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**Economic development under socialism: A Bulgarian village on
the eve of transition**

Creed, Gerald Wayne, Ph.D.
City University of New York, 1992

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER SOCIALISM:
A BULGARIAN VILLAGE ON THE EVE OF TRANSITION**

by
GERALD WAYNE CREED

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York.**

1992

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PREFACE

WHY EASTERN EUROPE?

It is telling that after studying eastern Europe for several years, and living in Bulgaria for nearly two years, the most common question I am asked as an anthropological specialist on the region has little to do with the area itself. Instead, people are more curious about my personal reasons for choosing such a specialization. My refutation of their basic assumption--that I have ancestral roots in the region--seems to render my choice completely enigmatic.

Meanwhile, my colleagues who risked their lives to do fieldwork in New Guinea are rarely asked such questions. Friends who went to Africa are never questioned about their motives, and Latin America is apparently of such innate interest to all anthropologists that no explanation is required from the innumerable ethnographers working there. The contrast with eastern Europe attests not simply to the limited history of anthropological work in the area, but to our inability to even conceive of eastern Europe as an anthropological subject.

In Chapter One I suggest some reasons for this conceptual handicap. In the meantime, however, I will simply relent and lay out the bases of my own aberrant attraction to eastern Europe. In fact, my fascination

with the area follows from a drive that is at the very heart of anthropology--a curiosity about the "other." Of course, how the "other" is constructed or defined is both a personal and historical development. Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, the ultimate and seemingly enduring "other" for me was that defined by the other major political and economic system in the world--communism. One could scarcely find a more clear-cut ideological division into "us" and "them." Perhaps I was naive and gullible to even accept this opposition. If so, I am redeemed by the following analysis, which, ironically, is organized around a thesis questioning the very opposition between capitalism and socialism which originally seduced me. My overriding hope is that it will contribute to redressing the epistemological avoidance of an area that has enormous potential to expand anthropological understanding, thereby making such prefaces unnecessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were times in the long process of producing this dissertation when the only thing that kept me going was the prospect of writing these acknowledgements. Having already incurred extensive personal debts I could think of no other forum where I might formally discharge them. Now, having gotten to this point, I am afraid I will not thank everyone who deserves it, nor succeed in conveying the depth of gratitude I feel. Suffice it to say that more people have contributed in more ways than I can touch upon here.

As a believer in the centrality of economic factors it is appropriate for me to start with the organizations that financed various portions of this project. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) provided a two-year fellowship which allowed me to develop an interdisciplinary expertise on eastern Europe before embarking upon field research. They subsequently funded a large portion of my fieldwork in Bulgaria as well. Additional research grants were provided by the United States Department of Education Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, the National Science Foundation, and the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Funds to help in the writing of the dissertation were provided by the David Spitz Dissertation Award from the Graduate School of The City University of New York (CUNY).

My intellectual debts start with my mother. Never going beyond high school, she has as deep a respect for the value of knowledge as anyone I know. She tried to instill the same in me by telling me often that "what you learn can never be taken away from you." During the last decade of my graduate studies she probably started to think she had created a monster in this regard, but she never intimated such and never questioned the rationality of my goal, dire economic predictions notwithstanding.

The intellectual curiosity she inspired was captured for anthropology by professors at Duke University, where I was an undergraduate. The most influential were Patricia Pessar, Virginia Dominguez and Ernestine Friedl. The latter also encouraged me to pursue graduate study at CUNY, for which I am particularly grateful. At CUNY I was lucky to work with a distinguished and varied group of scholars. Professors May Ebihara, Susan Lees, Sydel Silverman and Eric Wolf have all influenced my intellectual perspective and interests in significant ways. They are each exemplars of the committed scholar and teacher--I thank them for their inspiration, instruction, support, and yes, even friendship.

Beyond CUNY I have been fortunate to have guidance on things eastern European from Professor Katherine Verdery of The Johns Hopkins University. I thank her for taking an interest in an unfocused graduate student and helping to remedy that situation. Her contributions were capped by serving as the external reader of this dissertation, for

which I am especially grateful. I was lucky to spend a year learning Bulgarian at Ohio State University under the instruction of Lyubomira Parpulova Gribble. She was a marvelous teacher of all things Bulgarian. Professor Charles Gribble assisted her in helping me along. I also benefited immensely from Professor Susan Woodward's class on eastern Europe at Yale University.

Of course my greatest intellectual debt, which is also a personal one, is to my advisor at CUNY, Professor Jane Schneider. Her ability to manage a wide array of intellectual interests at the highest level of scholarship is awesome. While I can never hope to achieve the same, her example is my inspiration and model. Her help and guidance date back to my first graduate course in anthropology--a dedication I can only appreciate now as I reflect upon how I must have appeared to her at that point. Her unflagging support followed me throughout my graduate career and without her this dissertation would never have been written. Would-be readers should also be extremely grateful to Professor Schneider; were it not for her selfless dedication to improving my prose you would have a much more daunting prospect ahead.

All of this guidance and encouragement would have come to naught were it not for Terri Vulcano, the Program Assistant for the Anthropology Program at CUNY. She has guided me through numerous impasses and difficult times, helping me to keep all things academic in their proper

perspective. In addition to her close friendship and institutional help, the regular contributions of Italian home cooking sustained me in a very physical way. Far more than an institutional facilitator, she is an institution herself. Her legacy rivals that of the giants in our field. Judith Attride also deserves special thanks for taking care of many tasks that contributed to my eventual completion of the degree.

My colleagues in arms in the pursuit of the doctoral degree share much of the credit for my getting to this point. They provided unconditional friendship, emotional support and intellectual stimulation when they were needed most. Distinguished by the quantity and quality of their contributions along these lines are Donna Kerner, Elizabeth Brusco, Claire Riley, Allyson Purpura and Beata Vidacs. I thank them with the anticipation that we will go on providing these necessities for each other. Karen Judd, Sharryn Kasmir and Ligia Simonian provided a collegial and friendly atmosphere in a workroom otherwise literally devoid of atmosphere. I must single out Max Kirsch for his very material contribution of a computer with which to write the dissertation. Aisha Khan provided too many essentials to list, among them, friendship, advice, and the necessary sounding board. I could always count on her not only to listen to my complaints, but equally important, to share my outrage at whatever I was railing against. Many other students at CUNY over the years have made graduate school an

enjoyable time and inspired me by their own achievements. Too many to name, I am glad to have shared the graduate experience with them.

The two friends and colleagues with whom I shared the last several years most closely are Margo Matwychuk and Elizabeth Sheehan. In retrospect it seems like the whole endeavor has been a joint project with these two very special people--they both deserve a part of this degree. There is no way to characterize their immense contribution to my life and this project, so I will not try. They know how important they have been to me in so many different ways and I am eternally grateful.

Elizabeth Sheehan, Karen Judd and Aisha Khan earned even more stars for their crowns by proofreading the final version of this manuscript. Anyone who has gotten to the point of having a final draft of a dissertation will appreciate what this contribution meant to me.

During my fieldwork in Bulgaria my indebtedness took on an international character. This process actually started during my year at Ohio State where Professor Ivan Ilchev of Sofia University was visiting and with whom I took a course on Bulgarian history. When I arrived in Bulgaria he and his wife Velislava were my salvation. I doubt they realize how important their friendship was for me. The numerous visits to their apartment and the wonderful meals they provided me kept me going during my stay in Sofia and on each trip back to Sofia after I moved to my village research site.

My official contact at the Institute of Sociology, Veska Kozhuharova Zhivkova, was also a godsend. She took a maternal interest in me well beyond the call of duty and was a true friend in addition to a colleague. She somehow arranged almost any request I made. I also developed friendships with the other members of the "General Sociology" section of the Institute, who provided an enjoyable affiliation where I felt completely at home. Vladimir Vladov deserves special mention for helping me through all sorts of bureaucratic necessities and generally assisting me in numerous ways throughout my stay.

In the final analysis my deepest gratitude for making the research possible must be reserved for the villagers of Zamfirovo where I conducted my fieldwork. They tolerated my prying presence and my broken Bulgarian to provide me with insight into their lives. Several villagers did more than tolerate my presence, actually incorporating me into their lives. My landlords, Ivan and Maria Borisovi, whose life I shared for the duration of my village stay, were like second parents to me. From this association I became "family" to all their relatives as well. My neighbors, Kyril and Dana Pelovi, were also like family. Their close friendship came with invaluable help in facilitating my work in numerous ways. Philip Philipov patiently tried to improve my Bulgarian. Emil Slavkov was a good friend and helped me feel more like a normal person in an alien context.

I was fortunate to be in Bulgaria at the same time as two other American graduate students--Linda Nelson and Donna Buchanan. Predictably, we became fast friends. Their presence in Sofia when I returned there on visits was a great boost to me. Sharing our impressions helped me keep my own personal experience from determining my intellectual project more than it did.

My family in North Carolina has given me continual support. I have come to appreciate this more after seeing the experience of other graduate students on this score. My father died while I was in the field and I regret that he did not see this project completed or that I was not there to witness the completion of his life. My mother has been the mainstay of my life. She must share the credit for anything I achieve. My sister and my brother and their respective families provided a healthy reminder of the "real world" to counter the decidedly unreal experience of graduate education. My other sister, who shared my attraction to the unusual, provided an equally important counterpoint to my academic involvements until her death. I wish she had lived to share in this achievement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The apocalyptic collapse of communism appears to have been more liberating for western intellectuals than for many citizens of eastern Europe. A full two years after the Communist Parties of the region relinquished their monopoly of control, the West is inundated with social scientific analyses of the "transition." Meanwhile, people actually living through it do not necessarily report profound changes, and those who do talk more about continuing decline than "transition." In Romania, many of the previous communist power holders control the post-communist government. In Hungary, former managers and technocrats have privileged access to state property undergoing privatization, and Stark (1990) suggests that privatization may not even lead to a market transition. Such continuity is most blatant in Bulgaria, where the Socialist successor to the Communist Party continues to garner extensive electoral support, and if the Polish elections of 1991 are any indication, pro-socialist sentiment may be increasingly widespread.

The devotion of intellectuals to the concept of "transition" amid all of this uncertainty and continuity reveals two things: our own indoctrination with cold war stereotypes and our limited understanding of the prior

system, at least as it was experienced. These two limitations are of course connected. It was our inability to transcend ideological oppositions that limited our understanding of socialism, leading us to caricature the system as the opposite of our own, and preventing us from seeing either the variation within it or its comparability to capitalism. Attempting to redress these limitations and thereby improve our prospects for understanding the current period in eastern Europe, this dissertation approaches socialism not as a completely distinct phenomenon, but as Wolf (1982:3) entreats us to see all anthropological subjects, as part of the "totality of interconnected process" linking all humankind. Two major objectives make up such an enterprise: to show the variation existing within the socialist experience, both over time and across the population within a single society; and to show that socialist developments were not absolutely dissimilar from the consequences of global political and economic changes outside the "communist bloc."

These contributions require a focus on the local level. Only when we look at actual people negotiating life under socialism do we see both the differences and similarities between their lives and those of people we know from ethnographic studies of nonsocialist societies. Similarly, only at the local level do we see the variation in life under socialism. The socialist experience not

only varied from one country to another, but was very different for different generations, for different regions and for different social groups within any given socialist state. As we will see in what follows, even the households of a single village cannot be lumped into a single frame. Thus, to elaborate upon Bahro's (1978) useful conceptualization, "actually existing socialism" was actually experienced in myriad ways. Looking at this variation brings us to the level of what we might call "lived socialism," to distinguish it from the dominant macro-level image associated with the term "socialism." This dissertation looks at lived socialism in a Bulgarian village to disaggregate the factors driving socio-cultural change, seeing them as part of global political and economic forces, albeit shaped in particular ways by the structure of socialism.

