the gaining of qualifications; in being qualified at a tertiary level, Gradenarov proved himself to be a successful educational figure. Qualifications identified an individual's current successes in the educational system; they were awarded not on the basis of achievements in the political past, but on a person's degree of expertise in applying her/himself to knowledge deemed useful in the present development of socialist society. Thus the educational qualifications possessed by Gradenarov, unlike political or cultural awards, were not recognitions of his achievement in any historically significant past, but for his achievements in the present. (We note in passing that awards for a worker's success in productivity, for example those handed out at the 9th September celebration – Chapter 2 – were also presented on the basis of contemporary contributions to historical goals).

Whether educational qualifications became an important aspect in understanding an individual's role in state historical goals depended on the way in which an individual

applied her/his educational skills[6]. Gradenarov could have put to use his knowledge in a culturally-educationally significant way by engaging in *Chitalishte* educational processes, for example by giving lectures about the latest agricultural production techniques. But he chose not to participate in this manner, so distancing himself from the *Chitalishte*. His educational skills were restricted to the domain of the TKZC and present concerns of agricultural production; indeed it was because of his educational qualifications that he held the highest position in the TKZC (recently-passed state laws required TKZC leaders to hold tertiary level qualifications). His position, based on educational qualifications and alliance to the TKZC – on educational-productive activities – defined his present orientation toward historical goals, that is, post-1944 and explained his lack of interest in celebrations which were oriented around the historical past – cultural or political.

Gradenarov's disinterest in the *Chitalishte* celebration was not an isolated response. A great number of villagers displayed little concern in who was given an award or how the recipients were selected, or indeed in any aspect of the event. This was reflected in the lack of enthusiasm to participate and evidently was a common problem, as anticipated by the planners (who were political and cultural historical figures) at a number of meetings held to prepare for the commemoration. Thus the Nekilva official expressed a need in one of the organisational meetings to ensure that villagers would be attracted to attend. At another meeting, Matov vocalised the concern to fill the theatre when he said that "We must get people to come. We must fill the salon during the day." It was a view I heard Rusev support on a different occasion.

'The people' were encouraged to participate as an audience by enticing them with free entry. The Nekilva official stated that "...we will attract and interest people toward the *Chitalishte*. We must overcome the barrier, 'What has the *Chitalishte* given me - food,

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6 We recall that education was a broadly based activity (Chapter 4), so broad that to have an education was not necessarily an indication of the degree of an individual's dedication to historical goals, especially not to the political dimension of history. (The distinction between being educated and a 'true communist' raised in Chapter 2 can now be understood as between two differing relations to history – having a present rather than past orientation, respectively, to history). A comment by Zhivkov to the effect that educational figures were not always Party members is revealing: "...special care is necessary for the recruitment and training of leading cadres from amongst non-Party people. There are in this country hundreds and thousands of men and women who, in their outlook and morality, can be called non-Party communists and many of them are among the best educated and most efficient members of our society" (1986b, p.33). Gradenarov was a Party member and therefore had a legitimate relation to history, but clearly there were many educated people without Party membership and therefore no legitimate relation to history (although Zhivkov assumed that they worked towards the historical goals – they were 'non-Party communists'). The important point is that educational qualifications in themselves were not an indication of the nature of an individual's relation to history. It was the specific application of educational skills which was a more significant factor.

clothes? No'. We must overcome this barrier. Lots of people consider the material side, so we will make it free so that the interest is bigger." 'The people' were tempted to attend the historical celebration with the incentive of free entertainment. Having no entry fee to the historical *Chitalishte* celebrations was seen by the planners as a way of trying to attract 'the people', through making the event more appealing, if not by offering material advantages, at least by making their attendance not substantially disadvantageous to them. In this way those interested in the historical past enticed those who normally did not engage in *Chitalishte* historical celebrations and activities, luring them to participate as spectators in the event. Through the pleasing turn out at the event, which filled the *Chitalishte* theatre to its 400 capacity, the organisers construed a situation which made it appear, to the official guests, that there was overwhelming support in Talpa for history. However those who attended as audience apparently took an interest in political and cultural history only when offered material incentives. The fact that the theatre was full was not necessarily a valid indication of the villagers' level of support for the organisers' construction of history as was suggested by the Nekilva official, who anticipated that the audience "...will be interested ... will Zhivkov be here? Who is from Sofia?..." That is, from the point of view of this cultural figure, the 'support' offered by the audience was one of curiosity rather than commitment to the historical past.

In filling the *Chitalishte* theatre for the Celebration one-half of the village population participated as an audience. There was thus a large proportion of villagers who, along with Gradenarov, were not active in this historical celebration, not even as curious by-standers. This was recognised at a gathering which had met to plan the event four months prior to its taking place, when Matov noted that "...It is hard to get people to attend even if it is free..." and Pashev reminded them that "...we had to knock on doors to get people to come to the last show." In revealing themselves to be disinterested through non-participation, the villagers were displaying their location to history to be neither political nor cultural in nature; their non-participation was a visible expression of their lack of interest in either dimension of history.

The need expressed by the organisers to attract 'the people', that is, to make the event appealing to them, was an implicit recognition of the diverging interests between villagers for whom the historical past held importance and those for whom it did not. The means by which 'the people' would be attracted – via free entry – indicated their concern in historical goals to be material in nature. Such materialism included monetary cares: "...we will make it free so the interest is bigger." It also involved concrete non-monetary aspects, as we were reminded by the Nekilva official who, in interpreting these villagers' position, voiced the question he saw as most reflective of their attitude: "What has the *Chitalishte* given me

– food, clothes? No." With this comment he expressed the belief that political and cultural activities in the *Chitalishte* were rejected because they did not address the concrete needs of the people. It defined the historical interests of 'the people' as predominantly utilitarian; these villagers were interested in material incentives offered by historical goals.

A further comment made by the Nekilva official throws light on who were 'the people'. At one organisational meeting, he identified them to be those who "...come from the fields." He thus denoted those with material interests in history to be the ones who worked the land; that is, workers primarily concerned with agricultural production. Identification of 'the people' as coming from 'the fields', defined the basis of their relation to history. Gradenarov who, as head of the TKZC, oversaw the domain of agricultural production in the village, was therefore also associated with 'the fields', his interests in history paralleling in this event those of 'the people'. In a similar way that political figures' interests were closely associated with the Party and cultural figures with mass organisations, so the interests of villagers who did not participate in the event were aligned with the institution responsible for agricultural production – the TKZC. This latter group was involved in the realisation of historical goals through present-oriented activities founded on agricultural operations. When 'the people' were identified as 'from the fields', the official was therefore also making an evaluation of their role in history, as cooperative farmers with no political or cultural interest in the historical past. Instead the agricultural workers had a present orientation to history which was represented largely through their contributions to historical goals in terms of their agriculturally-based activities (When speaking of the material dimension of history I am referring to present oriented, agriculturally focussed, historical activity). While such productive activity was a valid aspect of historical goals – and in Zhivkov's writings was presented as being at the very root of historical progress (see Chapters 2 and 5) – from the perspective of the dominating political dimension of history, it held a less important role. In attributing political dominance to the historical past, those involved in the material dimension of history were placed in a relatively marginal position. (Such a peripheral location also implied that the activity characteristic of the materialist dimension of history, that is, participation in agricultural production, did not demand Party membership as a pre-requisite. One could take part in such productive activities, and espouse a materialist interest in history, without having a legitimate relationship to the historical past provided through Party membership. This was unlike the political dimension of history, which almost inevitably presupposed Party membership; and cultural interests, where Party membership was an advantage but was not mandatory – recall Naymov's position).

The relationship between, on the one hand, a materialistic pursuit of historical goals and on the other, a political or cultural one, was epitomised by the nature of the association between the TKZC and the *Chitalishte*. The previous head of the TKZC, Mikanov, had given a proportion of the cooperative's profits to the *Chitalishte*, which were used to fund entertainment programs and the general running of the *Chitalishte*. In this way through a monetary contribution to the *Chitalishte*, support was offered to cultural and political events. The utilitarian nature of a material dimension of history involved contributing to the political and cultural dimensions of history in terms of monetary means, through a financial gift by the agricultural cooperative rather than personal involvement Notably such a relation was implied by the necessity for organisers at the *Chitalishte* Centennial to 'buy' villagers' interest. Recall the statement '...we will make it free so that the interest is bigger." It established the nature of the relation between those with materialistic concerns and political and cultural dimensions of history, as occurring only through a donation of currency, not through any personal re-enactment or cultural celebration of history. The financial losses – according to Boteva – which the TKZC had suffered since Gradenarov's term of office as head, did not permit him to make such gestures of material generosity to the *Chitalishte* as his predecessor had done.

Irrespective of whether 'the people' participated as an 'audience' or rejected the celebration and showed no interest even in such a minor capacity, the event had a very different significance for them than for political and cultural figures. Those disinterested in the historical past related to history on the basis of their material concerns rather than attributing to it cultural or political interest. The material dimension of history constituted another standpoint from which to engage in history; it gave an importance to history through substantive interests which were realised in terms of engaging in village agricultural production. Most importantly, their participation in the realisation of historical goals by agricultural productive activity gave them a present orientation toward historical goals; a concern with concrete goals which did not demand reflection on the historical past, but involved an orientation on the present and future historical goals in terms of productive activity based in the present. The villagers who represented the material dimension of history offered minimal support to the historical past; their non-participation in the historical past placed them in a position of opposition to both political and cultural figures – as was implied by the organisers of the event.

In their participation or lack of it in the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration, villagers exhibited their various relations to history. Along with its political and cultural significance, the historical event was also given a material value. The selection of award recipients, which was a specific aspect of the Celebration, created conflicts between

political and cultural figures in relation to the interpretation of the consequences of the awards and more generally of the event. However these two categories of villagers were unified in their opposition against material figures' interpretation of the event by virtue of the latter's absence from the proceedings. As it was to the advantage of political and cultural figures to be engaged in historical awards and to encourage the participation of others as an audience, so it was not in the material figures' interests to participate. The absence of Gradenarov and other disinterested villagers in the event, was a rejection of the importance of the historical past and of those villagers engaged in the proceedings. It represented the irrelevancy political and cultural aspects held for 'the people', who were more concerned with their own material welfare in the historical present.

These varying concerns represented the contrasting significance attributed to history. It established the contentious nature of a Talpian understanding of a Marxist-Leninist history in relation to who had the legitimate right to interpret history and whose interpretation was the most legitimate. Ultimately, political-historical figures were successful in determining the choice of recipients and in having their own past, or the past of their supporters, publicly recognised as most significant through receiving awards. On this occasion, history was rendered as having a political – above cultural or material – significance, an issue to which I return in the conclusion.

Other Events, Other Alliances.

The *Chitalishte* Centennial was one instance where a particular set of alliances expressing villagers' differing interests to historical goals was established. The relation between political and cultural villagers set them in opposition to each other and yet both were aligned in respect to villagers who held material interests. This was, however, but one of a number of possible oppositions and alliances between villagers that could have been and were actualised in the course of village historical activity. The relationship which arose between material, political and cultural historical villagers, depended to a large extent on the event. The occasion determined the particular display of interests of villagers and the nature of the relationship between their differing concerns. In the following discussion I develop this idea by briefly recalling events noted in previous chapters in order to look at the alliances established in them. (This makes it possible, in the concluding comments of this chapter, to raise as problematic the notion of 'history' used by Sahlins). I do so with no pretence of providing a detailed analysis which would require another chapter in itself, but merely to suggest that the relationship described between material, cultural and political

villagers in the *Chitalishte* Centennial is not necessarily repeated in the same form during other events. For although the responses to history as political, cultural and material were relatively unchanging – although towards the end of this section I speculate about a situation when changes may occur – the shifting alliances or arrangements of the relations between them appear more varying in nature.

In part, the modulating nature of the relationship between villagers was due to the fact that different events involved the participation of different actors. In part, too, it was because it is not easy to 'categorise' people; at the individual level, a villager may have numerous alliances, one being actualised in 'preference' to another at any particular point in time depending on the nature of the event. Individuals do have conflicting interests![7] An individual's relation to history – as upholding political, cultural or material concerns – varied as individuals' interests changed. This was the situation with Boteva, whose relation to history was of a cultural nature in the *Chitalishte* Centennial celebration. But the affair leading to the death of her husband (Chapter 2) and her vain attempts to bring retribution to his 'moral murderer', sometimes placed her against all Party members – political and cultural – whom she saw as not doing enough to investigate Gradenarov's involvement in the affair. At such times her interests coincided with those of her late husband who, as a TKZC worker with non-Party status, had a material orientation to history. In fact she commented to me once that in a moment of anger at a Party meeting, she had threatened to 'throw in her membership card'. Any loyalties to the Party were overridden by her priority to clear the name of her husband and in so doing bring about what she believed was justice against the immoral practices of Gradenarov. In this cause she opposed villagers whom she perceived as corrupt, whether Party or non-Party, political or cultural historical figures. Thus, whether she advocated a cultural or material historical position, depended very much on the contextual circumstances, that is, on her immediate interests in any given situation.