Far from being rendered irrelevant by the so-called "collapse of communism," such a study contains our only hope for understanding what happens in eastern Europe from 1989 onward. Without such background, the analyses of transition will perpetuate misconceptions developed in past analyses. For example, there is already a trend in contemporary thinking to blame limited progress toward marketization and privatization on old communist leaders or technocrats protecting their privileged positions. This follows almost lock-step from previous authoritarian, "top-down" models which blamed bureaucrats for obstructing

reforms and granted limited roles to the masses unless organized into resistance movements like the Hungarian Revolution or Solidarity. When we look at socialism on the ground, however, we see instead that ordinary people--factory workers and farmers--devised viable strategies under the conditions of that system, their actions even influencing the evolution of state reform policy. These people, too, are understandably hesitant about embracing and promoting new arrangements which threaten past achievements, even if they advocate democratic capitalism as a political platform. The attempt of would-be capitalists to surmount such hesitancy with promises of a brighter future fall on deaf ears, desensitized by years of similar rhetoric from communist leaders.

At the same time, there is no shortage of such evangelical capitalists in the region. An appreciation of lived socialism is essential to understanding the profile of these and other opposition figures. It is not coincidental, for example, that intellectuals and literati formed the vanguard of the new anti-socialist governments, for this group had one of the most tormented experiences of socialism. As a group they are defined by their ideas, or as Verdery more precisely (1991a:16) puts it, by their claims on knowledge and value. Yet the socialist state curtailed the expression and recognition of these claims through censorship and control over employment. In this way socialism negated their very conception of self.

Censorship bothered many people in socialist countries, but it did not threaten their very identity as it did for intellectuals and artists. Granted, they developed well-known ways of writing and reading to circumvent state control, but in so doing they actually affirmed their equivocal position. This accounts for their vehement anti-socialist stance and opposition leadership.

We should not expect everyone living under socialism to have developed such vehemence. In fact, for many, including several of the local villagers we are about to meet, being a member of a socialist society was crucial to their self-perception, even if they were not members of the Communist Party. Additionally, their historical antagonism toward urban intellectuals probably served to reinvigorate their socialist allegiance in response to the new political ascendancy of this often irritating group. Thus, just as Szelenyi (1988) suggests that life trajectories and career histories can help explain who adopted entrepreneurial possibilities under socialist reforms in Hungary, the same types of considerations can be expected to color the responses to "transition." Individuals' responses to transition will vary according to their experience of socialism, and this experience varied over time and across the society. This dissertation provides a glimpse at a segment of this variation.

Not only does such an analysis contribute to the anthropological literature on eastern Europe, but it adds a case that is sorely underrepresented, doing so literally in the nick of time. Documenting the local dimension of what is all but a closed chapter in Bulgarian political history, it provides an essential reference for subsequent studies. Without it there would be little local-level information on socialist Bulgaria from which to evaluate any "transition." More importantly, the timing of the field research on the eve of the collapse makes it a unique case, even among existing ethnographies of socialist eastern Europe.

Timing also accounts for the dissertation's focus on reform, as the research for it coincided with Bulgarian's own period of perestroika. In what follows I examine the reform processes that shaped Bulgarian economic development, showing how at times they replicated global capitalist trends, while at other times they produced distinctively socialist results. Looking at lived socialism allows us to see the process of reform not simply as top-down planning, but as an interactive process between local, national and international levels. This dynamic accounts for the survival of the socialist system through the last 25 years of scathing political-economic critique, as well as for its ostensible collapse. From this perspective we can see that much of what passes as

evidence of "transition" in contemporary discussions was actually set in motion by socialist reform.

In the remainder of this chapter I will outline the essential parameters of the preceding discussion: the relevant dimensions of economic development, the attendant macro-level characteristics of socialism, and the role of reform. I will then discuss the importance of an ethnographic focus on households as a means of getting at the local dimensions of these forces. Supplemented by a brief history of the area, this discussion provides both the background and the framework for understanding lived socialism in a Bulgarian village as recounted in the subsequent pages.

Dimensions of Development

Social scientists have examined the forces of economic development at all levels of abstraction, from local-level studies of singular development projects to grandiose evolutionary models and global critiques of dependency. Despite such exhaustive attention, analysts seldom attempt to combine both socialist and capitalist examples or even to see them as parallel processes. This conceptual divide is particularly evident in the mutually exclusive expressions commonly used to characterize economic development: "the penetration of capitalism" and "socialist development." Yet another example of the potency of cold war oppositions, this separation has even

generated separate subfields within various social science disciplines.

On a theoretical level, the distinction is understandable given the difference between capitalism and socialism as abstract economic models. Unfortunately, this abstract difference led empirical observers of local-level economic development to unquestionably accept the polarities, laying much that is the result of broader economic forces at the feet of capitalism. In the chapters that follow we will see that some very typical consequences of capitalist development in peasant societies occurred in the Bulgarian village under socialist conditions, and more interestingly, that some ostensibly capitalist developments underway in the pre-socialist period were actually advanced by socialist policies.

Paramount among these changes is the disengagement from agriculture. By this I refer to the global trend whereby ever fewer individuals proportionately depend upon the agricultural enterprise as their primary means of support, whether owning the land they farm or paying for the use of it. For many who remain involved to some degree in agricultural production, there is a parallel disengagement from an agricultural identity as they increasingly turn away from definitions of self associated with either the land or its cultivation. This process has occurred at different paces and to different degrees. In

some places a significant sense of disengagement has occurred within a single generation; in others it is a more gradual development.

Either way, various interdependent forces have played a role. Most important are industrialization and the increasing mechanization of agricultural production. Machines reduce the need for agricultural workers, and place a mechanical mediator between remaining farm workers and the land itself. Most liberated agriculturalists migrate to towns where they try, with varying degrees of success, to get jobs in the industrial or service sector. Remaining rural residents are often subsequently sapped from full-time agricultural production by the encroachment of industry into the countryside. These developments are both the result and further stimulant of land accumulation and expropriation, facilitating the further expansion of industrial agriculture and the development of agribusiness. Hardly unique to capitalism, these developments were part and parcel of the penultimate socialist agricultural objective--collectivization. Collectivization and subsequent agricultural reforms were aimed specifically at the mechanization of agriculture, the transformation of farmers into industrial workers and the creation of an "industrial" agriculture.

In mechanized agricultural systems, remaining manual labor is accomplished in large degree by either temporary brigades in the socialist context, or migrant workers

under capitalism. While very different, the central role of either group is symptomatic of the disengagement from agriculture. Though performing agricultural work, their identification with the endeavor is hardly that of family farmers or even peasants. Their limited input in decision making and lack of investment in the enterprise are reflected in the devaluation of manual agricultural activity by the larger society. Under capitalism and socialism alike, harvesters, for example, do "disgusting" work, which no one would do unless they were economically desperate (the capitalist solution), or forced to do so by the state (the socialist solution).

Agricultural disengagement has been furthered in both socialist and capitalist contexts by the continuing globalization of economic forces and the increasing engagement of these forces with rural peoples. This is an ongoing process in which the development of capitalism was but a pivotal stage. Important economic links existed before capitalism (Schneider 1977), and they have been increasing and changing since the "long 16th century" (Wallerstein 1974). While driven primarily by capitalism, socialism has contributed as well. In fact, the very existence of socialism and cold war competition for spheres of influence provided additional momentum to capitalist expansion, and established an alternate basis for global integration as well (see Chase-Dunn 1982). Increasing economic interdependence furthers the

transformation of local agricultural practices to serve external markets or powers. Whether or not these global market forces are mediated by a strong socialist state, they reduce the sense of control local farmers experience in relation to the agricultural enterprise, contributing to the process of disengagement.

Related to the disengagement from agriculture is a change in the nature of community relations in agrarian societies. As the agricultural enterprise shifts from the center to the margins of community life, the social relations maintained by agricultural activities dissipate. Moreover, with the mechanization of agriculture, communal institutions such as labor exchanges also break down and the social relations based on them suffer a similar fate. These processes are well documented for capitalist cases (Blum 1982; Redclift 1973). In the following chapters I examine them under socialism.

The decline of community relations is compounded by changing kinship relations consequent upon another factor often associated with economic development--the demographic transition. While a causal link between economic and demographic change is not supported cross-culturally, it seems clear that there is a connection between economy and fertility, albeit mediated by cultural factors. Declining fertility has consequences across an economy, but its implications are especially extensive in agrarian sectors where family labor shapes economic

possibilities. At the same time, when examined cross-culturally, agriculturalists seem to be in a no-win situation: in societies or regions with high rural fertility, they are blamed for perpetuating their own rural poverty; in rural areas with low fertility, they are held responsible for dwindling rural populations and must bear the resulting stereotypes of their villages as dying places. Although confounding for those attempting to understand demographic patterns, this double-bind actually illuminates the difficult position of agricultural communities in the process of economic development, be it socialist or capitalist.

The difficulties generated by development are also reflected in the role of informal economic activities. While most analyses of informality in capitalist societies focus on urban examples, a few cases (e.g. Halperin 1990) document the importance of such activities for rural people, and in socialist cases the rural sector is a central locus of informality. If we step back from our urban perspective on informality under capitalism we can see the parallel victimization of agriculture and agrarian communities in both capitalist and socialist systems of informality. Similarly, we can see that subcontracting arrangements, so central to the contemporary expansion of informal activity in urban capitalist settings, also played a role in rural socialist development.

The Nature of Socialism

There is, however, a danger in taking the above observations too far. To see parallel processes at work is not to deny differences, and we must resist the temptation to simply go from seeing socialist development as completely distinct to conflating economic development the world over. Aspects of socialism do color these processes. For example, as we will see in Chapter Five, subcontracting arrangements were not allowed to progress down to the household level under socialism, so that what evolves into a process of "de-industrialization" under capitalism is contained as the basis for rural industrialization under socialism. Similarly, informality under socialism has distinctive characteristics from that under capitalism. According to Stark (1989a) these differences follow from the major disjuncture between the operating principles of the formal and informal sector in the socialist case.

Finally, in regard to agricultural disengagement, the process has been less complete under socialism, causing greater ambivalence. The low level of industrial wages, the systemically induced scarcity of consumer items and the poor distribution system forced people to maintain small "private" subsistence plots. This kept proletarianized rural residents in much of eastern Europe tied to limited agricultural production, even though they no longer perceived of themselves as farmers in any sense.

This, in concert with the centralized system of economic planning, and the importance of agricultural trade for national economies, kept farming in many rural areas from disappearing altogether as happened in some capitalist cases of agricultural disengagement (e.g. Douglass 1975, Greenwood 1976). Thus, while socialist villagers do not identify themselves with agricultural work, the socialist village remains strongly wedded to agriculture, and non-agricultural rural enterprises must adjust to agricultural demands, rather than vice versa as is often the case under capitalism. From such an agricultural milieu rural residents were able to underwrite the social reproduction of their urban-migrant relatives, reducing the costs of industrial labor and facilitating socialist industrialization without a reserve army of unemployed. This combination of similarities and contrasts with capitalist processes highlights our primary focus: the relationship between socialist structures and broader forces of economic development.

In attempting to understand socialism, it is helpful to start with Verdery's (1991b) model, itself drawing upon several important east European social theorists (Campeanu 1986, 1988; Kornai 1980; Konrád and Szelényi 1979; Fehér, Heller, and Márkus 1983). According to Verdery, (1991b:421) "socialism's central imperative is to increase the bureaucracy's capacity to allocate." I will not repeat the several ramifications of this imperative which

she eloquently draws out, but given our central concern here with economics, we do need to emphasize one of its essential components--what Kornai (1980) has characterized as the "economy of shortage." To simplify a two-volume argument, he suggests that "soft budget constraints," that is, the socialist state's commitment to support production units whether or not they are profitable, leads to chronic investment hunger and the hoarding of resources, which in turn generate the shortages so symptomatic of socialist economies. Shortages stimulate the proliferation of informal mechanisms for acquiring desired goods and services, creating the expansive "second economy" also archetypical of socialism.

This basic dynamic is crucial background for much of the analysis in succeeding chapters, where we will discover that, at the local level, its consequences were positive as well as negative. In Chapter Three, for example, I suggest that shortages may have benefited local farm officials, granting them more discretion in following central plans. Verdery (1991b:423) points out a similar issue in regard to informality. The bureaucracy's drive to control allocation was advanced by increasing resources for distribution, but also by destroying alternate avenues of allocation like the second economy. At the same time the second economy was essential for supplying the livelihood of the population, so "there remained a constant tension between suppressing and

permitting a certain amount of secondary economic activity."

In Chapter Six we examine in detail the systemic benefits of informal activities for both individuals and the society. I mention such conflicts here, however, as examples of what I perceive as the overarching characteristic of socialism--its constitution as a system of "conflicting complementarity." By this oxymoron I hope to capture the constant tension generated by socialism's totalizing logic--its holistic integration of political, economic, and social structures. Every aspect of the society is integrated through the state apparatus. Attempting to manage all dimensions of their societies, socialist states leave no area outside their purview or, more to the point, beyond their responsibility. Any solution that causes problems elsewhere is just another problem for the state. There is no area of life that can be sacrificed with impunity, no private sector to be blamed or called upon to contribute. An appeal for a "thousand points of light" does not make sense under socialism.

Consequently socialist states find themselves constantly balancing potentially contradictory demands to achieve some sort of complementarity. Perhaps surprising to some, they were often able to do so, which is why they operated as effectively as they did from the 1960s to 1989. To return to the example of informality, it

certainly threatened bureaucratic control, but at the same time it helped fulfill the state's responsibility of provisioning society, indirectly enhancing the bureaucracy's claim to power. Ultimately at odds, however, such arrangements were inherently unstable, requiring continual renegotiation. This dynamic is at the heart of socialist change. Thus, it was not just the internal contradictions of socialism that shaped the history of socialist societies (Staniszki 1991:2-4), but the way the contradictions were worked and reworked into operational forms over three decades of adjustment.

Certainly, many will object to this characterization on the basis that capitalist states, too, bear responsibility for all dimensions of social life. This is true, but the capitalist state is not synonymous with all that it oversees or manages; there is a substantial difference in the degree of integration evident in the two systems. For example, the market under capitalism is said to have its own logic, the state being left simply to constrain or stimulate it, or perhaps compensate for its movements, whereas socialist states plan and direct economic processes, even market ones, creating that semantic hybrid, "market socialism." Similarly, the idea of "civil society" as an arena defined by its autonomy from the state is often presented as incompatible with socialist integration.

Contributing to the above distinction is the different role of ideology under capitalism and communism. To paraphrase Wolf (1982:389), ideologies are idea systems that codify and naturalize the human distinctions essential to a particular mode of production. Thus, wherever there is differential access to political and economic power, ideology will reflect and legitimize power relations. Both capitalism and communism, as ideal types of economies, are shored up by such idea systems.¹ I am not suggesting that there is something as singular or as homogeneous as "capitalist ideology" or even "socialist ideology." Attempts to reshape or perpetuate power relations inevitably engage ideologies as both target and weapon, resulting, as I have shown elsewhere (Creed 1991a), in constant reinterpretations. Consequently, ideological constructs vary both over time and across the population of a given society.

Still, there is a crucial distinction between the focus of ideological contestation under capitalism and communism, particularly with regard to the economy and economic development. In simple terms, the difference is between ends and means. Ideological processes in capitalist states focus more often on the means of economic development. The essence of capitalism is ideologically located in the mechanics of the economy,

¹See Taras (1984) for a review of the concept of ideology, especially as discussed for socialist states.

that is, in such sacred concepts as private property, free enterprise, and market mechanisms. The social consequences of these processes, while variously criticized or applauded, are not in and of themselves elemental to ideological formulations. For communism, ideological justifications draw more heavily upon the ends expected than the means to achieve them. If these defining objectives lead to contradictory demands, such as those Lowenthal (1970) lays out in his useful discussion of the conflict between development and utopia, communist polities must negotiate a delicate complementarity.

Reform as Solution and Problem

Not only does the ideological focus on objectives produce conflicting combinations, it provides a constant measure against which to evaluate the state's, indeed the system's, progress toward its legitimizing goals. As these prove elusive, new ways of achieving them must be presented. Since the means are ideologically less crucial than the ends, the former are open to manipulation and alteration, so long as the manipulations can be credibly argued to further the system's objectives. This then is one of the bases for the central role of reform in the economic development of socialist states.

Perhaps no topic of east European political economy has received as much scholarly attention as the process of reform. My purpose here is not to review this research, a

task which, thankfully, has been done by others (e.g. Johnson 1989), but rather to see how the reform process as a characteristic of socialism put a particular stamp on economic development, with consequences that have outlasted the eclipse of reform initiatives by the recent "transition."

The era of reform in eastern Europe began in the late 1950s. Up to that point, economic development had followed the Stalinist model of rapid expansion of industrial capacity through massive investment in heavy industry, subsidized by agricultural resources extracted via collectivization. This strategy proved effective for a "'catch up' type" of economic development (Höhmnn 1982:1), but by the late 1950s it was producing diminishing returns. New strategies were required both for continued economic development and to maintain popular confidence that such progress was feasible. Reform emerged to answer this call.

Once reform was initiated, it was both unattainable and unstoppable. Most analyses focus on the former. By far the most common explanation for why reforms failed is that they were obstructed by functionaries of the system whose power or privilege was threatened by proposed changes. However, the failure of reform has a broader basis that harks back to the integrated nature of socialist society and the objectives of socialist ideology. As policy makers oversaw every dimension of

society, their reform programs for one sector invariably affected other sectors as well. More often than not, these "secondary" effects were ideologically undesirable or in conflict with other objectives and necessities, notably centralized political control (see Burks 1973).

This very fact, however, is also why reform was unstoppable. Reforms not only generated secondary effects, but the effects themselves required subsequent reform treatment. In other words, the unintended consequences of reforms provided the motivation for subsequent reforms. Some analysts have presented this dynamic as an alternation between reform initiatives and reversals. In an insightful version of this perspective, Laky (1980) lays out what he calls the "hidden mechanisms of recentralization," which inevitably countered decentralizing reforms. While enlightening, this perspective is also somewhat distorting since, as Lewin (1988:1-2) points out, the "freeze" following the "thaw" (recentralization following decentralization in Laky's terms) never completely returned society to its pre-reform arrangements. So, what may appear from a structural perspective as a scaling back of prior reform, can be seen processually as another step in an ongoing progression of reforms. Thus, we can see reform as both a solution and a problem, or as Korbonski (1975, 1989) puts it, as cause and effect of social, political and economic change. The interaction fueled the perpetual reform process which

characterized most socialist societies. Continual reform, in turn, provided the inspiration for economic experimentation which sustained socialist economic momentum from the 1960s to the "transition".

This trajectory recalls the dynamics of religious reformations as captured by Sheldon Shapiro (1973, 1976; see also Schneider 1991). Rather than constituting distinctive events, the political and economic reforms of socialism can be seen as an ongoing negotiation between people and the state; like religious innovations some are more vigorous than others. Certain of these eruptions become packaged by other historical developments into particular "reformations" or "transitions." Understanding such instances, however, requires an appreciation of the continuing process of which they are a part, and not simply their content in a particular period.

Although socialist reform sequences include periods when reform measures seem to have been retracted, overall the progression is toward ever more radical reforms. This is most notable for Hungary, but it was true elsewhere as well. The overall escalation was the result of the cumulative effect of prior reforms, and the need to redress their unintended consequences, but it was also important for ideological reasons. In fact, Baylis (1971) suggests that reform itself became an element of communist ideology. As suggested above, reform programs demonstrated the commitment of leaders to do something.

However, after recurrent disappointments, people became skeptical, and ever more extreme measures were required to achieve the same effect. Tamás Krausz put it this way: "In Hungary we have had reforms for 20 years now-- permanent reform you might say. So when Hungarians hear the word 'reform' it doesn't mean anything to them" (In These Times, 3/21/90). The perpetual need to establish programs potent enough to break through escalating popular skepticism not only led to the "transition," it shaped the very nature of transition. Given that the starting point of 1989 was already significantly transformed from the socialism of the 1950s, anything expecting to qualify as truly "transitional" had to be extreme.

From this perspective, perestroika was not a new development, only the inevitable result of the snowballing of reforms underway in eastern Europe for three decades. With reform operating almost like a positive feedback system, a radical reform program was overdetermined. What distinguished perestroika, however, was that in going further than prior reforms, it actually cut the connections officially binding and integrating all the dimensions of society, thereby terminating the driving dynamic of the reform process. It did not, however, terminate or transform the political, economic and social foci of prior reforms. Although these foci now appear as issues of "transition," many were concerns of reform programs in the years prior to 1989.

Households as a Focus

These revelations appear most clearly at the local level. There, for example, do we discover that some cooperative farm officials were experimenting with leasing land to private farmers in the late 1980s, before the "transition." At the local level we see how conflicting requirements were balanced and integrated into a system that both maintained the village economy and provoked further reform. At the local level we see the potential benefits of seemingly deleterious aspects of the socialist economy. At the local level we see the diverse and changing ideologies of socialism and how they figured variously in people's perceptions and practice. In short, it is only in a local context that lived socialism can be examined.

Yet the local level is not an uncomplicated microcosm in which the processes outlined above coalesce in some self-evident relationship to one another. To understand the nature of the connections, it is essential to find the social spaces where various factors of development come together. This dissertation makes a claim for households as critical spaces in which to see the on-going interaction of forces such as agricultural mechanization, demographic change, and rural industrialization.

Much intellectual effort has been devoted to refining our concept of the household (Bender 1967, Sanjek 1982, Yanagisako 1979), and numerous scholars have followed

through with case studies of these domestic groups (see Netting Wilk and Arnould 1984; Smith, Wallerstein and Evers 1984). Yet the concerns of these literatures become less significant when we take the household to represent a social space where various social forces are brought together through the interaction of the individuals defining that space. This approach does not treat the household as a unit of analysis, but looks at how various forces of change affect people's interactions in households, then, how these interactions reciprocally influence the wider forces of change. The household setting has been productively examined in relation to singular forces of change, such as migration (Pessar 1982), informality (Argyres 1988), and various aspects of the economy (Maclachlan 1987, Wilk 1989). Here I aim for a synthetic view in which households emerge as crucibles of socio-cultural change, rather than just another object of change.

If we accept the possibility of the household as a space where diverse forces interact, generating other forces of social consequence, then the often criticized but tenacious top-down model of socialist economic development disappears by default. In a model of change where people's actions as members of households influence the unfolding of political and economic history, the idea of totally directed change is untenable. Thus the household provides a window on the nature of local and

national interaction, allowing us to capture the elusive synthesis of people actively shaping their own destiny while responding to larger political and economic constraints. This social formula (simultaneously shaping and being shaped) is constantly invoked by anthropologists, but less often actually demonstrated. A household focus makes the duality vivid.

I see households then as places where diverse forces affect human behavior, this behavior, in turn, having consequences for other factors of socio-cultural change. In many cases, what individuals do or do not do is affected by the combination of constraints, requirements and possibilities they encounter within the household context; their responses in turn influence what is possible or necessary for the locale and the state. The differences between capitalist and socialist economic development, then, may be found not so much in the types of change, which are sometimes similar, as in the different interactions generated in the household context. In the following chapters I attempt to demonstrate this suggestion, first by analyzing the forces of economic change which are brought together within the household context, then by examining their interaction as revealed in village household strategies.

Location, History and Method

I chose to focus on agricultural change as the entree into the topics outlined above because it is both an important focus for anthropologists looking at the penetration of capitalism, and a paradigmatic characteristic of socialism in the guise of collectivization. Once I decided upon agriculture, Bulgaria was an obvious location. As we will see in Chapter Three, Bulgaria pursued a policy of agricultural concentration that was unmatched elsewhere in eastern Europe, and yet comparatively little attention had been paid to the case.

The attraction was further enhanced by Bulgaria's checkered past, suggesting an interesting agrarian history. A combination of Thracians, Slavs and varied Turkic peoples called Bulgars were united into the Bulgarian state in the late 600s, forcing Byzantium to sign a treaty of recognition in 681. In 1018, however, the First Bulgarian Kingdom fell to Byzantine control. A Second Bulgarian Kingdom, established in 1185, lasted until the middle of the 14th century when it came under attack from the Ottoman Turks. The Turkish conquest was virtually complete by 1393 and the country remained under Ottoman domination for nearly 500 years. The Sultan claimed rights to all Bulgarian land which he allotted to Turkish overlords in exchange for their military support.

These overlords lived off the tribute of Bulgarian peasants.