The fact that individuals had conflicting concerns and that this influenced the nature of alliances between interest groups in any particular event, provides an insight into the first incident with which I deal. Chapter 2 noted a situation where Gradenarov had been forced to ask Pashev for help in finding volunteers to pick TKZC grapes. Most villagers had not responded to Gradenarov's request for voluntary labour because – as my next door neighbour informed me – he had shown favouritism towards some of the villagers earlier

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7 This introduces a complexity to the situation not considered by Sahlins (1981) and raises questions about Sahlins' categories of 'women', 'men', 'chiefs', 'commoners' etc. which are presented as 'neat' and unquestionable.

in the year at the time of fodder allocation. My neighbour was not a Party member and the basis of his contribution to history was in terms of his agricultural productive activity – he had worked at the TKZC for most of his life, until his retirement three years earlier. On this occasion, his material interests paralleled those of political and cultural historical figures who also had complaints against Gradenarov. Their opposition to Ivo Gradenarov was expressed by withholding voluntary labour in a time of need. Given this situation, Gradenarov found it necessary to call upon Pashev for aid. Arguing for the vital necessity of voluntary aid so that the plan for the year could be met, Pashev eventually enticed enough volunteers to carry out the task. The support given Pashev was far from overwhelming, but it was considerably better than that given to Gradenarov. During the few days that it took Pashev to organise help, there was a realignment of affiliations between villagers. The event began as an opposition from most of the villagers – those who had received no animal fodder – whose shared plight united them against Gradenarov, the leading figure with a materialist interest in history and the small number of those who, by virtue of their favoured position in the allocation of fodder, supported him. The incident ended with the joint effort of the material and political historical leaders who won the begrudging support of most of the villagers, irrespective of whether they had received , not received or were indifferent to the matter of fodder allocation. Party and non-Party individuals, regardless of their political, cultural or material concern in history, were brought into line in the name of Marxist-Leninist historical goals to which, Pashev argued, they must give precedence.

In this instance, unlike the *Chitalishte* celebration, it suited the villagers with political, cultural and material interests to align themselves in an expression of protest against Gradenarov. The united front expressed opposition to a select number of villagers, led by Gradenarov, who were protecting their exclusive control over a material resource – animal fodder. (We note in passing that Gradenarov's material orientation toward history, also established the nature of his authority in the village, which was in terms of the control of TKZC resources and therefore an ability to exert some influence over the material well-being of villagers). In the 100 year *Chitalishte* celebration there was no such affiliation between villagers who participated in various areas of the historical development of the state.

A different combination of oppositions, involving only political figures, occurred in the incident regarding Pashev's response to the publication of a book by another political-historical Party figure (who was not a resident of Talpa). The book was critical of Pashev's historical activities, calling him a 'coward' (see Chapter 2). In response to this published work, Pashev was writing his own history of the village Party and of his role in it. The

occurrence thus pitted two political-historical Party figures against each other, as one tried to legitimate his individual role in history threatened by the other.

Within the village, Pashev and Matov were involved in similar competitive activities, often attempting to align themselves more closely to history at the expense of the other. They did so, for example, by taking every opportunity at public meetings to recite anecdotes of their respective shared past with Zhivkov. That they were in disagreement over the extent of their role in history was clear from the fact that Talpa had no officially written village history, a situation which Boteva and Tzela told me – on different occasions – was due to the fact that agreement could not be reached in respect to the validity of any one interpretation. Indeed the greater the number of politically active figures there were, the greater the potential for disagreement over the valid interpretation of history. This was supported by the fact that other villages viewed by Talpians as less progressive – that is having fewer politically active figures – such as the neighbouring village of Tevelak, had a published history while Talpa did not.

Pashev's antagonism, as a political figure, to other such colleagues, whether within the village or external to it, presented a different set of oppositions and alliances from those which arose in the course of the *Chitalishte* Centennial. In this case, political figures were not aligned, but opposed to each other. Further, their activities apparently involved no cultural and material historical villagers, all of whom were unified by virtue of their exclusion in this matter.

The two incidents involving political figures in competition with each other provided not only a means for legitimating their place in, but also an attempt to legitimate their acts as history. That is, the competitiveness between political figures resulted in or rather occurred through the re-finement of history. When these political figures engaged in battles aimed at bringing them greater authority through establishing their role in the past as politically significant (through being formally acknowledged by the state, as a result of receiving awards and by publications), they were re-fining, even transforming village history itself. In striving to show their own individual past as politically significant, history – defined in terms of Zhivkov and the long line of leaders from Zhivkov to Dimitrov and, via this Bulgarian connection, ultimately to Lenin and Marx – was under negotiation. It was therefore in their interests to revise history, for this provided a means by which they were able to re-locate themselves in respect to it. In this process, the political position of individuals constantly changed in accordance with the transformed history. Thus the accusation of 'coward' against Pashev seemed detrimental enough to warrant his need to respond and make evident his place in the historical past. A series of

such accusations, or the inability of Pashev to legitimate his past, could have resulted in the distancing of his relation to history and perhaps even his demise as village Party leader. This would also have represented a change in the dominant version of history.

Such a change represented a shift not only in political figures' location, but also in their relationship to cultural and material figures and the nature of the relationship of all villagers to history. A refinement of the historical past meant a potential change in the basic nature of the interest groups and the possible relations they had to each other and to history. For example, the demise of Pashev would represent not only a change in history – as his version loses credibility and another's is enhanced – but consequently a transformation in the composition of the villagers' interests and the relations constructed between them. Indeed, the location of all individuals was under constant review as history was being refined, a process which was the central activity and part of the normal course of historical figures' political manipulations[8]. Usually such refinement was, however, of minimal significance and did not inflict major changes on village history and therefore on the interest groups[9].

Although brief in ethnographic detail, the above discussion is intended to indicate that the relationship between historical – political, cultural and material – figures, as constituted in the 100 year *Chitalishte* celebration, was not repeated on other occasions. Other events did not necessarily involve the same parties, let alone the same relationships between them. The additional two cases discussed in this section reveal that there were a number of possibilities in terms of the involvement of interest groups and their alignment and interaction with each other, that could arise in any particular event. Differing alliances were actualised out of different combinations of the same categories, although individual's interests did not necessarily locate them in any one particular category. The diagram following portrays an idealised set of combinations.

In the diagram, I have marked the position of the central figures discussed in respect to the *Chitalishte* Centennial event. Along the abscissa axis: Pashev is located in the second quadrant (upper left sector) and Gradenarov in the first quadrant (upper right sector),

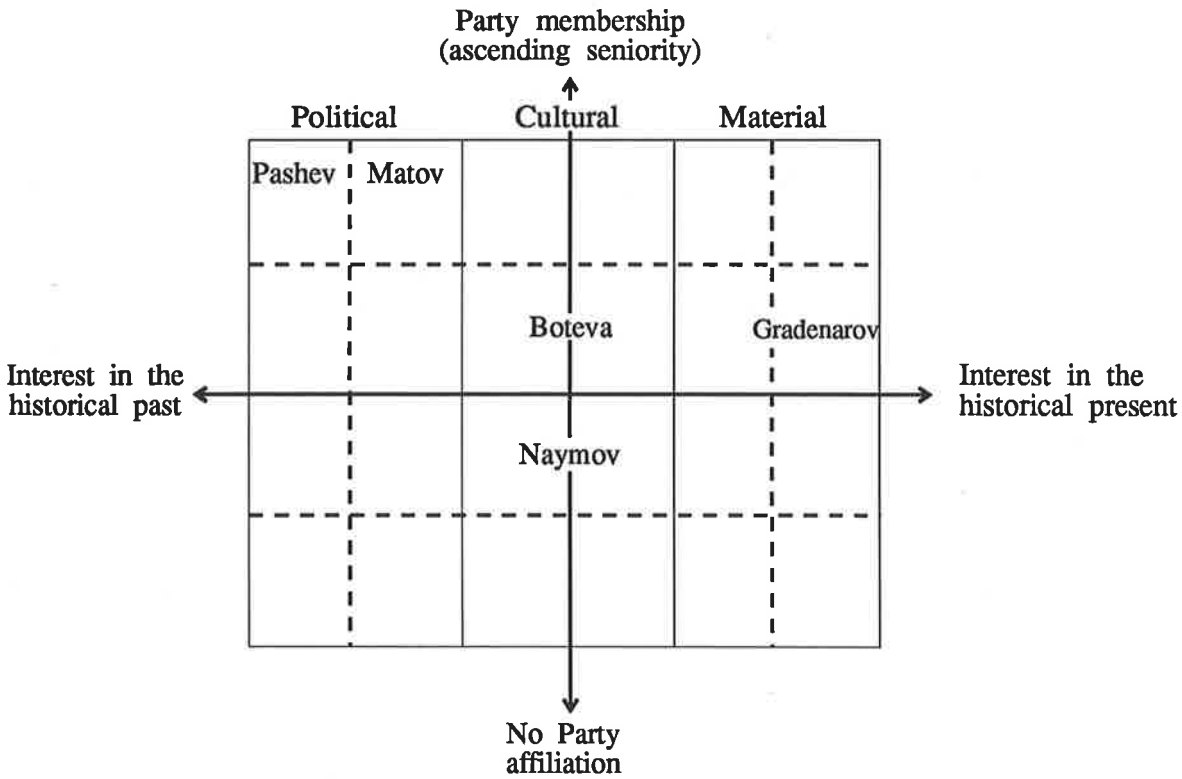
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8 The career of any Party figure was influenced by the continual changing alliances between interest groups. In this process, political careers were made and broken.

9 One apparent exception was at the time of the death of Stalin, when a major re-writing of history took place in all the Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria. Such a re-definition, rather than re-finement of history, explains the turmoil which occurred at the time as previously historical figures who had found prominence in a Stalinist history became politically inactive while other historical figures rose to prominence.

reflecting their contrasting concerns between an interest in the historical past and historical present respectively, while Boteva and Naymov hold mediatory positions, with concerns in both. A separation of the horizontal axis into three main sections reflects this division, representing interests exclusively in the historical past, exclusively in the historical present, or in both; that is, in the political, material and cultural dimensions of history, respectively. On the ordinate axis we have degree of affiliation to the Party, with senior Party figures such as Pashev at the highest point, junior Party figures further down and Naymov, who had no party affiliation, being located in the negative region. If I were to plot the position of 'the people' as predominantly non-Party and having a present orientation to history, they would be located in the fourth quadrant (lower right sector):

Villagers' Differing Interests in Respect to History



The diagram displays the possible relations of alliance and opposition that could be formed in village events in respect to history. It is an idealised set of combinations, because one event cannot actualise all possible alliances, or make evident all relations, oppositions or affiliations, between them. At times, alliances and oppositions referenced as a Party versus non-Party issue, at others expression was in terms of villagers' relations to history. I draw

solid lines to denote these potentially major cleavages. On other occasions, oppositions were expressed as internal segmentation within one sector of a group, or between various interest groups. The broken lines denote such potential contradictions. Of course, depending on the event, these delineation lines, broken or solid, could represent affiliations instead.

This depiction is a modification of that presented by Evans-Pritchard (1968, p.144); however, it differs in an important way. The above diagram implies no hierarchical "...principle of segmentation and opposition between segments..." in the sense described by Evans-Pritchard (1968, p.143). It does not assume any prescribed hierarchical rules existing between the various categories; there is no predictable pattern to the constituted set of alliances and oppositions between interest groups which can be ordered and conventionalised as a 'formula' that indicates which categories (or combination of categories) would be actualised under any particular circumstances. Therefore, the existence of the interest groups cannot be viewed as any form of..."principle of contradiction in political structure" (Evans-Pritchard 1968, p.147), since the Talpian categories and their established relations did not follow any predictable principle of alliance or opposition in the same way as Evans-Pritchard found for the Nuer. Rather, the actualised relationships were dependent on the nature of the event (for example on whether it was concerned with the historical past or present), as well as on the involvement of individual interests in respect to history. If this were not so, the constituted relationships would loose their performative character.

Conclusion.

As performatively actualised in the *Chitalishte* Centennial, history was far from the unifying principle it was portrayed to be in the 'model village' event. Villagers were not united in the struggle to realise the historical goals of communism; instead, history took on a multi-faceted nature – the several dimensions discussed in this chapter formed the focal point of village contention. Villagers established differing relations to history which represented the basis of the struggle over its significance. The very existence of villagers' various relations to history, let alone the conflict which was engendered between them, was a divergence from the harmonious and unified pursuit of state ideology which was portrayed as having the total support of the 'model' villagers.

In following their interests through separate responses to the event, villagers reflected their characteristically different relations to history as political, cultural and material in nature.