The period of Ottoman domination left many marks on Bulgarian society and culture. The most obvious is the presence of a sizeable Turkish minority (approximately 10 percent of the current population), with associated ethnic tensions (see Creed 1990). Other consequences are more subtle. When I was in the field in the 1980s, the phrase "500 years under the Turks" was a common excuse for anything from the level of economic development, to the lack of an underground communist opposition, to the poor quality of the country's telephone system. In the 1990s opposition supporters appealed to it to explain the continued electoral support for the Socialist Party. Many times the excuse was offered in jest but at other times it was a serious attempt at social analysis. More often, it seemed to include both jest and seriousness in proportions difficult to determine.

Ottoman control lasted until the Russians drove the Turks out of Bulgaria in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878--an event that contributes as well to Bulgarians' benign (by east European standards) attitude toward Russia and the Soviet Union. Following the liberation, a large independent Bulgaria was established by the Treaty of San Stefano. Western European powers, fearful of Russian influence in the Balkans, would have none of this treaty and called an international conference in Berlin to trim

down the borders of the new Bulgarian state. Irredentist desires for the San Stefano borders would eventually drive Bulgarian involvement in two Balkan, and two World, Wars.

After liberation, the country imported royalty from western Europe and set up a constitutional monarchy, but by the 1930s political developments replicated the regional trend toward dictatorship. Perhaps the most distinctive element of Bulgaria's inter-war politics, and one of the most interesting from the point of agricultural change, was the election of an Agrarian Party Government in 1919, albeit with some subterfuge on the part of the Agrarian leader and new Prime Minister, Alexander Stamboliiski. His programs included the concept of "labor property," according to which land should belong to whoever works it, and he instigated limited land reforms toward this end.

Stamboliiski competed for mass support, however, with the Bulgarian Communist Party, founded in 1891, eight years earlier than the Agrarian Party. The communists were fairly successful in mobilizing rural support despite ideological conflicts at high levels over the appropriate role of the peasantry in a putatively proletarian party. For example, in the municipal election of December 1919, the Communist Party won control of 65 village councils. Stamboliiski dissolved them and scheduled new elections for 1921 in which the Communist Party emerged with control of 104 village councils (Rothschild 1959:107). The Party

attempted to expand this rural base without changing its national-level rhetoric by appealing individually to village Agrarian Union cells to transfer their allegiance to the Communist Party (Rothschild 1959:110). This insured extensive communist agitation in the villages despite the limited concern for farmers in the communist platform and its dismissal of Stamboliiski's reforms as bourgeois half-measures.

In the end, however, it was not the communists but the right-wing of Bulgarian politics that ended Stamboliiski's programs with a coup in 1923. Since there was no love lost between the agrarians and the communists, the latter made no attempt to intervene. The Comintern in Moscow was less than pleased about this passivity and made its feelings known to the Bulgarian Communist Party. The Party quickly changed its mind and launched an attack on the Rightist government, which became known as the September Uprising. The uprising gained widespread support only in a few areas of the country and was suppressed within a week.

Following the failed uprising, the Communist Party was outlawed and went underground. A legally constituted Worker's Party was created in 1927 and operated as a parallel communist front. According to Oren (1971:109), the drop in Party membership in the 1930s should be attributed to this repression and disorganization rather than a decline in the appeal of communism. Even with this

decline, Oren contends, the "overwhelming majority" of Party members in the 1930s remained peasants, and there was continual illegal communist agitation in the countryside.

After a doomed attempt to maintain neutrality, Bulgaria ended up on the axis side in World War II, creating the condition for yet a second "liberation" by Russian troops, this time in Soviet uniforms. The Red Army took control of the country on the 9th of September, 1944. This event brought post-war Bulgarian politics decidedly into the Soviet orbit for the next 45 years. The "9th of September" was designated as the official national holiday and it became synonymous with the beginning of the communist era.

The country's experience with communist political economy followed the broad outlines previously discussed--extensive industrialization followed by reform. Contrary to the popular perception of Bulgaria as a conservative communist polity, the dynamic of reform was as evident there as anywhere in the region, even if the results were less remarkable. I will not attempt to recount the history of economic reforms, as this has been done elsewhere in painful detail (Crampton 1988; Feiwel 1977, 1979, 1982; Jackson 1988). I am concerned with the dynamic of the process rather than particular initiatives; specifics important to appreciating this dynamic will be discussed when necessary in the following chapters.

To help orient the reader, however, it may be useful to provide a stylized reference point. Bulgarian reform got underway in the early 1960s. According to Feiwel (1979:72), the first reform blueprint included the familiar objectives of reducing top-down planning and increasing the role of the profit motive. The Prague Spring in 1968 redirected the reform agenda of the 1970s from general structural change toward specific alterations of particular sectors and enterprises (see Feiwel 1977, 1982). At the end of the 1970s a New Economic Mechanism (NEM) was put forward, reestablishing radical systemic alteration as an objective (Crampton 1988). Never living up to expectations, the NEM gave way to a newer mechanism in 1986 (Jackson 1988), this being subsequently recast as "preoustroistvo," the Bulgarian equivalent of perestroika (Pitassio 1989). Preoustroistvo was in turn the segue to "transition."

I arrived in Bulgaria at the beginning of this last reform drive. I intended to spend a few weeks talking with scholars and interviewing officials about the rural situation while I located a village in which to ply my anthropological skills. Given that I was the first American to make such a request, and that this was nearly three years prior to the transition, finding a suitable village was not up to me. After nearly three months of consultations with various specialists and scholars in Sofia I began to think that the nay-sayers back home, who

predicted I would never get to a fieldsite in Bulgaria, were right.

Just at that point my affiliate institution informed me that arrangements had been made for me to live in the village of Zamfirovo in the northwest of the country, about two and a half hours across the Balkan mountains from Sofia. They assured me that it met the criteria I had laid out. I questioned their choice, which they said had been made in consultation with the National Agro-Industrial Union, but queries about "why this particular village" were always answered in vague generalities about it being a good size or a good location, which could have been said of numerous other villages as well. I was too relieved to push the issue further.

My fear that Zamfirovo was a model village chosen to give me a good impression were dismissed upon arrival. Located in the Balkan foothills with poor quality land and limited water supplies, its agricultural situation could hardly be called ideal. Zamfirovo was also fairly isolated and there was even a Turk interned there for refusing to change his name in the recent assimilation campaign. In these respects the choice of Zamfirovo surprised me. I was less surprised by the village's numerous non-agricultural enterprises since that was an issue in my research project. After 20 months living in the village and travelling elsewhere in the country, I came to see my new home as somewhat exceptional in the

number of non-agricultural opportunities, but otherwise fairly typical of large Bulgarian villages. The most distinctive feature was not physical, fiscal, or demographic, but the somewhat greater commitment of the residents to socialist politics. It shared this characteristic with other villages in the region, and local residents had an historical explanation for it.

Not much is known of the early history of Zamfirovo. The ruined walls of a late-Roman fortress remain atop one of the surrounding hills, but their exact date is not known. According to one historical report the village has existed at least since the 11th or 12th century. It is mentioned in Turkish documents from the early 17th century as "Gushaniche," a version of "Gushantzi," its name prior to the 9th of September. At some point in Turkish times there were two Ottoman overlords controlling most of the land, and during the Russo-Turkish war, Russian forces passed through the village.

After the 9th of September the name of the village was changed to Zamfirovo in honor of its favorite son and early communist activist, Zamfir Popov. Under his leadership in 1918-1919, the village Communist Party increased tenfold to 80 members and he was elected as a representative to government councils at both regional and district levels. After the Communist Party's about-face on the anti-Agrarian coup in 1923, Zamfir Popov organized a revolutionary committee and led a brigade of 200 men

against the forces of the new government, contributing to the region's fame as one of the few areas mobilized for the uprising. Thanks to this history, Zamfirovo not only got a new name after the 9th of September, but acquired a new identity and glory as a "politically active" village. This was the history recited by villagers to account for the region's commitment to socialist politics. However, as the first multi-party elections in 1991 revealed, this commitment was not restricted to the northwest part of the country. This dissertation attempts to illuminate the continuing support for socialism throughout rural Bulgaria after 1989.

Local-level politics certainly played a role in the village's response to the "transition," even if this history is difficult to characterize. Prior to 1944 village leaders were primarily lawyers dispatched from Sofia or nearby cities. In the early years after the 9th of September, village leaders were selected from local residents who had past claims to leftist politics: perhaps having been members of the Communist Party or having been involved even marginally in the resistance. Subsequently, in the 1950s, they were replaced by villagers chosen by higher organs and sent to Party training schools. These promising politicians were often selected on the basis of connections to higher level officials. Many of them had social relations with a local resident who had attained an

important national position based on his activity as a communist resister during the war.

This cohort maintained control of the village until the 1980s, but, as we will see in succeeding chapters, the actual power associated with their positions gradually eroded beneath them. This erosion ironically helps explain the continued support for socialism. Many Zamfirovo villagers detested the privileges and nepotism of local communist leaders, but they were not intimidated by them. So while urban opposition leaders swore the electoral support for the Socialist Party in the 1990 elections was a reflection of the powerful hold of communist leaders in the villages, it was just the opposite in Zamfirovo. Villagers kept the socialist system because local communist leaders no longer controlled their lives to the degree they did in the past, and they cherished this independence. This contributed to their electoral decision, which can ultimately be explained by an old cliché: "better the devil you know than the one you don't."

Friends and acquaintances in other parts of Bulgaria said it was unfortunate that I worked in the northwest as the people there were unreceptive to outsiders and not much interested in things beyond their experience. The degree of Bulgarian regionalism and attendant stereotyping is extensive for a country that is smaller than the state of Pennsylvania. It deserves a study all its own. If

this particular stereotype of the northwest was true, it was lost on an American who expected people to be even more suspicious, and who was surprised that anyone would open their home and life to a prying stranger, as many did.

Data collection for the project consisted of numerous techniques, all familiar to anthropologists. I was lucky to live with a village family, a retired couple, whose village and family connections provided an essential entree into local life. As the husband had been a local leader in the past, I was also able to follow political developments. In the early months of my stay, the bulk of my data was drawn from observations and casual conversations, conducted while working on agricultural brigades and attending ritual events, such as weddings and christenings. People were especially forthcoming with invitations to major rituals as they were organized as quasi-public displays. It suddenly became clear to me why ritual is such a favorite anthropological subject.

After I began to feel more integrated into the village I sought out contexts for both formal and informal interviews. I talked repeatedly with village officials and directors of local enterprises, especially those in charge of the cooperative farm. I collected statistics from the village "town hall," where I spent time going over old household registers, census data and cooperative farm records.

From Zamfirovo's approximately 700 households, I conducted a random survey of 50, and interviewed members of several others as well. I questioned members of different generations, getting both a profile of the contemporary household and its history. I asked the members of five households, each with a distinctive composition, to keep a written record of their finances and activities. The best data, however, came from participation in the life and work of about seven households where I was a frequent guest and was treated like a member of the family. These households had relatives in nearby towns and Sofia where I was welcomed as well, providing insight into the nature of rural-urban relations.

I travelled one day a week by bus to the district capital, Mihailovgrad, to work in the archives, which had several useful documents from the village dating back to World War I. I also developed friendly relationships with archive workers. This not only expanded my network of informants, but increased my access to archival documents. I worked at the district statistical offices on two occasions, collecting regional demographic statistics. I also made four short research trips to the north-central, south-central, and south-eastern regions of the country, primarily for comparative purposes.

I have no doubt that anyone repeating my study in the conditions of the "transition" would have access to more

information, both official and informal, but they would not have the "benefit" of having lived under the system of socialism as it existed before 1989. This firsthand experience with lived socialism provides the foundation upon which the entire analysis is constructed.

Plan of the Study

I went to Bulgaria to examine changing agrarian systems as an entree into the local dimensions of socialist economic development. I quickly discovered, however, that any such undertaking would have to go far beyond agriculture to resolve the paradox of agricultural disengagement in Zamfirovo--that is, the continued importance of agriculture for village and household economies at the same time that individuals were dissociating themselves from agricultural activity. The most crucial component of this dynamic was the changing nature of agriculture itself, and it is with this issue that we begin.

Chapter Two examines collectivization in relation to prior agricultural arrangements, suggesting that it actually continued the dismantling of "cooperative" arrangements historically associated with agrarian capitalism and already underway in Bulgaria before World War II. This analysis is followed in Chapter Three by an examination of the continuing changes in agricultural production between the completion of collectivization and

1990. These changes, including mechanization and increasing scale, were crucial to the disengagement from agriculture and also show the spiraling escalation of socialist reform.

Chapter Four takes up a different but related dimension of agricultural disengagement, the declining population of rural villages. This development had two components: a fertility restriction underway since the early part of the century, and the massive out-migration of villagers in the 1960s. These demographic changes were both a product and stimulant of economic reform.

Chapter Five adds a final component to the disengagement picture, the development of non-agricultural enterprises in the village. While rural industrialization was part of state reform programs, local initiatives were required to actualize reform possibilities, illustrating the interaction between local and national levels in the process of planning and reform. The ensuing attempts of village workers and local administrators to juggle non-agricultural and agricultural activities provides critical insight into "peasant-worker" models of such combinations, showing that the requirements of village agriculture often influenced non-agricultural arrangements.

In accommodating the various demands of the village economy in the context of larger socialist structures, villagers generated extensive informal arrangements. Chapter Six analyzes these innovations, focusing on how

they both augmented the economic performance of the village and provided additional stimuli for reform. From this perspective informal activities and relations can be seen as a means of integration, binding together the bureaucratically segmented levels and sectors of society.

Chapter Seven brings all of these forces together by examining the social space where they most intensely intersect--the household. In this context we see that economic changes are determined not simply by the momentum of economic forces, but rather, by their interaction in combinations which are to a great extent structured by household arrangements. Far from replacing economic with domestic determinism, this argument revolves around the interactive nature of numerous considerations influencing human behavior. Those behaviors, in turn, shape future economic possibilities at all levels of society.

There is a loose historical trajectory to the organization of these chapters: collectivization and subsequent agricultural reforms prompted the out-migration of the 1960s, which in turn inspired attempts to keep villagers in the countryside through local industrialization. The latter created a diversified economic milieu for the village, which stimulated expansive informal arrangements integrating the various economic sectors. Again, this integration was most evident at the household level. Looking at the trajectory as a whole, however, it is clear that a chronological view

is distorting. The forces examined were overlapping in time as well as space, and their interaction rather than their sequence explains the dynamic of socialist economic development.

CHAPTER TWO

RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Of all the radical changes in eastern Europe since World War II, none are more closely identified with communism than the collectivization of agriculture. This is somewhat curious given that the quintessential objective of most communist regimes was industrial, not agricultural, development, and that some communist countries never even collectivized agriculture. Still, collectivization dominates the image of communism for distant observers and local participants alike. Ask any Bulgarian villager about the changes in his or her village since World War II and you are certain to hear first about collectivization.

The prominence of this event in the historical consciousness of Bulgarian villagers is due in large part to the dominance of agriculture at the time of communist ascension. Subsequent changes are viewed against this agrarian backdrop which directs attention to agricultural changes. Thus, for villagers, collectivization became a metaphor for the communist transformation of the countryside in general. For the same reason, we must understand the agricultural transformation of the village before attempting to examine other related developments.

To do so we must begin with collectivization, but we must approach it as part of ongoing agricultural change and not as a single isolated event. Collectivization had a history that is grounded in international, national and local factors. It extended over several years with various local idiosyncracies. The experience of collectivization, in turn, shaped subsequent agricultural reforms throughout the communist era. Even today, collectivization continues to haunt agricultural policy as post-communist governments throughout the region grapple with "de-collectivization" (see Kideckel 1990). Conceived in this way, collectivization, which otherwise appears to be the antithesis of rural capitalism, can be seen as part of a process that replicated the developments of agrarian capitalism in many ways. The most notable parallel is the subversion of pre-existing communal arrangements. While collectivization was perhaps less complete in this assault because of countervailing requirements in the so-called private sector of socialism, the outcome was similar to that achieved in western Europe with such quintessentially capitalist programs as the enclosures.

In this and the following chapter we attempt to portray these vicissitudes as an entree into the relationship between socialist reform and economic development. We begin with a discussion of the background to collectivization from around 1920 to the mid-1950s, demonstrating, in the process, that the pre- and post-war

differences are not as definitive as is often assumed. We then look at the mechanics of collectivization itself. This provides the essential foundation upon which to examine subsequent agricultural changes in the following chapter. This sequence of agricultural change illustrates well the interactive, spiraling nature of socialist reform in Bulgaria as well as its ongoing legacy. Taken together, these changes provide the frame upon which all other forces transforming the village hinge, including those of the present transition.

Why Collectivize?: Agriculture Before 1956

Shanin (1971:263) maintains that collectivization was pursued throughout eastern Europe simply because the Soviet Union had done so. In this view, the Soviet experience established collectivization as an essential ideological component of communism, setting the agricultural agenda for all aspiring communist states. In contrast, Kideckel (1979:35) states that the collectivization of Romania was a response to "the objective circumstances which Romania faced after World War II rather than the product of an ideological posture." Both stances are too extreme. The ideological connection must be acknowledged, especially given the extensive and internationally sanctioned Soviet influence in the region after World War II. In Zamfirovo early enthusiasts for collectivization told me that the Soviet kolkoz was their

inspiration and model, and there was no evidence of any alternate program for agricultural development even being considered. The ideological primacy of the Soviet example, however, should not blind us to other factors linked to collectivization. Clearly, as we will see in this section, the objective economic situation of Zamfirovo after World War II cried out for collectivization even if the decision to go through with it involved political and ideological considerations. Each of these factors was important in its own right, but what made collectivization compelling was its efficiency in addressing all of them simultaneously. This is why collectivization was such a popular strategy for communist leaders.¹

The relative contribution of these different factors certainly varied from country to country, which probably goes a long way toward accounting for cross-cultural variation in the collectivization experience (see e.g. Nolan 1976; Wädekin 1982:63-82). Furthermore, their relative importance within a single country changed over time in response to international forces and to the domestic consequences of on-going economic change, including prior collectivization initiatives. It is essential that we be aware of such local dynamics not only

¹Sokolovsky (1990) makes a related argument about the multi-variate dimensions of collectivization, but fails to adequately consider economic development objectives apart from the state's attempt to control economic resources.

to better understand the collectivization process but also to account for regional variation in post-communist agrarian experiences. For example, I suspect that rural enthusiasm for "decollectivization" will be greater where ideological and political factors predominated in the original decision to collectivize. Conversely, where economic factors strongly influenced collectivization decisions, the ideological "collapse" of communism may be less devastating for collective arrangements. This is not to predict a uniform response to decollectivization within a single country or region. Clearly there will be different attitudes across different social groups even within a single village. Furthermore, enthusiasm for decollectivization may not be the determinate factor, as other factors may facilitate or obstruct action. Still, an overall correlation might be detectible at the macro-level. It would be premature to pursue this comparison now, nor is it the focus of this study. The project at hand, however, does provide a step in this direction by examining the economic bases of collectivization in Bulgaria.

To do so we can start with the Soviet case, for while collectivization emerged from the Soviet experience as an ideological requisite of communism, the original Soviet decision to collectivize was based on political and economic considerations that were relevant in parts of post-war eastern Europe. From the various development

strategies advanced in the Soviet industrialization debate between 1924 and 1928, Stalin opted for an extreme industrial variant (see Erlich 1960). It stressed extensive investment in heavy industry. To simplify, this policy maintained that by investing in machinery to make other machines, industrial capacity could be expanded exponentially. The benefits of this approach would eventually far exceed the short-run benefits of agricultural investment or investment in consumer industries.

The resources for such investment were to be extracted from agriculture via low purchase prices for agricultural goods combined with high prices for consumer goods. This could be expected to undermine peasant market participation, which is where collectivization entered the picture--it guaranteed continued agricultural production and state access to the products. It also conveniently insured that labor would follow capital as it severed peasants' ties to the land, freeing them up for work in the expanding industrial sector. They could be replaced in agricultural production by machines, either produced by the industrial sector itself or imported in exchange for other industrial products. At the same time, among those with ample agricultural resources, it curtailed what was perceived as an increasing influence over economic policy. In fact, it established a mechanism for general communist

control of the countryside. Collectivization was thus an efficient means to various political and economic ends.

This package fit the situation in post-war Bulgaria, especially in regard to economic considerations. First, Bulgaria was a predominantly agrarian society after World War II so agriculture was an obvious source for industrial investment. Prior to 1944 approximately 80 percent of the population was engaged in agriculture and all the country's foreign exchange earnings came from goods of agricultural origin (Tanov 1986:45). The potential contribution of agriculture, however, was constrained by its small holding subsistence structure. Bourilkov (1933:4) puts the average Bulgarian holding in the early 1930s at 62 decares² per family, with significant regional variation. Looking at two villages near Zamfirovo, the average size of landholdings was 35 decares in one and 55 in the other (Petrov 1940:8-9). Since each household needed parcels of land in different economic zones, including forest and meadow as well as arable land, and given the desire to locate cultivated plots in different zones so as to minimize the potential damage of hail storms, these land holdings were usually divided into several widely dispersed strips. According to Sanders (1949:42), the average 18-acre farm in the village of Dragalevtsy in the 1930s was composed of 16 such strips,

²A decare is the standard unit of measure for land in Bulgaria. It equals .1 hectare or .247 acres.

one less than the 1926 national average of 17 strips per holding (Crampton 1987:137).

The situation in Zamfirovo mirrors these descriptions. Based on a list of land use in 1916 and a list of households from 1917, the average land holding per Zamfirovo household can be approximated at 36 decares excluding forest holdings. Regarding fragmentation, an historical note prepared for the local archives reports that "before 1944," the arable land in the village was divided into more than 15,000 parcels. Assuming this to reflect the situation in the 1930s, the average number of parcels per household can be estimated at over 21.³ One village informant from a family of 11 reported having 40 decares of land, including about 6 decares of meadow and 6 decares of forest. The remaining 28 decares were divided into approximately 7 parcels. This may not seem excessively fragmented, but his father was from a small sibling set; one can imagine what this land would have looked like after division between nine children. Another villager said her family had to devise elaborate work schedules and send different family members to work on different parcels because some of their plots were so dispersed that they could not walk from one to the other and still get any work done in one day's time. Others

³This estimate is based on an approximate village population of 3,500 (see Table IV.2), and an estimated average household size of five members (see Table VII.2).

reported spending the night in the fields during peak work times for related reasons.

I am not assuming that such a small holding agrarian structure was innately less productive than larger holdings. In fact Lampe (1986:86), using calculations by Totev (1940) and Jackson (Lampe and Jackson 1982:442-5), maintains that holdings under five hectares were more efficient and productive than those over 10 hectares. However, if larger holdings represented a larger number of segmented and scattered plots, then the higher efficiency of smaller holdings is not surprising--fewer plots meant less time spent travelling from one to another, allowing more time for productive work.

Regardless of efficiency, this situation certainly limited agricultural options, such as mechanization, which is another often cited weakness of inter-war Bulgarian agriculture. The standard cultivating tools were a hoe and plow. The latter was usually wooden, and while some plows had metal plowshares many had no metal parts. They were pulled primarily by cows or oxen. The numerous households with only one draft animal cooperated with each other for plowing, or plowed with one animal which they personally guided. Those with no draft animals borrowed them in exchange for other agricultural work. Harvesting and threshing were done by hand and animal hoof respectively. Irrigation was limited to the south-central rice-growing region where it was accomplished with earthen

canals built during Turkish times. Government plans for improving these facilities in 1906 and 1928 had negligible results, and elsewhere in the country there was no irrigation at all apart from bucket brigades for plots close to water sources (see Pasvolsky 1930:202-205). Chemical fertilizers were known but rarely used, although animal manure was scrupulously collected. It was applied primarily to vegetable gardens, with other plots fertilized according to supply on an alternating basis. The attraction of mechanized technology was diminished by availability and cost, but also by the labor supply, which was already beyond the absorbing capacity of agriculture for the country as a whole (Rothschild 1974:331; Crampton 1987:137; Wolff 1974:60-61).