Those who played a politically significant role in the events leading up to 1944, espoused a history which accorded the most importance to this period. Their senior Party positions gave them the authority to successfully validate their rather narrow interpretation of history as dominant and their own positions as privileged in respect to it. Those born since 1944, or who were very young at the time and with no such personal involvement in the politically significant events, minimised the importance of 1944 by viewing history in a broader context (this was the cultural dimension) or by attributing to 1944 no importance at all – instead, bestowing sole significance on the historical present (the material dimension). Cultural figures advocated an interpretation which was based on an individual's cultural contribution to the past and present, irrespective of her/his political location. In defining history in such a broad sense, their interpretation acknowledged villagers' cultural activities before and after the 1944 period as equally important; relevancy was given to all events from the villagers' present contributions and stretching back into the past. The engagement between a political and cultural historical stance may be viewed essentially as concerned with the significance of the past and the degree of importance of events leading to 1944. This joint concern placed them in an aligned position against those who upheld a materialist view of history. Materialist figures, by virtue of their rejection of the Centennial event, defined their interests to lie outside the domain of the historical past; their contribution to the historical development of the socialist state was in terms of agricultural production, an activity which required no reflection on the past, but instead demanded participation in the realisation of present historical goals. This divergence between political, cultural and material dimensions of history – which essentially defined the disunified nature of history – can also be expressed as one between senior Party members, mass organisation officials and TKZC workers. Thus state officials in Party and administrative posts, were not united in a harmonious effort towards realising historical goals – as the 'model' villagers portrayed themselves to be – but were pitted against each other, all striving to establish their own contribution to historical goals as the most significant[10].

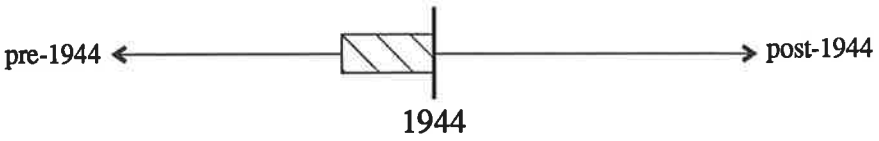
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10 The *Chitalishte* Centennial revealed a variety of factional interests within the Party. Thus, it is misleading to conceive of the Party in Bulgaria as a unified or homogenous body, since various interests granted different Party members different relations to, and control over, history. The situation in Talpa and presumably throughout Bulgaria, was therefore not indicative of the conditions described by Skilling (1966, p.54) for Eastern Europe in general, where he talks about 'single Party' domination. While true that the Communist Party had a monopoly, it is important to remember that within the Party, members held conflicting interests which surfaced under a variety of circumstances (such as award ceremonies). Kolakowski's work (again on Eastern Europe and Russia rather than specifically on Bulgaria) is also misleading in portraying the Party as a cohesive unit (1978, Vol:2, p. 392 and p.465). The analysis of the Talpian situation finds agreement with Giddens who rejects any notion of the Party as 'monolithic', except perhaps as it existed in the Stalin period (1985, pp. 296-7).

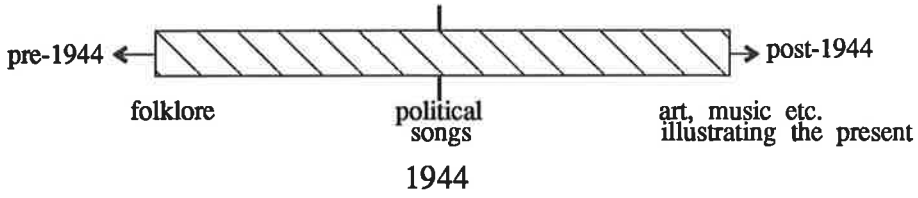
The three ways of participating in state historical goals – political, cultural and material – gave emphasis to different aspects of a Marxist-Leninist history. These differing relations to history represented three distinct temporal zones which may be depicted diagrammatically as:

Temporal Representations of History

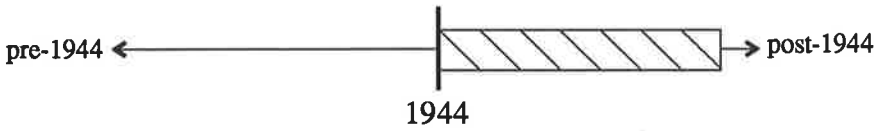
A) The political dimension of history



B) The cultural dimension of history



C) The material dimension of history



Importantly, we note that villagers were not arguing about whether history was significant, but about *how* it was significant. By denoting particular events and activities in the past and present as fundamental to the development of the socialist state, history was represented in a variety of contrasting ways. As far as the *Chitalishte* awards were concerned, Pashev and the other political figures were successful in establishing their interpretation and their own role within it, as dominant. With their exclusive control over the awards, the political figures displayed to the audience their legitimate and prominent role in history, which oriented the present and future in respect to the events associated with 1944 (represented in Diagram A). However, their position was rejected by cultural figures who objected to the underhanded methods of the political figures, to the manipulative manner in which they pursued their goals for self gain at the expense of others. In short, cultural figures questioned the appropriateness of Pashev and the other political figures for receiving the awards, thereby questioning on this occasion the relevancy of the political interpretation of history; and put forward an alternative understanding which made pertinent a much wider set of events as historically significant

(see Diagram B). Such a view attributed equal importance to the past and present in the realisation of present and future historical goals.

However, this did not represent the disputation of Marxist-Leninist history as a valid way of understanding the past. In their opposition to political figures, cultural figures were not denying or criticising historical goals, only the actions of particular historical figures who were putting forward an exclusive understanding of history, that was deemed inappropriate for the event. Thus, the intention to go to Nekilva to query the whole selection procedure, which some dissatisfied cultural-historical figures were planning to do (according to one of the 12 award holders), did not constitute a rejection of Marxist-Leninist history. Rather it was a questioning of the appropriateness of political-historical individuals receiving the awards and, by extension, a denial of the significance of a politicised history for the occasion. Nevertheless, the fact that the villagers felt they could appeal to a higher authority for justice, showed a fundamental belief in the system; their opposition to the political figures did not put at risk the socialist order – history was not threatened. This was equally relevant to the disinterest shown by material-historical figures. Their response, or lack of one, was not a rejection of historical goals, merely a statement about the irrelevancy of the political and cultural significance of history and the upholding of a materialist view of these goals. 'The people' advocated support for a notion of history which was oriented in terms of (their) contributions in the historical present (see Diagram C).

The risk to history itself however was ever-present. It was implied in Petrova's threat to no longer participate, to withdraw from serving the *Chitalishte* (and also implied in Boteva's threat to throw in her Party membership, noted in the previous section). Petrova's threat assumed a potentially more radical expression of opposition, for activeness (participation) in the realisation of history – be it through political, cultural or material means – was a fundamental aim of state ideology, as constructed by the Talpians in the 'model village' event (Chapter 5). A vital part of the way they portrayed themselves as 'model' was to display the involvement of all villagers in the historical progress of the socialist state. Thus, by saying she would no longer participate in *Chitalishte* activities, Petrova was threatening to discontinue her role in the development of historical goals. This response was not a questioning of the significance of any particular understanding of history, but a disengagement from history altogether by non-participation. While Petrova's threats remained unfulfilled, this indicated the risk to which history was subjected. Non-participation, especially by figures once prominent and active in historical activities, represented a public rejection of historical goals. Petrova's threat of non-action constituted a protest and rejection of history because it was a threat of 'regression'; it turned around the

fundamental character of history as a one-directional and evolutionary process and openly contested the display of cooperation so crucial in the villagers' construction of themselves as 'model'. Having been active, Petrova was now threatening to return to non-participation. This represented an anti-historical movement which directly contested a Marxist-Leninist history, since it was an anachronous act that questioned the historical notion of progress.

Thus the past as performatively actualised, diverged considerably from the way in which it was prescriptively enacted. The *Chitalishte* Centennial was an occasion where villagers' activities contrasted with state ideology as it was constructed in the 'model village' event, although it did not contrast with Zhivkov's rendition of a Marxist-Leninist history (as presented in Chapter 2). The prescriptive configuration of the past – that is, state ideology – as an interpretive application of Marxist-Leninist history, was rejected performatively; the past, as performatively actualised, was a realisation of potentially valid interpretations engendered by a Marxist-Leninist history, which diverged from that constructed as state ideology. On both occasions – in the 'model village' event and in the *Chitalishte* Centennial – a politicised interpretation of history was given dominance, although on the latter occasion, it was not an uncontested phenomenon. Performatively, history was not a unified construction of the past but held a number of significances, sponsored by various conflicting interests in the village. Indeed, history was the centre of village negotiation as villagers with differing interests attempted to legitimate their own understandings as legitimate. A folkloric construction of the past, which was one facet of a cultural dimension of history, was not subsumed in a political history (as in the case of the 'model village'), but strongly opposed to it. That is, in the *Chitalishte* Centennial event, the cultural dimension of history provided an alternative interpretation of the historical past which re-focussed attention away from a politicised history, giving it less importance in a much more broadly relevant history. The TKZC as the centre of agricultural production was, in the 'model village' event, displayed as playing a supportive role in the development of state ideology, that is, in a politicised history. However, the disinterest of agricultural workers in the *Chitalishte* Centennial represented their (material) interests to be in a position of conflict with both a cultural and political understanding of history. The past as performatively realised was therefore known in quite a different way from that in which it was prescriptively enacted. In the *Chitalishte* event, politicised history was still in a position of dominance, but the victory came at a high cost; namely the resistance of cultural figures who were critical of political figures and the non-involvement of material figures – who rejected both as irrelevant. Performatively, the prescriptive configuration was compromised: by political-historical figures who acted (in cultural terms)

inappropriately; by cultural figures who advocated an alternate rendition of the historical past; and by the need to entice material-historical participation by catering to their utilitarian concerns. The compromise indicated the extent to which the significance of history was under contention.

That a political history had not been deposed or rejected but was still on occasions pre-eminent, was partly because threats that suggested a 'regressive' movement away from history – like Petrova's – were rarely carried out. Also as discussed in the previous section, every event created a different series of relations between the 'categories', that is, interest groups. The changing relations between them established a de-stabilising situation not conducive to any long term permanent alliances. For example, the grape picking incident and the book affair, created relationships between villagers quite different from that of the *Chitalishte* Centennial event. In the former case, political figures were aligned with cultural and even some material figures; in the latter, political figures were opposed to each other and to the rest of the village, which was excluded from participation. Both these suggest a very different performative configuration of history from that created in the *Chitalishte* event. It serves to remind us that Pashev was not always seen to act in a self-interested way. Nor was he always located in opposition to other historical, Party and non-Party figures. Frequently he was a respected historical figure, not only representing Talpa's interests outside the village, but also protecting the villagers' interests in respect to Gradenarov, who in more than one instance was viewed as acting in an inappropriate manner. The importance of the modulating nature of the relations between differing villagers' interest groups, was due to the fact that the relations identified in the *Chitalishte* Centennial event were no more 'permanent' or valid in constituting the performative configuration than the relations actualised in any of the other events.

Indeed, it is for this reason that the section 'Other Events, Other Alliances' has been included. That is, to make the point that every event potentially at least set up a different combination of relations between historical interests and that there is nothing inherently valid in attributing precedence to one set of such relations above any other. In dealing with three events (albeit two rather briefly) and establishing the different relations constructed, it becomes difficult to decide what factor, if any, gives the relationships between the categories in the 100 year *Chitalishte* event any greater importance or validity than those in the grape-picking incident, or the book affair. For while it is true that some of the relationships may diverge more dramatically from the prescribed configuration than others and therefore be viewed as more threatening or 'innovative' to the prescriptive configuration, this does not explain the denial or prominence which could be given to any

particular established relationship in the systematic understanding of it as *the* performative configuration of the past.

In part, the importance of recognising the 'equal' validity of constituted relations in any comparison between different performative configurations and their possible divergence from the prescriptive configuration, is to emphasise the fundamental importance of the past as the central locus of meaning in Talpian socialist village life. The configurations of the past I have discussed in the previous and present chapter, as prescriptive and performative, realised (often conflicting) ways in which it was known and experienced, granting diverging values to history, folklore and tradition and therefore to the way in which they order (that is, value) events in, and as, the past, present and future. The past was a central site of contention in Talpa and the means through which villagers' relations with the state and knowledge of themselves as socialist beings were articulated. That is, the socialist village was constituted and distinguished through its rendering of the past as a contentious realm of social and socialist life. To the extent that the past was a fundamental domain of village life, the Bulgarian state has been successful in its socialist policies. To the extent that this domain was continually undergoing a process of negotiation and that the villagers did not necessarily performatively actualise the past in compliance with the village's prescriptive configuration, it was not.

The realisation of the importance of the past as the fundamental and contentious domain of socialist Talpian life and the appreciation of this through the assumed equal importance that must be analytically attributed to any particular configuration of the past (performative or prescriptive) arising from any given event, also brings to light a problem evident in the use of Sahlins' method. In *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, Sahlins (1981) gave primacy to the arrival of the British in Hawaii; to the relationships established between Hawaiians and between the Hawaiians and the English that arose from this event. Given the preceding discussion, we may ask how or why this event – in Sahlins' terms, a 'structure of the conjuncture'; that is, as a "...practical realisation of cultural categories in a specific historical context..." (Sahlins 1985, p.xiv) – is seen as any more significant than any other event or 'structure of the conjuncture' which occurred in Hawaii's past. The question is, how it is possible to attribute to any one 'structure of the conjuncture', a greater determining influence above any other?

We may begin to move towards an answer, when we ask this differently. Why do certain positional relations among (what Sahlins terms) cultural categories become more prominent or memorable than others? We have learnt from the previous and present chapters that the past, as prescriptively enacted or performatively actualised, is realised as

a configuration between historical, folkloric and traditional constructions of the past. This configuration is a value created through political and other interests. The value given by Sahlins to the past is clearly stated in his above-quoted phrase – his interest in the past is 'historical'; that is, the contextual value he attributes to the past is 'historical'. In so doing, he equates 'history' with processes of change (1985, p.138) and worse still, processes of change with 'history'. He thus makes certain assumptions about 'history' and its attributed pre-eminent position. Indeed the pre-eminence he gives to 'history' is indicated when he writes "Culture is...an historical object" (1985, p.148). That is, he establishes the importance of culture in terms of the 'historical'; he makes culture an object of 'history' and 'history' the object of culture. The study is carried out from the hindsight of 'history', thereby giving dominance to one set of 'structures of the conjuncture' and the relations it constitutes over and above any other. In doing so, Sahlins uses a notion of the past that has already pre-judged the importance of a particular event (or set of events) and its constituted relations, giving it a significance and value above all others, as 'history'. This represents a denial of the significance of the past, not its successful incorporation within a structuralist analysis.

The issue is thus more fundamental than a misguided dichotomy between structure and 'history', as Sahlins believes – and which he tries to re-address somewhat problematically through treating 'history' in a non-political and taken-for-granted manner. It is based on our Western notion of 'history', the pre-eminence we grant it as the valid and indisputable way of understanding the past (and social change). There are however no grounds for equating the past with 'history', except ethnographic. 'History' is an ethnographic concept as much, I suggest, in the West as in Bulgarian society. It is this issue of the past as the dominant and taken-for-granted Western notion of 'history' and a problematic facet of anthropological works, with which the concluding chapter is concerned.

Concluding Remarks

Summary

When Talpians described their village as a 'new Bulgarian village', they were underlining the fundamental importance of the past in the presentation of themselves as socialists in the Bulgarian state. The 'new Bulgarian village' was a term which in condensed form referred to their moral, political and national identity as Bulgarians and socialists. Such an identity was framed in terms of Talpians' victorious struggle over the old – that which was Turkish or fascist-capitalist. In attributing importance to such events, the past was given a special importance in the contemporary socialist village; in the particular understanding the villagers held about themselves and their location in respect to the Bulgarian state. Their identity oriented them in a particular way to the state, in terms of temporally defined relations through the upholding of a certain interpretation of the past, as a specific valuation of historical, folkloric and traditional activities.

In Chapter 2, I looked at history as a particular way of constituting social time. As a specific state-supported vision of the past, present and future, history represented events in a linear mode; that is, as uni-directional, chronological, evolutionary and teleological. It was celebrated in public locations (usually the *Chitalishte*), controlled by state officials and presented in textualised, documented form. The knowing of the past in terms of its communist goal also assumed a particular moral order. Moral and teleological elements of history served to differentially evaluate historical events; those figures associated with the advent of the socialist state in 1944, who had been actively involved in World War II events and the bringing about of the present socialist order by helping to overthrow the fascist regime, were attributed a privileged position. Political activity was oriented in terms of villagers' established relations to 1944 while movement in the political hierarchy depended upon changes in their legitimate position in respect to this history. Politics was thus defined as the contemporary relations emerging from villagers' differing relationships to specific morally and teleologically valued events. In turn history was constituted as a resource which was not equally accessible or valued by all. While all Party figures had a legitimate relation to history and were thus officially political beings, those who could display their involvement in the most valued historical activities were considered not only

politically but also morally exemplary. The greater an individual's role in valued historical events the higher was her/his presumed moral worth. History, as a temporal representation, thus determined socialist relations of a political and moral nature.

The character of tradition as an alternate temporal construction was dealt with in Chapter 3. Traditional customs had religious origins, ordered the past in a cyclic manner which was perceived to be unchanging; recurring with rhythmic and predictable regularity in villagers' lives. A traditional past was also indeterminate, its specific origins being untraceable. Moreover, traditional practices were restricted to non-public (private) locations considered outside the state domain (such as the household and church), which did not involve the presence of state officials or Party members in their official capacity. Traditional customs were not documented events, but rather spontaneous activities which centred on agricultural and 'natural' life cycle themes – death, fertility – and which varied enormously in terms of territoriality or ethnicity. Traditional practices also constituted relations which were a-political in nature; they delineated humanness in terms of religious, territorial and ethnic factors which both unified and distinguished between villagers in terms which undermined historically-supported conceptions of humanness. That is, a traditionally constructed past was a temporal order which established humanity in a way that directly contrasted with history. Indeed tradition was more than just conceptually opposed to history, but was recognised by state officials as a potential source of resistance to history.

Folklore was a state attempt to restructure the peoples' perception of the traditional past and neutralise its relevancy through creating a temporal (and spatial) dislocation of the traditional past from history. The process of the appropriation of traditional customs by means of the selection and emphasis of certain traditional aspects (for example the emphasis on its visual appearance) and rejection of other aspects (religion) and their incorporation within state-determined events as folklore, I have termed re-contextualisation. It was a process which involved the selection, recording (textualisation) and performance of tradition in a state-directed context. This transformational process characterised folklore, through aspects which included: its movement away from the private and into the public domain (often educational institutions); its indeterminate past; its cyclic content and linear context; and the involvement of state officials in the planned performance of folklore as traditional practices which were re-oriented from their religious significance and given a historical relevancy. Folklore was distinct from tradition and history and yet held characteristics of both. The mediatory position of folklore as both state-determined and yet rooted in tradition, gave it no explicit political significance (in the historical sense). While non-political, folklore nevertheless held an important position in

the historical struggle for communism; for it was a means by which traditional practices were severed from having any present or future relevancy in the development of the socialist state, except in the terms considered beneficial by the state in the pursuit of its historical goals.

Notably, re-contextualisation resulted in the characteristically time-less nature of folklore which was relegated to 'another time' and 'another place' and which held contemporary relevancy only on this basis. Folkloric performances thus constituted a radical break from the traditional past. Removal of folklore from socialist contemporaneity, that is, its a-temporal nature facilitated its broad accessibility, which made it especially appropriate in contributing to a notion of Bulgarian identity. The re-presentation of tradition on stage as folklore, established the villagers' identity – as Bulgarian – in opposition to a traditional identity focussed at the intra-national level; villagers could 'learn' about their Bulgarianness through a state-approved means of re-cognising the traditional past in terms compatible with historical goals. Thus folklore provided not only a state critique of the traditional past, but a means by which tradition was subsumed in the historical goals of the state. Folklore designated temporal relations which appropriated tradition for the states' own hegemonic purposes.

The characteristics of the ethnographic constructions of the past, meaningfully delineated as history, folklore and tradition, are summarised in the accompanying Table. These characteristics have been derived from the celebrations Talpians performed and knew as historical, folkloric and traditional. Considered together, they comprise Talpians' socially constructed past 'universe'; they are practices which attain meaning in relation to each other, their sense constructed out of the contextual relations they held in respect to each other as differing ways of denoting the past[1]. Chapters 5 and 6 focussed on relations between the three, as constituted by Talpians on different occasions.

In Chapter 5, I studied the configuration between the three constructions of the past as effected by Talpians in the making of themselves 'model villagers'. The 'model village'

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1 The three categories appeared to be in a constant state of re-negotiation. For example, during my fieldwork period, the state changed the format of the 9th of September historical celebration, while another traditional celebration was elevated to state recognition (this being the 3rd of March, the day Bulgaria won its liberation from the Turks in the 19th century, which became a public holiday). The fluid nature of relations between the three constructions was also evidenced in the relatively recent development of folklore, as a particular 'marriage' between tradition and history.

Characteristics of the Three Constructions of the Past

Tradition	Folklore	History
cyclic content, cyclic context] cyclic time	cyclic content, linear context] cyclic-linear time	linear content, linear context] linear time
a-political	non-political	political
nature influences humanity	humanity overcomes nature	humanity dominates nature
connects past, present and future	separates past from present and future	connects past, present and future
close ties with religion	separate from religion	anti-religious
determined by non-state officials	determined both by state and non-state officials	determined by state officials
concept of humanness	concept of Bulgarianness	concept of humanness
unknowable past	unknowable past	knowable past
celebrated in private areas, outside state domain	celebrated in private and public areas, outside and within state domain respectively	celebrated in public areas within state domain
unchanging time	a-temporality (static, time-less)	changing time

competition was about villagers' particular relations to the past as structured by Talpians in agreement with their understanding of the monolithic state view. It provided an opportunity to show how in all areas in the socialist village, the Talpians displayed their commitment to the historical goals of the state: by acknowledging the rightful place of the Party alongside other administrative organs which all had a proper and important role to fulfil in the development of the state; in supporting two forms of production both of which were socialist in organisation; in displaying a selfless concern for historical goals and an understanding of humanness related to historical concerns; and finally in displaying their Bulgarianness, an identity subsumed in internationalist socialist concerns. The Talpians thus depicted themselves to be working harmoniously and in an united fashion to develop the socialist state through their administrative and class relations, by the nature of their morality and their adherence to a Bulgarian identity. The metaphors used by the Talpians to create such a discourse about state ideology and to construct their acquiescence with it, were uniquely Talpian; they were villagers' representations which inflected the meaning of state ideology as recorded by Zhivkov and gave it a specific-ness in terms of their shared historical past with Zhivkov.

Talpians displayed their support for a distinct and totalising socialist vision of humanity by portraying their involvement in the development of state historical goals. As depicted by Talpians in the 'model village' event, state ideology was determined in terms of temporality – through a concern and interpretation of the past as a particular configuration between history, folklore and tradition which gave ultimate value to history, more specifically to politicised-historical goals and which thus involved an outright rejection of tradition. The inclusion of folklore which provided the historical village with a nationalist identity encompassed by historical (internationalist) interests, was therefore of secondary importance. Thus in terms of state ideology as framed in the 'model village' event, the three constructions of the past presented in the Table, must be read as a valued progression from left to right – a movement away from tradition and toward a pre-eminent history. Such a configuration of the past was constructed in the course of the 'model village' event as the uncontentious view of state ideology, which had the unanimous support of all villagers. In reflecting upon and advocating the past in this way, Talpians defined themselves as model socialist villagers.

The manicured representation of themselves as progressive socialists concerned with 'building communism' was shown in Chapter 6 to be only part of the story. On other occasions the state-supported way of knowing the past was compromised; the past was attributed a significance which diverged from, indeed threatened the particular

configuration between history, folklore and tradition which was articulated as state ideology.

In the pursuit of individual political ambitions through interest or disinterest shown with respect to the awards during the Chitalishte Centennial event, villagers' conflicting position in relation to each other and to state ideology was actualised. The villagers' divergent interpretations of the event reflected their differing relations (and conflicting interests) with respect to history, as political, cultural or material in nature. These represented different temporal delineations of history; the former attributed greatest importance to events leading up to 1944, cultural relations gave equal importance to the past and present, while a material orientation to history emphasised the importance of the present in the realisation of the socialist goals. This created a disunity amongst the villagers and established the contentious terms under which socialist ideology existed. State ideology was not as rigidly adhered to in Talpa as the 'model villagers' had indicated during the competition; instead, Talpians' historical relations were the centre of debate and compromise. The issue was not over the significance of history but *how* it was significant. History was thus not the unifying principle it was portrayed to be in the 'model village' event. Instead, it took on a multi-faceted nature. The past was not a definite and uncontentious way through which villagers constituted themselves as socialist beings, but was a site of struggle. The valued movement away from tradition and towards history which was an important part of the reading of the above Table in respect to state ideology, was in this instance not clearly effected by the villagers.

As prescriptively enacted and performatively constituted through the participation of villagers in historical, folkloric or traditional celebrations – be they in the *Chitalishte*, attendance at a funeral or at any number of other public or private celebrations – the past was determined as fundamentally important in Talpa, as the central arena in which ultimately the relevancy and validity of the socialist order was debated[2]. Village state officials 'seized' the past for communist ends, claiming authority on the basis of a socialist historical past. That is, via history, the state defined the legitimate and meaningful nature of social(ist) relations in contemporary village life. This was, on occasions, counteracted by villagers through practices which upheld alternate ways by which to constitute their humanness and suggest a differing social order. While the past was vital in the way

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2 It is for this reason I would suggest that Western writings that characterise the socialist state as primarily a particular economic system do not provide an appropriate means by which to understand it. Such a characterisation reflects more than anything else, an (Western) ethnocentric perspective and therefore a misunderstanding of the socialist stance at a very fundamental level.