With a growing population and partible inheritance the situation could only get worse (see Table II.1). As Petrov (1940:6) describes it,

On the same plot of land lives two to three times as many people. The forests have disappeared. Trade is dying. Animal husbandry is declining greatly. The land is being divided up into infinite numbers of little parcels, so that a large part of it is lost to borders and paths. The weakening [of agriculture] has set in because with the decline of animal husbandry the amount of animal manure has decreased.

Clearly, many interrelated changes were in motion. The shortage of land and excess labor stimulated a demographic transition which we will discuss in Chapter Four, but it did not immediately halt population growth. An important stopgap measure was apparently the clearing of forest

Table II.1 Size of landholdings in Bulgaria

<u>hec- tares</u>	<u>Percentage of holdings</u>		
	<u>1926</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1946</u>
0- 1	11.9	13.5	14.9
1- 5	45.1	49.6	53.7
5-10	28.0	26.2	24.5
10-20	12.6	9.2	6.2
20-30	1.8	1.1	0.6
30+	0.6	0.4	0.1

Source: Rothschild 1974:330

land, which occurred to some degree by default through the expanding need for fuel and wood, leaving denuded land for potential cultivation or for use as meadows. Sanders (1948:13) indicates that Dragalevtsy villagers had significantly reduced their forest holdings by the 1930s, and Zamfirovo residents also talked about an unspecified time "in the past" when the surrounding forests were much more extensive.

Bringing woodland under cultivation had ramifications for animal husbandry since livestock grazed in the forest. Prior to 1944 the private forests of villagers were used as common lands. They were privately owned, but if the forests were mature anyone from the village could pasture their animals there. Only young forests in early stages of regrowth were off limits. So, in effect, the deforestation of private holdings represented a decline in communal resources as well.

At the same time, the official common lands of the village were also at risk. Villages relied upon common land for the communal pasturage of their livestock, but the pressure on land generated attacks on these arrangements from various fronts. According to Sanders (1948:54), the shepherds and cattle herders of Dragalevtsy came into conflict over grazing rights and the local government resolved the issue by eliminating communal pasture altogether. In addition, other communal pastures in the mountains some distance from Dragalevtsy were, for an unexplained reason, "no longer available to the peasants" (Sanders 1948:54). Similar processes were evident in Zamfirovo. A written report on the village from 1926 declares a "desperate need" for more communal pasture, since the commons "is small and much has been taken over by cultivation." To make matters worse, the commons was shared with a neighboring village, and a legal battle between the two villages over use rights in the mid-1920s probably attests to increasing pressure on this resource. The village also lost access to common pasture in the Balkan mountains above Berkovitza where, until the early 1920s, sheep and goats were taken for summer grazing. According to village elders, the Sultan gave the village the right to use this meadow in Ottoman times, but the authorizing document was lost. The Bulgarian state allowed them to continue using the plot on a rental basis,

but early in the decade the state took part of it away and raised the rent on the remainder, making it unprofitable.

This instance was probably not unusual as common land became a major target of state policies in the inter-war period. Stamboliiski's Agrarian government came to power in 1920 promising land reform. Because most land was already in the hands of small holders, only 82,000 hectares were transferred before the fall of the government in 1923. Of this land, almost a quarter (24.99%) came from "village councils," while another 10 percent came from state property (Crampton 1987:89). The former was certainly communal property such as village commons and much of the latter, in all likelihood, had been rented to villages for communal use as described above for Zamfirovo. According to Crampton (1987:137), this division of communal property "continued apace" in the 1930s and early 1940s. Without suggesting a conspiracy, we can note that the attack on village communal property parallels the increasing central control of the Bulgarian state during the inter-war period.

The assault on pasture obviously affected animal husbandry and villagers probably had to alter livestock operations. This in turn affected agricultural enterprises dependent upon animal manure. The decline in pasture land could be offset by increasing the use of fallow for pasture. Thus the high percentage of fallow cited by Crampton (1987:139) was likely a consequence of

the very low national percentages of meadow and pasture land which he also notes. At the same time the increasing land pressure certainly restricted this strategy, and Lampe (1986:86) points out that much of the expansion in cultivated land in the 1930s occurred at the expense of fallow. The 1926 report on Zamfirovo states that only "the few better off farmers" left their weaker fields fallow for one to two years.

The limitations on manure and fallow were particularly detrimental in Zamfirovo because the land was generally of poor quality. These factors account for villagers' descriptions of inter-war adversity, replete with stories of hunger and poor diets consisting primarily of corn mush or white bean soup. There appears to be agreement on this desperate situation across generations. Petkov's (1940:6) elderly informants, interviewed in the 1930s, compared their lives unfavorably with "dear memories of the past," while my elderly informants of the 1980s considered contemporary life a vast improvement over their childhoods in the 1920s and 1930s. Clearly the inter-war period was one of increasing difficulty, which is perhaps not surprising given the global economic depression of the 1930s.

Still, comments by the same individuals, as well as documents and secondary sources, suggest that there may have been periods of deceleration, respite and even reversal in the spiraling decline. For example, while

talking about the land shortage, many informants also complained about how much they had to work--"we got up before dawn and worked until dark." Although this attests to the difficulty of life, it also suggests that there was work to be done and that underemployment had not reached the point of wide-scale idleness. Information on migratory work may support such suggestions. A description from 1926 maintains that temporary labor migration had diminished in the 1920s: "In older times residents went as hired hands to villages in the plains, but now this is less common." If correct--and the report must be contrasted with the life histories of villagers which often included accounts of migratory wage work in the Danubian plain during this period--this observation could reflect a decline in the demand for such labor on the part of landowners in the plains, or an increase in local possibilities.

The land use statistics in Table II.2 suggest that the latter played some role as the total land under cultivation in Zamfirovo apparently increased significantly between 1916 and 1931. Surprisingly, this expansion outpaced village population growth so that the amount of land cultivated per capita went from approximately 5.67 decares in 1916 to approximately 8.12 decares in 1931. More surprisingly, acreage in grain was also expanding even though the price of grain was dropping and the export of Bulgarian grain declining, due in part

Table II.2 Zamfirovo land use, 1916 and 1931

Crop	Decares	
	<u>1916</u>	<u>1931</u>
wheat	4384.3	8280
rye	6.5	1100
barley	137.0	600
oats	1241.0	2000
corn	4177.8	7600
hemp	19.9	48
flax	5.5	-
fallow	453.7	- *
meadows	3451.8	4630.9
vineyards	658.3	1548.6**
poppy	-	5
sunflower	-	185
beans	-	55
potatoes	-	80
fodder beets	-	5
fruit orchard	-	3

*not a category in 1931 document

**plus 338.4 decares of young
vineyard not yet bearing

Source: Mihailovgrad archives

to North American competition. Government purchasing programs at higher than market prices may have been a factor in this paradox (Molloff 1933:60-62), but the changing nature of animal husbandry was probably more important. As described above, the increase in cultivated land likely occurred at the expense of pasture, forest and common lands, which probably prompted an intensification of husbandry techniques in the form of more stall feeding and cultivated livestock fodders, including grain. This suggestion is also consistent with the rise in per capita

grain consumption in the second half of the 1920s (Lampe 1986:53). Faced with an increasing need for animal feed and declining grain prices, farmers devoted more grain to animal feed. Unfortunately, this means we cannot automatically interpret higher grain consumption as an indication of improved living standards. It may simply have enabled household economies to maintain their customary access to animal products in the face of rising populations.

We do not have adequate historical data on animal production in Zamfirovo to analyze the ultimate economic consequences of these trends. Table II.3 shows a clear decline in cattle holding, but other data suggest that sheep more than compensated for these reductions. A brief historical note in the regional archives says that in the 1930s nearly every household in the village had seven to eight sheep, while nearly 100 households had over 30. This suggests a clear increase over the number in 1925. Paradoxically, however, in talking about this period villagers consistently reported that the majority of Zamfirovo residents could not support their household economies with their grain production and actually had to purchase grain supplements.

The explanation of this paradox is related to another change evident in Table II.2 which likely benefited villagers--the expansion of viticulture. This expansion predated and probably contributed to the national increase

Table II.3 Numbers of selected livestock in Zamfirovo

<u>Live-stock</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>Year</u> <u>1925</u>	<u>1931</u>
cows	403*	-	329
ox cows	128	-	117
sows	18	-	100
sheep	-	4540**	-
goats	-	300***	-

*208 households

**293 households

***67 households

Source: Mihailovgrad archives

in grape exports following the reduction in grain and tobacco exports in the 1920s. We should note, however, that positive assessments of the Bulgarian agrarian economy in the 1920s and 1930s, based on the shift in exports from wheat to tobacco and subsequently grapes, cannot be assumed to reflect improving economic conditions across the country. Areas of tobacco cultivation do not correspond exactly with major grain or grape growing regions, so economic transitions at the macro level tell us little about conditions on the ground. In this particular case, however, Zamfirovo was lucky. Its climate and soil, though not ideal, were at least suitable for grape cultivation. The viability of viticulture was demonstrated by limited cultivation immediately after World War I. When markets expanded for grapes in the 1920s, residents eagerly planted more vineyards and reaped

economic benefits, selling grapes for grain and other needs.

This expansion reflects the generally increasing commercialization of the village economy. Grape cultivation was underwritten by the sale of spring lambs to merchants in Berkovitz, which provided the cash to buy chemicals needed to protect vines from blight. The grapes were sold or exchanged in other villages and in Berkovitz for food as well as for cash to buy additional food, farm equipment, and other necessities. This also enabled villagers to buy clothing rather than make it, and older villagers reported that most of their clothes in the 1930s were purchased. In the village description from 1926, the school principal wrote that most clothes for men were still made at home, but their dress clothes and almost all women's clothes were store bought:

In regard to fashion, the village woman is imitating the city woman. She is abandoning the traditional clothes which she could make herself, and which are inexpensive and durable, for foreign things, even though they are often less comfortable and less attractive. Very few of the women's clothes are made at home. They are mostly bought in stores at high prices.

Such developments increased the opportunities for village craftsmen and artisans. In addition, it was in the 1920s and 1930s that villagers began purchasing metal plows, a clear indication of prosperity. The plow, made in Germany, was available in Mihailovgrad (then called Ferdinand) for 3,000 leva. Villagers remember this

clearly because it was a significant event when people first starting buying such plows. "It was a big occasion in the village and people would say, 'Oh, what's his name got a German plow.'"

Ironically, commercialization was combined with an increase in subsistence activity. Villagers diversified their subsistence economy to satisfy certain domestic consumption needs so that cash could be used for other things. This can be seen in Zamfirovo in the emergence of sunflower acreage (see Table II.2). Planting small amounts of crops such as sunflowers and, in a few cases, even sugar cane, limited the need for purchases of oil and sugar, reserving exchange resources for other products.

I am not suggesting that life was easy by any means, but farmers were able to adapt to changing local, national and international forces to maintain and even at times improve their situation. The depression restricted some of these possibilities in 1929 and the early 1930s (see Molloff 1933:60-62), but they were revived by the continued increase in German trade later in the decade. Villagers report that prices for their products increased in the late 1930s and early war years, supporting Lampe's (1986:85) claim that the purchasing power of the rural population had regained 1929 levels by the end of the 1930s.

During the war there were forced requisitions, but apparently they were not overly exacting. The increasing

importance of grapes in the local economy probably helped in this regard, since fruit had higher requisition prices and was less subject to governmental control than grain. Moreover, villagers apparently found ways to circumvent the grain requisitions. As one villager put it, "I do not remember the exact amounts of the requisitions, but they were not that bad, and it did not matter because we hid the goods instead of handing them over." Like the villagers of Dragalevtsy (Sanders 1949:186-7), they shook their own supply of grain from the sheaves before taking them to official threshing stations. Successfully retained grain could then be sold on the expansive and lucrative black market, itself a product of the system of requisitioning. Prices for black market food were so high that farmers could get significant cash returns without cutting into their subsistence production. Villagers said that they could get any price they wanted for goods during the war, and many claimed that Germans arrived with small printing presses and printed as much money as they needed to purchase village products. Sanders (1949:184) says that the prosperity brought to Dragalevtsy by the war was reflected in the number of new modern houses built in the war years and in the number of radios.