Talpians negotiated their meaningful reality as distinctly socialist, this was not always conducted in the monolithic form advocated by state ideology.

Thus the past may be viewed as the central domain in which meaning was negotiated in the Talpian socialist village; where Bulgarian socialist ideology was established, resisted and re-negotiated through the historical, folkloric and traditional practices of the villagers. Temporal representations of the past and the relations constituted in terms of them were fundamental to the definition of Talpa as a 'new Bulgarian village' and to the villagers' characteristically socialist nature.

Revisiting the Museum and Law Courts

History, folklore and tradition were not neutral concepts, but were ethnographically constituted by the Talpians. As specifically Bulgarian notions of social time, they were three particular and different ways of representing the past in the socialist village. In the remaining parts of the conclusion I look at history and tradition, as ethnographically constituted by Westerners and anthropologists (who are in any case mostly Westerners), in relation to the Bulgarian situation described above. This discussion is carried out largely in terms of Clifford's study (1988). In so doing I move away from the ethnographic material provided in respect to Talpa and toward a more general socialist position presented by the Bulgarian state. This is justifiable given the pervasive role of the state in people's lives; the state demanded reflection on and concern with Bulgarian socialist history and Talpians showed that they had successfully gained this understanding – as witnessed in the 'model village' event. Talpians were more than just part of the socialist state structure, but had been acknowledged (by means of awards such as the 'model village' title) by the highest state bodies as understanding and indeed reflecting, in an exemplary fashion, state ideology. For this reason it appears justifiable to use the Talpian findings in order to draw out more general conclusions, enabling a broader discussion pertinent to the Bulgarian socialist state.

The Museum

In *The Predicament of Culture*, Clifford talks about the politics of collecting and exhibiting in museums as relations "...of power whereby one portion of humanity can select, value and collect the pure products of others" (1988, p.213). Through the example of the Museum of Modern Art and a number of other New York museums, he explicates a

relation between anthropologists and Western artists – who authorise the two forms of museum he discusses, namely the ethnographic and artistic museums – and the 'tribal' Other, a relation which framed the latter as a-historical. The relation is political in nature, locating and devaluing the Other as 'timeless' in respect to the West – those who are historicised. This discourse of the museum is one I use in order to establish a brief discussion between Western and Bulgarian socialist history – as two differing histories which determine similar relations between differing Others.

It is worth noting, at the outset, that there were no museums in Bulgaria (or to my knowledge in Eastern Europe) comparable with those in the West; that is, often privately owned places that house the treasures collected from other societies. This is not surprising, given the direct links associating the West to the domination of tribal peoples (Clifford 1988, p.197). Colonialism was not a process in which Eastern Europe, Bulgaria included, had any part. Instead, in Bulgaria there were two forms of museum – both state owned and run – which housed treasures from their own 'culture'. These are the folkloric museums, which have on display various costumes and implements from the traditional past; and historical museums such as the one in Talpa.

The New York museums, writes Clifford (1988, p.220), de-contextualise and abstract their pieces as representative of a whole culture: the ethnographic museum does this through relegation of the Other in a 'vanishing' past; and the artistic museum through transcending the cultural and historical context by denoting the pieces as contemporary 'art'. In this process of generalisation and abstraction, the exhibits are incorporated into a classificatory scheme that constitutes and creates a coherent order, one that makes sense in terms of Western history (Clifford 1988, p.220). This representation of the abstracted Other becomes a relation between objects; for in the historical valuation of the Other, illusionary relations are created between the displayed pieces which not only deny the particularity of their social origins, but create "...an illusion of a relation between things..." (Stewart, cited in Clifford 1988, p.220). Such a relation known as history in the West, is thus apparently non-political; established in the name of scientific knowledge (a situation similar to the folkloric museum in Bulgaria but quite different from Talpa's historical museum. See below). The temporal separation between the contemporary 'us' and timeless or vanishing 'them' in the Western museum is spatially defined, portraying the physically distant and exotic tribal Other' in respect to a present historicised 'us'. What is culturally significant about a Western notion of history is that it temporally separates the 'them' as 'past' or 'becoming-past' from our present. In addressing this particular historical relation in the West, I also wish to indicate the specific nature of a Western notion of political and traditional, both of which are bound up with a particular Western notion of history.

Western tradition I take to be the constituted Other of the historical relation and for the purposes of this work may be aligned with the primitive Other (both Fabian (1983) and Clifford (1988) give support to such an alliance). The particular relation between a Western (modern) 'us' and primitive 'them' is constructed in a specifically Western political form. I denote the different uses of tradition, politics and history in the discussion by prefacing these terms by *Western* or *Bulgarian*[3].

When considering the museum in Talpa, in relation to the ethnographic or artistic ones noted by Clifford, one outstanding feature becomes evident. The museum in Talpa constructed relations precisely in an opposite manner to that of the Western museum; it purposefully sought to specify and make evident the historical context of those things exhibited – people's roles in the foundation of the socialist state (Chapter 5). The whole purpose of the chronological presentation of the photos and the glorification of Mara Marlaueva's time in Talpa was not to sever the villagers' ties to their historical past, nor to abstract or generalise them, but to exhibit them in all their historical specificity and individuality – to define particular villagers' relations to state figures (Zhivkov) in and as the historical past. Memorialised in the museum were the relations between certain people and their previous acts in a chronological order, which was constituted as socialist history. These relations were not those belonging to a distant and irrelevant past, but held great contemporary significance. In so doing, social relations were not denied their specificity nor objectified as a relation between 'things'; rather, the museum set up particular social relations in their full historical depth. The history constructed in the Talpian museum was a relation which integrated particular historical figures both temporally – since it implicated and associated the present activities of Pashev to his past friendship with Zhivkov – and spatially; again integrating a physically present Pashev to a physically distant Zhivkov and by implication, to an even more physically and temporally distant Dimitrov and therefore ultimately to Lenin and Marx. The historical past in socialist Bulgaria served to integrate particular individuals in terms of a historical relationship – which had present relevancy and was fundamental to the very basis of the socialist system and its perceived communist future – rather than delineate them as temporally-spatially distinct. Further, unlike Western history, socialist history was an openly celebrated political relation; indeed as has been discussed in some detail (Chapter 2), political activity was central to an understanding of Bulgarian socialist history.

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3 I recognise that in referring to the West and socialism, I am not using symmetrical terminology; and that to speak of the West in respect to Eastern Europe, or capitalism in respect to the socialist state, may be more accurate. However, to designate socialist Bulgaria, 'Eastern Europe', would be to reduce it to Western terminology, while to term the West, 'capitalism', would subsume it in socialist valuation. I have therefore attempted to respect each temporal order and give preference to neither.

The rejection of the Other's past through the construction of a spatial-temporal distance in a similar way to the Western museums which Clifford discusses, was achieved in Bulgaria in the folkloric museum. It is in this latter type of museum that the denial of the traditional socialist Other was achieved. It is here that a temporal disassociation, rather than integration, was made between the past, present and future, through a spatial disjuncture – the practice of certain activities being categorised as belonging to another previous period of social organisation – in a non-political arrangement. Socialist traditional customs, as in the Western museum, were represented through an abstracted collection of objects 'from a previous and backward age'. The costumes and 'primitive' agricultural tools usually exhibited in such museums were displayed and relegated to a separate temporal and spatial framework – as folkloric. And again as in the Western museums of which Clifford writes, the relations set up in the folkloric museum were between objects which were portrayed to display a totality – the past way of life in Bulgaria before socialism. Any folkloric performance on a stage, be it on television or the *Chitalishte*, can be viewed in a similar light – as a display about the non-socialist past. The re-contextualisation of tradition into a historicised context (in Clifford's terms, an abstraction and re-classification) established relations which were distanced from contemporary present socialist life and history as folklore, creating an Other which was denied contemporaneity in space-time.

The 'model village' event (Chapter 5) was exemplary in portraying similar relations. Traditional practices were shown to have been banished from current temporal and spatial village life, as being part of another decaying time, one long gone, thrown out with the fascist and capitalist social order. Traditions were not exiled to some distant land – as Western history did to its traditional Other – but to certain socially (in)significant areas of the village domain. Thus while history was spatially located in public space, mainly the *Chitalishte*, traditions were confined to private space, – the church – and along with folklore, to the village households. Folklore occupied an intermediate position in both public and private space, being performed on theatre stages and through media such as television and radio which reached the homes of the villagers. The attempted distancing of traditions in the socialist village was achieved by relegating different pasts to separate but neighbouring locations within the state-approved spatial territory of 'village'. This 'model' was however, not indicative of Talpa on other occasions.

That which was carefully constructed in museum exhibitions or in events such as the 'model village', was often not indicative of the social world outside these locations or occasions (as was discussed in Chapter 6). Traditional activities were not always separated from contemporary Talpian life, but determined an important part of the villagers' relations, sometimes straying beyond their historically denoted boundaries of time and

space. This appears to be largely so because the traditional 'them' and historical 'us' shared the same site – the contemporary socialist Bulgarian village. Folklore, tradition and history existed together in a contentious relationship which was being continually re-negotiated in village public life; indeed the delineation between the three was not always clearly effected, in part because Talpians brought together antagonistic conceptions of time and space into the same arena. While attempting to confine the Other to a distant time-space location, socialist history was less successful than Western history; for the Other was enmeshed within its own grounds with which Socialism was being confronted daily. Thus, unlike the Western situation (see below), it was almost impossible to confine any contact with the traditional Other to the museums and folkloric celebrations.

The fact that the constituted Other in Western history was geographically less accessible than its socialist counterpart, meant that the various ways in which the West represented 'the primitive' (for example on television, in museums), was often the only means by which Westerners encountered the Other. Western history is less directly confronted by its traditional Other except on its own terms. It is therefore more exclusive in the relations it constitutes, and its portrayal of 'the primitive' more authoritative than relations delineated by socialist history. The West need not engage with – and is less threatened by – its constituted Other, because the latter is relegated to an arena not easily accessible to contemporary Westerners.

In order to know more about the extent and way in which Western history constructs a relation of authority over the Other, more study needs to be carried out on Western museums (or indeed on other Western temporal sites) especially, for example, on Western historical museums, those 'equivalent' to historical museums in Bulgaria. This would enlighten us on the other 'end' of the process – how Western history constructs a 'Western' unity. For history in the West is not only a way to set up relations to a temporally and spatially distanced Other, but is also a specific and particular way to construct a unity between those perceived to be historicised beings – Westerners. Historical museums were one way in Talpa that such relations were determined in Bulgaria. I would expect similar but not identical processes in the West. Here I can but suggest that Western history places a number of different 'cultures' with diverging geographical locations and pasts under the integrated concept of 'the West' (a process itself worthy of further study). Compare for example the physical distance between Australia, England and Northern America, and their diverging pasts and yet conceptual integrity as 'the West'. That is, Western history, in constituting the dominated Other, also places a variety of 'modern' countries in the same shared time-space framework, in a fully shared historical context, as 'the West'. As

socialist history unites all socialists, so Western history integrates in the same time and space a certain historicised people: Westerners.

Thus museums (which most often celebrate the past and always determine ideologies of time) in the West and socialist Bulgaria, both construct relations between an 'us' and 'them'. This relation is a temporalising relation which denotes the Other as spatially distanced from the 'us'. While the Other is necessary to the construction of both the Western and socialist Self, this Other-Self historical relation is constituted very differently. Although both histories involve relations of domination, they target very differing Others; the particular Other created and the particular relation between an 'us' and a 'them' differs dramatically. Or said the other way around, because the West and socialist Bulgaria had different histories, they also created different Others dependent on the nature of their history. History in Socialist Bulgarian created a relation which integrated Bulgarian communists while rejecting a relation with their own traditional past and those who advocated such a past. Bulgarian history set up a temporal relation which had as its central axis a Marxist-Leninist notion of history, a space-time framework defined and demarcated in terms of mode of production and class struggle. Historical relations determined a goal, a valued end, in part through the banishment of the Other from contemporary socialist life. And yet for this class struggle to be shown to be occurring, the traditional Other had also to remain close at hand – within the same defined territorial site, the socialist village. Traditions represented a backward form of socialist order from which the contemporary socialist state had to portray itself as evolving. Such a relationship with tradition was constituted by history largely through folklore. In this way the socialist state was seen to be progressively realising its future historical goals[4].

On the other hand, Western history 'necessitates' its Other to be peripheral to its historical social centre. Western time-space has as its central axis an expanding market economy, forever drawing in new objects to be commoditised and marketed – colonisation was an important part of this process; the Other a consequence of it. In a similar way that socialist history 'required' an immediately tangible yet distant Other, so Western history creates relations which incorporate an Other further and further away from its centre. A Western history necessitates a geographically distant Other. Western historical relations which extend to integrate its primitive Other are a necessary part of an ever expanding Western economy, indeed a precondition of such Western expansionism.

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4 The existence of the traditional Other within the boundary of socialism, suggests that the relationship between Eastern Europe and its 'colonies' (for example some African countries) cannot be viewed in a similar way to the relations between the West and its colonies. It is beyond the scope of the present study to deal with this issue further.

There are certain implications of the above which can be only briefly noted. I have suggested that the Bulgarian socialist and Western time-space arenas are differentially valued. If we accept that the time-space 'universe' is a constituted phenomenon, with any particular way it is construed holding ideological significance, then the differing space-time demarcations between the West and Bulgarian socialism are significant in a number of ways.

Spatialised time gives meaning to distribution of humanity in space (Fabian 1983, p.25) and to an ordering of this as 'culture'. The spatial and temporal distancing which designated the socialist Other, differed considerably from Western history which represented a different way to demarcate this space-time framework and therefore a different Other. Indeed, differing Others have led to diverging interests in the object of study (not to mention differing 'observers'); Western anthropologists study primitive Others, while socialist ethnographers and folklorists study their own traditional past[5]. The existence of an Other is ultimately a reference to notions of cultural identity. Two basically different conceptions of culture are suggested: studies which focus on another 'culture' or on another part of their own cultural past (respectively). This implies that both offer contrasting definitions of what constitutes 'cultural'. In Western terms, something distinct from its own time-space arena is another 'culture'; the 'cultural Other' is raised as an anthropological problematic for the West. At the same time the West establishes itself as a 'culturally unified' body. Creating a distance in time-space also determines the socialist 'cultural Other'; their Other, however, is not defined in terms of capitalist market economy boundaries, but instead on a 'territory' stipulated by stages delineated by the nature of the modes of production. The 'cultural Other' established by Bulgarian socialist history is denoted as a former stage of human evolution – a capitalist mode of production.

Different histories constituting differing Others create different foundations on which to base a conception of 'culture'; that is, from which to understand and construct 'culture'. The 'culture' worthy of study in the West is the non-Western (the capitalist's Other); and in socialism, the non-socialist. Implied are two differing bases from which to define culture as a historically (time-space) constituted process. The a-temporal Other, as either non-Western or non-socialist, is an ideological contract which refers or relates to different conceptualisations of 'culture'. The fact that Bulgarian socialism and the West study different Others and therefore suggest fundamentally different understandings of 'culture', carries with it an assumption that the temporal and spatial framework plays an important

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5 Of course there are exceptions: some Western anthropologists have focussed on the West and on anthropology itself, as some Bulgarian folklorists have travelled to study 'other cultures'.

part in creating their respective notions of 'culture'; differing temporally-spatially delineated ideologies (espoused for example in politicised relations as and between history, tradition, folklore) are an important component in any understanding of the concept. This offers support for the recent questioning of the anthropological concept of 'culture' itself, as a politically established category of Western thought, which is determined in a particular (Western) way. (Clifford (1988) raises questions about the assumptions involved in delineating anthropological notions of 'culture' and how useful or relevant this term is for anthropology).

Another aspect of these two histories is their relationship to each other. Bulgarian socialist and Western history have established quite diverging, indeed mutually conflicting histories, each of which implied temporal superiority over the other. For the West, socialism existed 'behind the iron curtain', which not only reflected the spatial separation of Western from Eastern Europe (despite their geographical proximity), but also implied the inaccessibility of socialist society, as indicated by the term the 'Eastern *Bloc*' (a closeness which has arguably protected socialism, until now, from becoming another historical casualty of Western colonialism). The socialists, from the perspective of the West, were the Other, because of their physical dislocation from capitalism and their non-participation in and therefore rejection of its market economy. Their physical separation denoted as 'the iron curtain', allowed the West to define socialism as being temporally backward in comparison to the Western economic system. The culturally significant aspect of socialist economy for the West was its use of old technology, its lack of commodities and general inefficiency in a variety of ways. In short, it was 'traditional' in the Western sense, because it did not use the advanced methods or have the economic successes exemplified by a modern Western economy. The West was the Other for socialist Bulgaria, because the former represented a social organisation which was part of the socialists' own traditional past. The Bulgarians' historical location as socialist, automatically defined their stage of development as superior to that of the 'backward' capitalists. The alignment of tradition with the more 'backward' social orders of fascism and capitalism, clearly defined the inferior place socialist history assigned to the West[6].

The West and socialist Bulgaria were thus able to incorporate each other within their own respective temporal frameworks, as 'traditional'. Both strove towards their own historical notion of progress which would display to the world their superiority over the other as their

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6 For example, we may recall a statement made by Zhivkov (already quoted in Chapter 2 in the section entitled "Commentary on a Bulgarian Marxist-Leninist Notion of History"): "...In its social development the Peoples' Republic of Bulgaria together with the other socialist countries has surpassed, by a whole historical epoch, the capitalist states" (1985a, p.101).

Other. Their conflicting histories claimed respective authority and superiority; socialist history put capitalism in a different time and space dimension from itself and *vice versa.* The two histories were thus a temporal critique of each other, a situation which now appears to be rapidly changing with the apparent collapse of the Bulgarian socialist state. In the words of Fabian (who wrote in relation to the West (1988, p.35)), the temporal fortress in Bulgaria – and indeed the rest of Eastern Europe and Russia – is being crushed and invaded by the time of its capitalist (and probably traditional) Other. Non-coincidently, with the apparent collapse of the Marxist-Leninist state, it has become the centre of interest and attention by those who in the past have been at the frontier of Western colonisation – for example, anthropologists, who have suddenly discovered a whole new 'unexplored' and 'exotic' area for study.

However, Western history also no longer hangs onto the monopolistic authority it appeared to have once held. The apparently dominant Western history which gives the Others' past an a-historical voice in the public arena, is now being questioned. Thus, as Clifford notes (1988, p.247), the place of objects in museums is presently being subjected to contention; the Other is challenging Western history. For example, the Zuni prevented the loan of their war god to an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (Clifford 1988, p.209) and a show visiting New York from New Zealand established that the works exhibited were on loan not only from particular New Zealand museums but also with the consent of the Maori people (Clifford 1988, p.209). Some tribes are now establishing their own museums, calling for the repatriation of their own collections (Clifford 1988, p.248). The Western museum is no longer an uncontested portrayal of the Other. The relation to the Other is changing, at least in areas where the West has been forced to confront the Other in its own space and time framework.

In this section I have addressed a question posed by Fabian (1983, p.155) in his concluding remarks. He asks "How is the Other construed in the anthropological discourse generated in societies not part of the West-and-the Rest complex?" and again (1983, p.156), "Does the routinized world revolution construe a different Other from the capitalist world market?." In reading these questions to be centred on an interest in the Bulgarian socialist Other, I have tried to show how the Other is constituted ideologically through spatialised time and how this differs in many respects from the Western Other (as identified by Fabian). But I have also suggested that a re-focussing of these questions would be equally beneficial; to pay greater attention to those who 'possess' history rather than simply on the

construction of the Western (or socialist) Other[7]. This is a task which anthropologists have recently taken on. For in identifying Western history as being of a politicised nature (Fabian) closely bound to political processes, questions are also arising as to the legitimate and objective position history holds in the West as solely representative of 'the past', rather than being one interpretation of it.

...and the Law Courts.

Clifford (1988) questioned the legitimacy of Western history in one of his chapters in *The Predicament of Culture*, entitled 'Identity in Mashpee'[8]. The subject of discussion was the trial set to establish the presence or absence of a 'tribal' identity of the Mashpee Indians (a ruling which would have implications for future land claim actions). This trial Clifford views as part of the continuing struggle between native Indians and Americans, part of an ongoing process of negotiations between them which had begun some 300 years earlier. It is particularly relevant to my purposes because the conflicting interests were expressed as a battle between two interpretations of the past conducted in the Western legal system. Clifford takes us through the case; the contrasting histories under contention between the Western, historical documentary evidence presented by the defence and the more oral based nature of the plaintiffs' submission based on the Mashpee Indians' past. The structure of the legal system – using highly valued documentary 'evidence', a necessary aspect of Western history – and the fact that the Indians did not fit into the standard Western conceptions of what a 'traditional' Indian should be (how can one be a businessman and also a 'real' Indian?), worked against the Indians, who lost the case.

In labelling the Indians' interpretation of the past a history, Clifford confronts the a-historical and de-temporalising effects of Western terms used by anthropologists. It is an effective tool used by Clifford to remind us that the Indians have changed; they do not belong to a mythic past, nor can they be viewed as living a 'timeless' or 'traditional' existence. Further, in describing the Indian tribal past as a history, Clifford indicates the

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7 Said expresses a similar concern and need for an investigation of the West and the location of anthropologists as part of this colonising power structure. Indeed as he says, "...the point is that anthropological representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented" (1989, p.224). He correctly reminds us that to investigate such matters has not only interpretive but political importance as well (Said 1989, p.217).

8 I use this as the most lengthy study to date. An article by Appadurai (1981) does however also espouse a similar view of multiple and politicised pasts. He is concerned with the legitimacy of particular pasts debated by state officials, the Tenkalai Brahmins and non-Brahmin worshippers in a South Indian temple.

importance of the event as a political process – as a contest between oral and literate forms of knowledge, between the Indian oral tradition and white American history, respectively. The latter, as Clifford shows, weighed against the Indian's version of the past. In fact the whole structure of the event, the preference of archival material to oral sources (Clifford 1988, p.339), the construction of both histories as coherent and sequential documentary records (Clifford 1988, p.302), meant that due recognition could not be given to the Indians' interpretation, on their own terms. Rather the sharing of the same space-time arena by the two conflicting pasts, which occurred in the court, was a meeting carried out very much within the framework of Western history. The case was a re-constitution of traditional Indian past into a past which Western history could seize for its own purposes.

The court process may be better understood if we compare the event as parallel to the position held by folklore in socialist Bulgaria. As the Bulgarian state appropriated traditions and gave them present relevancy as folklore, so the court room appears to have been at the centre of a similar Western transformational process, in re-defining the present relevancy of Indian tradition. This comparison is supported by Clifford's own references to the event as a process which included the textualising of oral court testimony through court scribes, as a 'theatre of dramatic gestures' (1988, p.328) enacted in a law court which reflected a 'logic of literacy of the historical archive' (1988, p.329). All these features – the textualisation of tradition, the event as a performance and the historical context – are characteristics reminiscent of a Bulgarian folkloric construction of the past. The meeting of Western history and its traditional Other in a state-determined context (the law courts) created a third notion of Western social time; one in which traditional Indian interpretations of the past were re-constructed, (re-contextualised we could say). This represented a revival and re-invention of tribal identity (Clifford 1988, p.336) within a historically determined context. In other words, the 'performance' in the law courts was a Western historical means of appropriating another's traditional past. This Western history provided the epistemological framework within which Indian traditions were understood and in Clifford's words, "...their discourse ... compromised" (1988, pp.336-7).

The comparison with folklore becomes all the more significant because of what Clifford does not note in any explicit detail – the non-political character attributed to the event through its location in the law courts. The fact that the conflict between the two histories was located in the structured procedure of the law courts, viewed as an unbiased judicial institution, attributed to the event a non-political nature. It also implied that the outcome of the case would be a decision both non-political and also just. As in the Bulgarian situation, where folklore assumed a non-political character and yet enabled the authority of one interpretation of the past over the other, so the non-political nature of the court case

held a similar significance. Its designation as a non-political event through its scene of action – the law courts – was a means by which Western history was able to dominate the traditional Indian one, allowing limited voice to another past only in terms and under the control of Western legalised history.

Thus it is not only important to recognise – as did Clifford – the political nature of the event but also to explicate the fact that this was disguised as a non-political process (which Clifford did not recognise). The meeting of American history and its Indian traditional Other in the law courts, was both a way in which Indian tradition was subjected to a Western historical framework and also a means by which the procedure was attributed a non-political significance. The non-political nature of the event was part of the process whereby the Other was heard only in order to be dominated. Indeed the court had the authority to adjudicate a battle between 'us' and 'them' largely because it was a location designated for the 'fair' carrying out of (Western) justice. In this meeting between Western history and its traditional Other within a Western structured procedure, non-politicalness became a mask under which 'factuality' and 'fairness' thrived. (I note the importance of the non-political character of the event not so much to criticise Clifford's work as much as to question other recent anthropological studies – such as those by Sahlins and Thomas, discussed in the Introduction – which, while sensitive to the importance of history, invalidate their analysis by their sterile and non-political incorporation of Western history. See next section).