This system of exchange obviously had limits, and soon there was less for villagers to sell and nothing for them to buy. "Yes we could get a lot of money for everything we raised," one villager recalled, "but there

was nothing for us to buy with it." The situation worsened significantly after the war. Requisitions increased in both the number of affected crops and the amounts demanded, while prices paid for agricultural products declined. In addition the program of labor service begun by the Agrarian Government in the early 1920s continued, requiring residents to work at least six days per year, usually on village construction projects. Amounts of agricultural quotas were assessed for local districts as a whole on the basis of the category of the local resources. Local councils then distributed the burden to residents according to the size of landholdings and number of livestock, usually giving some consideration to the number of household members, much like a progressive income tax in kind. Rates were high. As of April 1950, holdings over 10 hectares owed the state 75 percent of their grain crop (Lampe 1986:148). Dobrin (1973:44) claims that the requisitions were so high that some farmers were forced to purchase produce on the black market in order to fulfill their quotas. Documents from the village give the amount of hay required from Zamfirovo in 1949 at 28,500 kilograms. A document from 1953 puts the milk obligations at 160 liters per cow and the meat requisitions on the basis of land ownership as listed in Table II.4. As the document points out, however, these rates represent a 21 percent reduction from previous years.

Table II.4 Requisition rates for meat in Zamfirovo, 1954

<u>Size of holding</u>	<u>Meat requisition</u>
1 to 10 decares	- 2.1 kilograms per decare
10 to 30 decares	- 2.3 kilograms per decare
30 to 50 decares	- 2.6 kilograms per decare
50 to 70 decares	- 2.9 kilograms per decare

Like the Transylvanian villagers interviewed by Verdery (1983:35), the residents of Zamfirovo were uncharacteristically reticent about the privations of this early socialist period. Recollections of the past were usually prefaced with the common Bulgarian expression, "before the 9th," which referred to the official beginning of the communist era on September 9, 1944. Temporal comparisons made in the other direction were usually prefaced with "after collectivization," which was completed in 1956, leaving the intervening dozen years unaccounted for. Given this gap and the historical data related above, it is clear to me that villagers used the phrase "before the 9th" as a political ruse to talk about the privations and hardships of the early socialist period.

Some villagers verified this intuition after getting to know me well by attesting to the difficulties of the post-war period, especially the distress caused by quotas. As one man described it:

From our 25 pails of wheat, they took 10 to 15 for the state. We had to keep 5 to 10 for seeds for the following year, which left us five pails for our own use. Nothing! We fared better with animal products because we continued to hide them in the forest, but then we had nothing left to feed them so what could we do?

As this comment suggests, villagers continued the subterfuges perfected during the war to elude extractions. They hid animals in the forest to reduce the amount of milk, wool and meat they were required to hand over. They even hid wine and brandy there to escape the tax assessed on these products. While land could not be concealed, some people hid their products and claimed that the harvest was insufficient to fulfill the quota. The post-war government, however, was more vigilant than the wartime regime in collecting these obligations, and they became progressively more so with the consolidation of Communist Party control. Higher administrative levels held village officials responsible for fulfilling requisitions, forcing them to scour the village for clandestine operators and their caches. The officials recounted to me the difficulty of their assignment while villagers complained about unfair officials and burdensome exactions. It was clearly a constant struggle.

Evidence of the struggle is recorded in the minutes of meetings of the village governing bodies during the late 1940s and early 1950s. At the meeting of the local Fatherland Front committee on May 15, 1945, officials reported that the requisition of lambs was stymied by the

large number of "hidden lambs" and the committee authorized village leaders to search out and take them. At the same meeting they also discussed the difficulties in collecting milk requisitions due to the collective pasturing of sheep. They resolved that communal shepherds could not milk sheep for personal consumption until the amount of the required requisition had been collected from each sheep owner. In 1949, difficulties related to requisitions were brought up at five different meetings of the People's Council and by 1950 it was virtually a regular item on the agenda. The list of products at issue grew. Pork products--lard and meat--became a central concern in 1950. This coincided with a national campaign to increase pork production, remembered well by villagers because of a famous socialist slogan at the time which became the source of many jokes: "Every farmer a pig; every communist two." During this period the progress of requisition campaigns of milk, hemp, grain, wool and hay were also repeatedly recorded in the minutes.

Relying on such a frustrating and potentially precarious procedure for resource mobilization, it is no wonder that the state became increasingly involved in assuring the production of goods to be requisitioned. Village leaders were charged by higher levels to oversee and assure that private farmers operated to maximize output. There were timetables for sterilizing seed grain, planting, weeding, and harvesting. The minutes of the

village council include numerous reports on the progress of these various campaigns. Committees were formed for surveying the harvest--making sure it was completed in the most propitious time frame, with the least waste, and obviously, with the fulfillment of requisitions. In the spring of 1951 the village council decided that those who had not planted their crops or weeded their fields by the specified deadlines would be "severely punished."

Government organs were involved in all phases of private agricultural labor, from plowing to harvesting to requisitioning the fruits. Also, through requisition demands the government determined what was planted; quotas placed on particular products forced villagers to produce them.

Another trend clearly evident in these records is the increasing diligence and power of local officials in regard to collecting these quotas. In March of 1950, a 500 leva fine was threatened against those who did not fulfill their hemp quotas, and fines of unspecified amounts were subsequently levied against those not handing over their wool. Officials authorized extensive searches of the village for cows and milk. Villagers were told in the fall of 1950 that they had to present the lard requisition immediately upon slaughtering a pig, and officials were charged with keeping track of who killed pigs. One report authorized officials to check all those people who had not provided their hay quotas and see if

they had any. If not, it was decided the officials should take more hay from anybody who had any. On a related issue, officials suggested that villagers be prohibited from selling eggs at the Berkovitza market in order to ensure their sale to the local cooperative. In January of 1951 a fine of 500 leva was levied on those who had not fulfilled their labor obligations for the previous year. These measures make it clear why villagers may have resorted to black market purchases to fulfill requisitions.

Under this array of obligations, villagers were certainly feeling increasing pressure. In the meantime the problems of the pre-war period had not disappeared. Population increase had slowed but was still a factor in the late 1940s. At the same time communal grazing lands continued to be encroached upon, now by the officially favored cooperative sector. In 1945 three decares of a nearby commons were given over to the Labor-Production Cooperative for the purposes of raising and grafting young grapevines. In April of 1948 the Council expropriated the plots of three villagers and compensated them with money and common lands. In 1949 similar arrangements were made in exchange for a plot of private forest and a man's garden plot taken over for use by the school.

Apparently then, the pressure on land did not abate and, given the increasingly strident requisition program, the limited strategies developed in response to land

shortage in the 1920s were no longer viable. Consequently, the second half of the 1940s and early 1950s saw a decline in economic conditions for villagers. According to Lampe (1986:125), by late 1946, farmers were slaughtering livestock due to lack of food. When the Zamfirovo village council was asked by higher government organs in 1948 to provide a list of families in the village who were "poor and needy," the council responded that "all are poor and needy except for 106 families," and they provided a list of these names instead. By this time there were certainly more than 500 households, so at least four fifths of the village were considered "poor and needy." Even considering the possibility of exaggeration for political effect, this is a significantly negative appraisal. The difficulty of the period was also verified by the thoroughly negative assessments offered by villagers whose confidence I shared. One villager told how people wore coarse silk shirts because there were no clothes to buy and silkworms were one of the few products they could raise and process locally for lightweight cloth. This contrasts vividly with the commercial availability of clothes during the inter-war period, as previously noted. One friend described this period as "a battle," and another characterized it with a standard Bulgarian cliché for hard times, saying "it was worse than Turkish servitude."

Apparently the government was aware of the increasing difficulty. A Zamfirovo document from 1954 reported the national change from a progressive milk quota to a flat rate per cow, citing the disincentive of the old arrangement which had led people to reduce their cattle holdings, exacerbating the decline of this sector evident in the 1920s. This change accompanied the previously mentioned reduction in requisition rates across the board. Both changes suggest a general governmental sensitivity to the deteriorating predicament of agricultural producers.

These difficulties made it increasingly imperative that the country complete collectivization. Collectivization allowed for consolidation of arable land which made it amenable to an economy of scale sufficient to increase output. Redundant labor could then be siphoned off for the industrial work force. The remaining agricultural workers, detached from their diversified subsistence base, would depend upon the compensation they received from the cooperative farm, the rates of which would insure the necessary resources for state investment priorities. There were other routes to development which the Bulgarian Communist leadership bypassed, no doubt because of an ideological preference for the Soviet model, but at least this model fit the Bulgarian situation. Furthermore, Lampe (1986:124) suggests that the prospect of acquiring Soviet agricultural machinery was a factor fostering the consolidation of Communist Party control in

Bulgaria from the onset. In other words, agricultural objectives could shape ideological choices as well as the reverse.

Whether or not agricultural needs actually influenced ideological preferences, it is incomplete to see collectivization as solely a solution to the above problems. Collectivization was underway in the village since 1948 and early efforts in this direction contributed to the problems just described. Furthermore, collectivization was part and parcel of the national industrialization drive which sapped resources from agriculture via low purchase prices and requisitions, contributing to the deteriorating conditions of village life. Thus, we must see this period as part and parcel of the collectivization-industrialization program. As it proceeded, additional agricultural resources, both labor and capital, became increasingly essential for industrial expansion, pushing collectivization to completion. At the same time the experiences of the late 1940s and early 1950s shaped the response of villagers to the more relentless pushes which ensued.

Collectivization

The collectivization drive began in 1945 as a preemptive strike by Bulgarian communist leaders and their Soviet benefactors attempting to secure a position in the post-war power vacuum. Communist control, however, proved

to be a prerequisite for collectivization rather than a result, and limited progress was made until the consolidation of communist power in 1947. Between 1945 and 1947 the cooperative share of arable land rose to only 3.8 percent (Brown 1970:198). Perhaps more significant than the quantity, however, is the fact that cooperatives were organized entirely through voluntary means, amid official Party pronouncements against any form of compulsion. During this time Zamfirovo residents frequently discussed the pros and cons of cooperativism and the possibility of starting a cooperative farm. No action was taken, however, because of the poor performance of existing cooperatives, one of which was in a neighboring village. It had no machines so the work was no easier than private production and the income was less. Such examples did little to convert village curiosity into enthusiasm.

The situation changed for Zamfirovo with the national consolidation of Communist Party control in 1947. Early in 1948, at the suggestion of higher Party organs, the local Party committee decided to form a cooperative farm. As in many other villages (see Zhivkova 1989:165), this was accomplished by forming an agricultural division within already existing cooperative institutions. In Zamfirovo a cooperative "Savings and Loan Society" had been founded in 1911, but it had few assets and, according to local reports, did not begin effective operation until

1932. In that year it changed its title to "Credit Cooperative" and attracted an increasing membership. This reflects a nation-wide increase during the 1930s in all aspects of the cooperative system--the number, membership, and assets of cooperatives all expanded. The motivation for this included the improved local fortunes previously described, as well as national initiatives such as the increase in bank loans to cooperatives and the channelling of increased state agricultural investments through the cooperative network (Lampe 1986:83).

Much has been made of this cooperative network as a forerunner of subsequent socialist relations in the countryside (e.g. Kolev and Olovanski 1977). It is certainly true that cooperativism has a long and distinguished history in Bulgaria, beginning as early as 1890 and including cooperation in production and marketing as well as providing credit (see Billaut 1988; Siulemezov 1986). Still, we must be careful how we interpret this background in regard to collectivization. Danilov (1989), for example, sees cooperativism in the Soviet case not as a predecessor of collectivization, but as an alternative which Stalin rejected. This distinction was evident even earlier in Bulgaria in the opposition between Stamboliiski's Agrarian platform, which stressed increasing cooperation between private peasant proprietors, and the Communist platform of wholesale nationalization. Focusing on such opposition, Oren

(1973:114) suggests that the degree of cooperativism actually made collectivization "all the more unpopular."

Nevertheless, when the communists came to power, they drew heavily on cooperative arrangements, so the relationship between these two forms became intricately intertwined. Among the cooperative elements of the early collective farms were the following: villagers retained title to the land they contributed, they could contribute only part of their land, and they were allowed to withdraw, mortgage, or sell their contribution. Most important, the collective paid them rent for their land, so that people who contributed more holdings got more income. In Zamfirovo, the early cooperative allocated 40 percent of the farm's profits to the payment of rent, with the remaining 60 percent divided according to labor contribution.