If the Mashpee trial was the contemporaneous playing out of two alternate pasts, this coevalness (Fabian's term for the intersubjective sharing of time and space) resulted in the denial of the Indians' traditional past through its (re-con)textualisation, through its conversion into a past which was subsumed under historical goals. The denial of the Indians' traditional past could happen only at a location where historical goals were the structuring force of the proceedings, as they were in the law courts. This situation was further strengthened by the apparent non-political location of the event – it represented the setting up of a coevalness through acknowledging the Other's contemporaneity, which took on the appearance of a just process through being enacted in court. Even though the Indians' past was allowed to enter into "the dialectics of the present" (Fabian 1983, p.153), this was not an automatic means for giving any greater acknowledgment or voice to their version. (As Clifford notes, they lost the case).

The court case and Bulgarian folklore were both contemporary meetings of 'us' and 'them' – history and tradition – which set up a restricted coevalness resulting in a de-valuation and rejection of the Other through their respective histories. In Talpa, tradition was

officially given 'a voice', only by being 'heard' as folklore; that is, as a re-contextualisation of the traditional past under the authority of the state. Similarly the court trial – the meeting in the same time-space arena of two conflicting pasts – was an enactment strictly determined by the dominating Western history which structured the 'dialogue'. This I believe suggests an affirmative answer to the question raised by Fabian (1983, p.154) when he considers the possibility, "Is not the theory of coevalness...a program for ultimate temporal absorption of the Other, just the kind of theory needed to make sense of present history as a 'world-system', totally dominated by monopoly – and state-capitalism?" On various occasions, such as in both the case of folklore in Bulgaria and the law courts in the West, the coevalness established was of a limited nature, an opportunity for socialist and Western histories to dominate their respective Other. When the Other was met on the same ground, in the same time and a discourse established, the result was essentially a performance where the Other was subsumed in historical goals – a process all the more insidious because of its apparently non-political appearance, which was itself an important pre-condition to allowing the continued domination of the Other.

Further, as Fabian astutely notes, the refusal of coevalness in some situations may be considered an act of liberation. ("Are there criteria by which to distinguish denial of coevalness as a condition of domination from refusal of coevalness as an act of liberation?" (1983, p.154)). I believe that if, as in the case of socialist history, coevalness becomes an important condition of the temporal ideology (of history), then coevalness can indeed become a 'condition of domination'. The formalised meeting of tradition and history in the form of folklore was a means of domination because of the importance of the role of the state in determining folklore. Clifford's law court case is another example of the meeting of tradition and history in Western historical terms. In fact any occasion which encouraged the meeting of the two conflicting pasts on the terms of one (usually it seems to be on the terms of a Western or socialist history) can lead to a relationship of domination. Under such circumstances, non-coevalness becomes an expression of resistance. It certainly seems to have been so for those opposed or simply disinterested in socialist history (and folklore). By refusing to engage in the space-time framework of socialist historical relations, traditional practices remained a forceful critique. Clifford suggests a similar possible line of argument as to why the Mashpee Indians had little recorded involvement in white USA history up to the point of the court case; non-participation in Western history was one avenue of maintaining their distinct identity.

But it need not be so. Socialist history, for all its attempts to dominate, to 'unify', succeeded instead in making the past a focal point of contention. Outside the museum, or away from the state supported folkloric performances, relations which constituted

conflicting pasts did meet in a contemporary arena and they were not always determined by history. The historical past was under continual debate and negotiation (as was discussed in Chapter 6). Nor was the court case a conclusion or final victory in the overall monopolisation of Western history over the Indian past, merely the first battle in a planned series, in a battle field where the Indians need not confine themselves to the legal system.

In a more general sense, history – whether Bulgarian or Western – becomes the valid interpretation of the past as long as it is viewed as analogous to 'the factual past', for then we (anthropologists) become blind to it as a central site for struggle; blind to the relations that constitute such a past, by whom they are constituted, and under what circumstances – factors which are instrumental in the determination of the engagement. Instead, history must be recognised for what it is – an ethnographic concept, a category of Western/socialist thought, not an object of it (here I am borrowing Fabian's words, when he spoke in a similar way about 'the primitive' (1983, p.18)). History is a means by which the Other is constituted in a particular – Western or Bulgarian socialist – (a-)temporal, and therefore ideological, relation to an 'us'. If anthropologists become receptive to Western history not as *the* valid, but as *a* valid interpretation, this opens up the possibility to consider rather than reject other constructions of the past which should be appreciated as different but equally worthy of consideration. Indeed, other pasts must be acknowledged on their own terms, in order that we do not risk playing down the importance of history as a means to the domination of the Other (even, if not especially, on occasions when the Other is apparently being given a voice in our own Western history).

Beyond the Musuem and Law Courts.

The consideration of alternate pasts only in terms of a Bulgarian socialist or Western historical framework was, I suggested, fundamental in understanding Bulgarian folklore, the court case proceedings and indeed the relations set up in the Western or Bulgarian museum. This does not have only political and ideological implications for the respective 'cultures', but is also fundamental in revealing a problem still existent in many recent (Western) anthropological ethnographies. Instead of denying history to the Other by the presentation of their ethnographic subjects as a-temporal – the conventional anthropological problem – anthropologists now appear to be imposing Western history onto the Other, which essentially achieves a similar result. The greater sensitivity developed in recognising a need to incorporate history within their studies, has not necessarily halted the ideological construction of a relationship between 'us' and 'them' in our favour. Indeed the inclusion of (Western) history has merely made possible the

continued, and more sophisticated, devaluation of the Other by placing them within the terms and control of our own past. We may briefly refer to the previous two sections in order to indicate how this is achieved.

The Mashpee trial presented a confrontation of the Indian traditional past with a Western, historical one. This confrontation, in being re-negotiated through the American legal system, considered the position of the Indian past only in a reconstituted form; that is, as re-contextualised within a historical framework. In such a way the Other's past was located in terms of Western history, rather than Western history being referred to the terms of the Other. This I believe is paradigmatic of some anthropological works which present a historicised Other by subsuming the latter in a Western – historical – notion of the past. Sahlins, I suggested, illustrates one such case (Introduction and Chapter 6). His presentation of history as a theoretical abstraction (or even a common-sensical term) to which any understanding of the Hawaiian past was inevitably reduced, gave precedence to a Western notion of history. He therefore does not give equal voice to the Other's past, which instead is 'heard' in terms of Western history.

If Sahlins serves as exemplary of one way in which the Other is being 'historicised', then Thomas provides another. While calling for the consideration of the Other in a fully historical context, he advocates a conception of history as an objective, absolute phenomenon. His faith in the use of Western history and archaeology as a means of including a temporal dimension to anthropological studies, makes evident the basis of his 'scientific' approach. It is a perspective which upholds Western history as the correct view while subsuming alternate pasts in it. In treating history in such a manner, Thomas denies voice to any other interpretation of the past as having legitimate authority. The abstraction of history and its status as a factual and objective entity in Thomas' work is reminiscent, non-coincidently, of the abstracting and generalising processes Clifford identified to be a facet of Western museums.

Thus, whether ethnographies espouse history as an absolute and factual entity (Thomas) or as some theoretical and unquestioned concept which serves as the measuring standard from which the Other is investigated (Sahlins), they represent an unsatisfactory means of including history in anthropological studies; one which does not recognise the ideological dimension of temporal representations and which by giving ultimate dominance to a history as either theoretically or factually significant, rejects the possibility of

understanding the past as a site of struggle for the negotiation of meaning[9]. In these works, history becomes a means towards 'temporal absorption', where coevalness between 'us' and 'them' is constituted within a restricted framework which reproduces the 'us'-'them' dichotomy in our favour. Such incorporations of Western history do not guarantee a treatment of the Other in a fully temporalised context, free from processes which reproduce relations of domination. In these instances history itself, as a temporal ideological construct, must be included in Fabian's (1983) and after him Marcus and Fischer's (1986) list of anthropological terms (for example, 'savage' and 'primitive') which effectively commit the Other to an a-temporal zone. For this kind of history refers to an ideological temporal framework which reinforces anthropological authority in respect to the Other. Indeed in many respects the use of the term 'history' is more insidious than other 'distancing devices' (Fabian 1983, pp.29-31), because it is still a pervasive and taken-for-granted term in anthropological discourse. The inclusion of history in anthropological studies is thus not necessarily a guaranteed means of overcoming the relations of domination thought to occur only if history is ignored. There is a fine line between presenting for contention our own Western history through explicating the past of the Other, and explicating another's past as a means of exercising authority over the Other by writing them into our own Western history. But the political consequences and distance between the two are vast.

It is no coincidence that with the recent interest of anthropologists as to how they establish their authoritative position over the Other, that a corresponding interest has grown in history. More specifically, discussions on the temporal paradox in anthropology between the contemporaneity of field research – between the anthropologist and her/his object of study – and the distance created, temporal and spatial, in the ethnographic account (Fabian 1983; Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.96; also noted by Clifford 1988, p.39) has led to a renewed focus on the history of ethnography as well as history in ethnography.

As part of the attempt to overcome the problem of ethnographic authority over an a-historical Other, several recent writers have called for the consideration of the Other's past.

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9 Any ethnography which applies a method of 'conventional social-historical narrative' (Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.90) along similar lines to a historian, is also problematic. Indeed the problem with a historical approach is clearly emphasised in Clifford's (1988) court case – the historian's evidence (as a crucial part of the defence's argument) was founded on 'factual', historical records. For the same reasons I am also cautious of 'microview world system perspectives' such as Wallerstein's (1974), although this is not to imply that I reject the worthiness of combining small scale research (ethnography) with larger world historical trends (in the way it is advocated by Marcus and Fischer (1986). See also Marcus in Clifford and Marcus (1986, p.165)). However I am not sure that delineating the problem in such terms is conductive to finding a solution. Such approaches may easily become ways to incorporate the Others' pasts in terms of a (Western) historical framework.

Marcus and Fischer write that "Ethnography...must be able to capture most accurately the historic context of its subjects..." (1986, p.39). Clifford suggests that there are other histories which need to be told (as in the Mashpee trial); and again in Clifford and Marcus he suggests we must open "...ourselves to different histories" (1986, p.119). The deficiency as he describes it, is that "...there is an enormous gap in all histories of fieldwork: the indigeneous 'side' of the story..."(1986, p.56). While Clifford, amongst others, uses the term history in a variety of ways,[10] he does provide, I believe, a more satisfying way of dealing with the problem. In recognising the existence of more than one history – in my terms, acknowledging a variety of social constructions of the past – history as a Western way of knowing the past is both radicalised and critiqued. (Indeed Clifford suggests the total re-valuation of our history, so that it is "...more complex, less linear and teleological" (1988, p.344)[11].

Once it is recognised that there are different ways of experiencing, understanding and constituting the past and that Western history is but one approach, then history itself loses its authority as an absolute objective and unquestionable phenomenon. To advocate history not as an objective or factual past, but as a central site of contention in the constitution of social processes, is what I understand Clifford refers to as post-modern fragmentation: "...the sense that history is composed of local narrative" (Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.24). This view opens up the possibility to consider the past as a site of struggle, that is, a politicised arena set up by the contestation of meanings. It is a view fundamental to the present work, which holds as its central interest the ideological uses of the past in the socialist state.

Why history as a particular way of interpreting the past should hold greatest authority in both the West and socialism is an interesting question which I can only raise at this point. I believe that the power of history as a particular realisation of the past may be bound to

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10 This is perhaps in keeping with the very nature of post-modernist views, or it reflects a common weakness in anthropology (see Introduction). For example, Clifford equates history with time (1988, p.236 and Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.111), considers there to be more than one version and therefore dispels the 'factuality' of history (1988, p.245). Other associations of history are with change and movement (Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.107, 97 and Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.6); history as context (Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.18, p.110 & p.120); and history as belonging to the past that is, not of the present (Clifford, in Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.102, Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.111). Further, time is often portrayed as subsumed under history, the latter being seen as even more objective and universal than time itself (Thompson 1974, p.466; Bloch 1977, p.290; Reid 1972, p.465).

11 Again Clifford in Clifford and Marcus, asks "What would it require...to associate the inventive, resilient, enormously varied societies of Melanesia with the cultural *future* of the planet?" (1986, p.115); and in so doing he is fundamentally questioning our Western notions of history.

the act of writing (textualisation). If this is so, it leads in turn to further questions as to the ideological significance of writing in socialist Bulgaria and the West; and why writing is so important in attributing authority. This is a direction of research which is being followed in current literature (see Rabinow 1985; Clifford 1988; Clifford, Tyler and Asad, in Clifford and Marcus 1986[12]). As Clifford notes, "The development of ethnographic science cannot ultimately be understood in isolation from more general political-epistemological debates about writing and representation of otherness" (Clifford 1988, p.24). The writing process itself, as inherently temporal, is also worthy of consideration as part of the authority of writing. Fabian considers 'fact' as that which is "...inevitably past in relation to acts of recording..." (1983 p.73); see also Marcus and Fischer 1986, p.67 and Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.116 and p.118). This inevitably returns us to the issue of temporality. Because ethnography is closely bound with textualising the past, so the past must continue to be the central issue demanding anthropological concern and attention at a variety of levels (during the conducting of fieldwork and the following writing up of the account).

With anthropologists' increasing sensitivity to the manner in which they have been involved in the reproduction of Western history through their portrayal of the a-temporal Other, it now seems appropriate to remind ourselves that history is exactly this: *his* (as opposed to her and a *his* which has as its source a colonising society) and *story* (that is, non-factual or at least one out of a number of possible interpretations, but one which nevertheless holds the dominant and legitimate position in the West and in the socialist state)[13]. This is to say that *his-story* must be considered as an ideological, temporal construct. It was not explicitly reflected upon in such terms by Talpians. However, the importance of the historical past and its political involvement with socialist meaning was hardly new to village socialist figures versed in Zhivkov's Marxist-Leninist history. Indeed the relatively sophisticated (in respect to Western) appreciation of the close relation between the historical past and its political significance in the Bulgarian socialist state, was implied in many of Zhivkov's writings: evident when he wrote "...no communist nation can

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12 Clifford talks about ethnography as a movement from oral to written media being one source of the particular authority held by ethnographers (Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, pp.115-116); also see Clifford 1988, p.39). He suggests means of overcoming ethnographic authority through discursive paradigms of dialogue and polyphony (Clifford 1988, p.41). Tyler views writing as an ideology of power (Tyler, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, pp.122-140) and Asad writes of the inequalities in power between languages and the entry of power in processes of 'cultural translation' (Asad, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.160), including the Western power of inscription.

13 Which should appeal to Clifford's notion of ethnography as 'allegory' (Clifford, in Clifford and Marcus 1986, p.98).

be formed without a history" (1974, p.41; also cited in 1969, p.48 and 1985b, p.36). Again, and of even more pointed interest to anthropologists – because history is explicitly associated with the construction of social(ist) meaning – Zhivkov has stated that "...One must know well Bulgaria's history and the history of our cultural development in order to be able to fully understand the meaning of the experiment which we are carrying out" (1986a, p.149).

Epilogue

The changes which have occurred in Bulgaria since I left the field seem to demand some commentary. Below, an attempt is made to convey an understanding of the events of the past 2-3 years in terms of the analysis put forward in the thesis. Needless to say, much remains at a speculative level given that the primary source of data on which I depend comprises newspaper articles and some personal communications.

On the 10th November, 1989 Zhivkov was ousted from power by members of his own Party. It was a move which surprised foreign observers, in view of the relatively stable and strong hold Zhivkov had had over the Party and government in the 35 year period of his leadership. The Guardian provides perhaps the most likely explanation for this event, arguing that while Bulgaria, of all Eastern European countries, had always maintained the strongest and closest ties with Russia, Zhikvov had apparently never felt comfortable with Gorbachev and had followed his reforms largely in rhetoric only (The Guardian, 1989a). Indeed, apart from increasingly numerous references to *preustroistvo* at village meetings, on television and in newspapers, there was little evidence of changes in Talpa during my stay, when the earliest stages of the restructuring program were supposedly underway. The growing dissension between those who advocated reforms in conformity with Russia and the rest of Eastern Europe and the 'hardline' Communists, was alleviated by the expulsion of Zhivkov. Under the leadership of the younger and more liberal communist leader Mladenov, who was received warmly by the USSR, the Bulgarian government set about implementing a number of reforms.

With the removal of Zhivkov from the political arena, former colleagues publicly criticised his luxurious lifestyle, exposing him as having used public funds to live in a lavish manner (The Australian 1989a, 1989b). An anti-fascist fighter and member of the National Assembly was quoted as saying, "This tsar whom we have made into a hero of the Bulgarian People's Republic and a Hero of Socialist Labour, owned more palaces than the Bulgarian tsars" (The Guardian 1989b). In a photograph taken at a rally after Zhivkov's demise, protesters held banners depicting him behind bars, while another had modified his picture to make him look like Adolf Hitler (The Advertiser 1989). After months of delay, he was finally charged in 1991 with the embezzlement of Aust.$1.5 million. (The Age (1991), a figure inflated in The Advertiser (1991), to Aust.$5.12 million). Since Bulgarian

law did not permit those over 80 years old to be goaled, it was not expected that the 79 year old Zhivkov would face imprisonment or indeed that the matter would be pursued after the formality of being charged was carried out. Both the charges laid against Zhivkov and the negative way in which he was depicted at the rally portrayed some Bulgarians' view of his unworthiness to rule. This was clearly expressed by his being equated to the tsars, which associated him with Bulgaria's fascist past. Zhivkov now embodied not the highest of communist values, but the very lowest of fascist ones. He was no longer the central figure in the production of state ideology, but re-located in a position of extreme distance from it. His characterisation as Hitler reflected the irony of his position, being portrayed as the fascist enemy, the enemy against whom in the 1940's Zhivkov had actively fought and against whom he had constructed his career as a historical leader. (Anti-communist demonstrators in Moscow and Leningrad were also reported to have carried slogans which equated communist rule to fascism).

A similar inversion of values was publicly expressed about the man on whom Zhivkov had based his political career – Dimitrov. The dethronement of Dimitrov as the revered father of Bulgarian Communism, was evident in a number of negative ways in which he was portrayed by Bulgarians. His demise was reflected in stories which circulated about how he had been close to Stalin, so much so that he had visited him on a weekly basis. (Personal Communication from Kalina Dimova, Sliven 1990). Such stories, while holding little foundation in fact – it would have been impossible for anyone in the 1940's to travel weekly from Bulgaria to the USSR – did effectively reverse the position of Dimitrov and therefore of his followers, who had established their careers on the basis of a shared history. Dimitrov was now re-aligned to Stalin – a Communist figure who had been rejected by the Communist Party itself, as the very antipathy of communism because of his 'grave crimes against humanity'. The foundation of Zhivkov's legitimate relation in history in terms of his shared past with Dimitrov was destroyed with the removal from the mausoleum and cremation of Dimitrov's body in July 1990. As the founder of the socialist state in 1944, the destruction of his body also symbolised the downfall of socialism in Bulgaria.

These events, while disastrous for the individual political careers, maintained the dominance of history and the reproduction of its values. The re-location of Zhivkov was carried out in terms of historical logic; he was aligned with the fascists because he did not act within the values expected of a communist. The demoting of Zhivkov occurred through his reassessment in terms of history, to a position of extreme distance from it. Further, he was ousted not from outside the Party, but by those within it, who held and maintained the interests of a more general historical past. Mladenov was a relatively

young man, presumably with no intimate relationship to a political history pivoted around the activities of World War II. That he was opposed to Zhivkov and the politicised history espoused by him, is evidenced by the fact that, having won the position of leading the Party, Mladenov immediately removed other political historical figures from the powerful positions they held (a move, no doubt, also designed to secure his own newly found power base). These were elderly colleagues of Zhivkov who had also figured prominently in events leading to the advent of the socialist state in 1944. In so doing, Mladenov uprooted the main figures considered to be working in a manner against the new socialist order. It was a situation where youthful Party figures with no interest in World War II events, were successful in overthrowing elderly political figures. (The location of Mladenov as a youthful Party member with no politically active role in 1944 defined also his location to Marxist-Leninist history as similar to that of the Talpian cultural figures discussed in Chapter 6. His attainment of power represented a victory which Petrova, Boteva and Tzela were not able to effect in the village after the Chitalishte Centennial event). The act was viewed as a means of relieving power from all those who were seen to have become corrupt, while those who were viewed as upholding the real values of communism remained. As one BSP member said to a reporter at their victory celebrations after the elections held in June 1990 (see below), "...all true communists are here" (The Australian 1990d), a direct reference to the nature of the 'purified' and reformed Party now controlled by 'true communists' (a term discussed in Chapter 2). Marxist-Leninist history was not questioned, just the exclusive politicised history upheld by the previously dominant political leaders. 'True Communists' was no longer a term applicable to the politically significant figures of 1944, but to Party reformers. Political figures' rights to interpret and dominate history were clearly lost. As in the case of the Chitalishte Centennial celebration, the significance of history was not overturned, although the significance of a politicised-history had been rejected.

As promised by the Communist reformists, elections were held in June 1990, the first 'democratic' elections, it was reported, for 40 years ('democracy' having become a term over which capitalism seems to have achieved a monopoly, or so it appears from the way it is used by Western media). The Communist Party, renamed the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), was returned with a small majority, winning over the main coalition – a number of parties who called themselves the 'Union of Democratic Forces', that is the UDF. The elections were deemed by international observers to be fair, despite accusations to the contrary by some members of the opposition. This made Bulgaria the first and only Eastern European country at that time to have elected a former Communist Party back to power. The BSP were re-elected, it was reported, on the basis of their strong support in the

rural areas. Conversely the opposition, the UDF, had majority support in the towns – the capital of Sofia being the opposition's stronghold (The Australian 1990a, 1990b).

The return of the BSP to power suggests that a Marxist-Leninist history was maintained, although the political dimension of history was no longer the dominating force. While history was still upheld, those who created history (Zhivkov and Dimitrov) were 'officially' marginalised, associated with the enemies of history. Historical logic was used against the very figures who had been central to socialist history; their legitimate role in history was questioned and re-defined in the light of an alternative Marxist-Leninist view of history. The change from a political to cultural emphasis on history was a victory for history, in the sense that the making and breaking of historical figures was a 'normative' part of the socialist system which refined history but did not appear to threaten it.

The victory of the BSP indicated the possibility of continued dominance of a state ideology founded on Marxist-Leninist history; however there were also signs of its weakening. That is, its very relevancy was under question as appropriate to the future development of the Bulgarian state. In holding elections, the Party had automatically re-thought its relation to history and relinquished its monopoly, giving an opportunity for some other Party to lead. When victory was returned to the BSP, but it was a victory which came by way of the strong pro-communist rural villagers' support. Conversely, the UDF held the support of the towns. This alliance between the BSP and villagers versus the UDF and towns, was not only a refinement of history but its re-valuation involving a reassessment of the role of the Party. For Communists were associated with the very people who represented, in their own terms, the more backward class. Those viewed as modern and progressive – the working class in the towns – became meaningfully aligned with the UDF. This apparent inversion of the town/village metaphor in historical class relations (Chapter 5), was also expressed as a distinction between city youth and village elderly. Indeed a BSP rally (numbering over 100 000 people) was reportedly comprised largely of those over the age of 60 years (The Advertiser 1990). The inversion which seems to have occurred in the course of introducing democratic elections, displayed the re-valuation of history as the Party was itself now aligned to the traditional past, represented by the villagers and cooperative farmers while those who opposed history had the support of the working class town inhabitants.

In short, while history continued to hold a prominent position in the Bulgarian state, its re-valued location provided the potential for its demise. For in the alignment of historical figures with fascism, socialist history took on a different significance, being defined in terms of its own temporal past. The fall of socialist history from its fundamental position

in the Bulgarian state became imminent; history was falling victim to its own logic, apparently becoming an ideology of the past as much as an ideology about the past, outdated in terms of its own metaphors and values.

It was a short lived victory for the BSP, their rule lasting only a few months due to the uncompromising role of the UDF. Unsurprising perhaps, given that the opposition was headed by an ex-political prisoner, a figure located in a-historical terms in respect to the socialist state. Such a profile was indeed a vital and successful part of his media image. Despite repeated attempts by the BSP to form a consensus government and to win the favour of the UDF, the opposition refused all moves to cooperate. The unworkable situation which resulted, created by a need to have a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly to pass various reforms, including the new constitution, eventually resulted in the forced resignation of the BSP. An interim caretaker government, led by the head of the Fatherland Front and seen as neutral by both the UDF and BSP, assumed government (The Australian, 1990c). This mass organisation, it may be remembered, was set up in the 1940's by Dimitrov. At that time it aligned all political parties in the fight against fascist dictatorship. It was also the mass organisation to which cultural historical figures such as Boteva, were most closely aligned.

The caretaker government in many ways exemplified the position of history as 'hanging' in the balance; between the BSP (cultural figures) who espoused a revitalised Marxist-Leninist history and the UDF (a-historical figures) whose policies turned the country away from its socialist past and toward a dependency on the West (including presumably the adoption of a Western understanding of history). At elections held in March 1991, the UDF gained a majority, but charges were levelled against some of the successful candidates that they had been too close to Communist activities. Yet another election was held in October 1991, resulting in a clear but small majority for the UDF, which was led by Filip Dimitrov. Installed were young leaders having no associations with the socialist historical past. Again, as in the previous elections, a deep-seated polarity between the villagers and town inhabitants emerged, with the UDF victory being summarised as 'Sofia's choice' (Dawn (*Zora*) 1991). Since late 1991 the UDF has begun its reform program including in early 1992 the dismantling of the agricultural cooperatives and the returning of land to its pre-1944 owners (which in the case of Talpa, may give control over Talpian lands to approximately ten village households). The contentiousness of history has continued, although the links to socialist history have apparently been weakened if not broken. The date of 10 November 1989 heralded another era in Bulgarian history. This date – 1989 – in future years may well become as significant to the new ex-socialist state as 1944 was to the Communists.

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