As we will see, all these arrangements were gradually eliminated. The collectivization process then can be best characterized as the "cooperativization" of agriculture followed by, and combined with, the nationalization of cooperatives. Villagers joined cooperatives which were gradually stripped of their cooperative elements as the process unfolded. Ludzhev (1989) fashionably characterizes the early stages in this process as the "restructuring" of the cooperative movement. Given this progression, Stillman's (1958:67-68) dismissal of the cooperative movement as insignificant to collectivization

is clearly indefensible, but finding socialist predilections in cooperative traditions is also suspect. The two were in a complex and changing relationship. I use the term collectivization because it was the ultimate de facto consequence of this interaction.

Cooperatives provided the base of operations for collectivization. Progress during the period between 1944 and 1950 was focused on reinforcing and expanding this foundation. New cooperatives were established and existing ones induced to expand and diversify. In Zamfirovo the credit cooperative took on additional commercial and production activities and changed its name to "Commerce Cooperative" in 1950. In 1947 a new Labor-Production Cooperative had been formed with various village craftsmen, and it was this group that village leaders tapped for organizing a "Labor Cooperative Agricultural Economy," commonly referred to by the acronym TKZS (pronounced tay-kay-zay-say). Local Party leaders approached the chairman of the Labor-Production Cooperative, engaged his support, and conveyed to him a list of about six "influential" people to serve as the initiating committee. These people convened the following day, elected the cooperative chairman as president of the new committee, and divided up the village into sections with each committee member taking responsibility for drumming up cooperative support in one zone. They

reported to each other on their progress at weekly Sunday meetings.

According to the president, this cooperative campaign got off to a slow start. He blamed several committee members for limited enthusiasm and particularly faulted the Party organization for not exerting pressure on Party members to join in. This suggests that local Party leaders were either hedging against an anti-communist backlash resulting from any cooperative campaign, or alternatively, attempting to minimize resistance from non-communists by keeping a respectable distance from the process. This changed later, but in the meantime, the president and one other committee member ended up canvassing the whole village. They were often met with insults, taunts and even threats. A common response was that it was "too early" to form a cooperative farm and that the village was "not ready." There is merit in this argument as the village lacked the farm machinery and other technological advances to make an economy of scale most efficient.

The president of the committee resigned his post as chair of the parent Labor-Production Cooperative and devoted himself full-time to mobilizing support for the TKZS. By October the committee had convinced approximately 30 families to join the agricultural cooperative. Deciding this was sufficient, they convened a meeting on October 14 to officially enroll the founding

members, elect leaders and begin planning the work of the farm. On that night 27 families signed the original document. Six more families joined just two months later.

The general belief, among both Bulgarian villagers and outside observers, is that these early joiners were the poorest farmers. One villager characterized the founders of the farm as "men with only one goat to their name." According to him, "they were followed into the cooperative by those with one cow, and only later by those with two cows." Another villager made the same point in joke form when he asked, "What do big frogs say?" I admitted my ignorance of frog communication and he responded with "k-u-lak, k-u-lak," drawing out the word to make it sound almost amphibian. "What does the tiny frog say?" he then inquired. I shrugged and he delivered the punch line in rapid syncopation, "Tay-Kay-Zay-Say, Tay-Kay-Zay-Say." I laughed and pretended not to notice the disapproving glare his wife gave him.

Data challenge this stereotype. A description of the TKZS from the archives characterizes the founders as "poor and paltry" but gives the amount of land they contributed as 1,085 decares. Even discounting the 74 decares that may have come from other village holdings, the average contribution works out to nearly 32 decares per member. This is indisputably a small holding, but not radically smaller than the pre-war averages for the village as a whole (see above). Also, we must bear in mind that

members were not required to contribute all their land at this point and in all likelihood many withheld some holdings for private cultivation. The inventory of property contributed by early members shows that none of them gave vineyards, which certainly they had. So, the landholdings of early members were even greater than the total for the new cooperative, suggesting that limited land resources was not the only motivation driving cooperative membership.

Political commitment was a factor for some. One joiner said he joined because "once the people's power had been established it was expected that we would move toward cooperative production." For others their social connection to people in the initiating committee was instrumental; at least three of the founders were either relatives or neighbors of the president. Conversely, other people refused to join because they were at odds with someone else supporting the cooperative. Still others who were previously on good terms came to loggerheads because of their different attitudes toward the initiative.

The potential role of social and economic relations within households and families is even more fascinating. While several of the founders were reputed to be from poor families, many had married into families that were better off, significantly improving their economic prospects. Dependence on the wife's property, however, also meant

dependence upon the wife's parents and in some cases this included moving in with her family in order to inherit her family's property. This undesirable arrangement placed the in-marrying male in a subordinate relationship to his in-laws. The cooperative offered a way out.

The tension between in-laws is a significant theme in Bulgarian folklore, reinforced by everyday events. The possibility that such a motivation underlay cooperative membership was suggested by a large extended-family household in the village in which two married sons lived together with their wives and children, and their parents, in clearly cramped quarters. A friend of the family told me that the wife of one of the sons was an only child whose parents had a big house, but refused to let the young couple live with them because of the potential for conflict with the son-in-law. The friend attested to the wisdom of this decision by pointing out that you can have many hens in a chicken coup, but only one rooster. I began to explore this issue and soon discovered that several early cooperative supporters had been dependent upon their in-laws in various ways. Cooperative membership was a godsend for these men. Not only did it allow them to escape an unhappy subordination, but as the national preference for cooperative membership became more pronounced, it actually allowed them to reverse it.

These motivations continued to attract members, but as production actually got underway new considerations

emerged. Members contributed disparate fragmented parcels. In order to consolidate them into larger blocks amenable to collective cultivation, the cooperative was legally empowered to expropriate private land bordering or separating cooperative plots, compensating the owners with equivalent land elsewhere. The exchange was very complicated, time consuming, and the source of endless conflicts between the commission responsible for coordinating the exchange and private holders. Very few people were satisfied with the exchanges. They complained about the quality of the land they received, about the lack of consideration for location, and especially about the lack of compensation for resources that were on their land at the time of the exchange, such as hay in meadows, wood in forest plots, and the fruit trees on cultivated lands.

Some took their complaints to the regional level, but apparently got little satisfaction. Others went straight to the top, writing directly to Chervenko, the leader of the Communist Party at the time. Responding to a deluge of complaints from all over the country, the Central Committee deployed regional representatives to deal with them. A Party leader from the town of Lom came to Zamfirovo for this purpose, bringing with him 500 complaints that had been registered against the Zamfirovo TKZS. The president of the TKZS defended the cooperative against the charges, most of which he told me were minor.

Some were dismissed and some plaintiffs received additional compensation. Perhaps sensing their disadvantaged position in these negotiations, at least a few people decided to join the cooperative upon being targeted for expropriation, rather than contest the land offered in exchange.

Once land had been consolidated into large blocks, the cooperative requested the plowing services of the machine tractor station in the town of Bouchinovtsi. At this time there were relatively few such stations. They were equipped primarily with the limited number of tractors supplied by the Soviet Union after the war to advance the communist cause. Nationalization of large farm machinery was authorized in Bulgaria in 1947, but it was a gradual process. Nor was the number of private tractors very large to begin with, especially in the region around Zamfirovo. It is not surprising then that the tractors never came to the village. Instead, the cooperative engaged the services of two farmers from neighboring villages who had unaccounted-for access to tractors in 1948. With much ceremony, including political speakers, a band, and one dissenter insulting the cooperative president, the tractors plowed the farm. Sowing, however, was done by hand, as was harvesting and most of the other work.

With cultivation underway, the performance of the cooperative provided another consideration for would-be

members. The Zamfirovo cooperative did well. The president attributed this to the fact that most of the members were supporters of the Party and devotees of the Soviet model, so "they followed direction closely and were diligent workers." Political commitment may indeed have been a decisive factor as the cooperative, lacking the technology of an economy of scale, continued to operate in much the same way as private producers yet posted higher returns in the first harvest of 1949. The cooperative also received a major loan from the state for construction needs. Such success inspired 14 new members to join soon after the harvest and may have been a factor in later campaigns, as the farm continued to perform well. At a regional conference in 1951 the farm was commended for its exemplary organization and performance.

By 1950, however, such considerations were less significant than the increasing pressures coming from the national level. Reports point out that various mechanisms of compulsion were put in place in the last years of the 1940s, including the nationalization of forests, the forced purchase of agricultural machinery, and the installation of rationing priorities which privileged cooperative members in the allocation of scarce commodities. These programs, of course, took time to reach the village. For example, as just noted, two nearby tractor owners still had their tractors at the end of 1948. By 1950, however, these requirements were being

enforced in tandem with a stepped up propaganda campaign. This was the beginning of the national drive to collectivize, often referred to as "massovization." In a nutshell the strategy was to make private cultivation as difficult as possible, while making cooperative cultivation more appealing. Its effectiveness can be seen clearly in the number of Zamfirovo residents entering the cooperative in 1950 and 1951 (see Table II.5).

Table II.5 Number of villagers
joining the cooperative by year

<u>Year</u>	<u>New members</u>
1948	33
1949	14
1950	58
1951	69
1952	26
1953	4
1954	29
1955	1
1956	600*

*approximate

The increasing involvement from the national level was evident in the arrival of a representative sent by the Central Committee of a nearby city. Everyone was very reticent about his role, though one member of the original initiating committee commented that the committee did not need or request his help. This mirrors the account given to Langazov (1984:54) by the first president of the TKZS

in the village of Pushevo, who recalled the arrival of a district representative to promote collectivization, but could not remember his name. At the same time villages had to send local representatives to attend a one-year course for cooperative farm presidents organized by the state. Zamfirovo sent a younger man who had not been among the original founders. Upon his return in 1951 he assumed the presidency of the farm.

At this time the Party organization also became more active in the collectivization drive. Not only were there weekly meetings with the Party secretary to discuss progress, but Party members had to join the cooperative or risk being expelled. This coincided conveniently with the general purging of ranks as the Party became secure enough to transform itself from a mass movement into a vanguard organization. Lack of support for collectivization or any hesitation in joining the TKZS became grounds for culling. A few such cases were recorded in the minutes of the village council. These examples were probably enough to bring any outstanding Party members into the cooperative, though many (some estimated over 100) were still forced out of the Party for other reasons.

The eventual expropriation of farm machinery affected very few villagers, though the TKZS's access to it may have made cooperative cultivation more appealing. In contrast, the exclusionary rationing system was acutely felt. Almost all the products available in the village

stores could only be acquired with ration slips which were reserved for cooperative members. As already described, villagers had long since stopped producing many of these items so they were vulnerable to such tactics. As one villager put it, "Of course, you did not have to join the cooperative, unless you wanted shoes on your feet and a shirt on your back." Alternate ways of meeting these needs were checked by a concomitant assault on private craftsmen who were forced into trade cooperatives. Permission of the village council was required to practice privately and, based on the disposition of several requests recounted in the minutes, it was never given. Those who continued to operate privately eventually had their tools expropriated.

We may recall that just as villagers were being denied access to products they did not produce, they were being required to hand over more and more of what they did produce through the expanding requisition program. Of course the system of delivery quotas itself was intended to encourage cooperative membership as well as provide resources for the state, hence the lower requisition rates for cooperatives. We should also note that the inability of private farmers to meet the higher delivery quotas was exacerbated by the establishment and expansion of the cooperative itself. Among other things, the exchange of land to create cooperative blocks occurred at great expense to village common lands. The minutes from a

meeting of the TKZS land exchange commission on January 10, 1949, states that the land of private farmers incorporated into cooperative blocks would be compensated with equivalent land "from communal or cooperative holdings." Of the 14 exchanges that were recorded, 13 of them were made with common land, amounting to 44 decares; only one plot, measuring two and a half decares, was compensated with TKZS property. Furthermore, the minutes point out that the new farm directly annexed an additional 30 decares of communal pasture. Such actions further damaged the economy of private producers, diminishing their ability to fulfill the increasing requisition quotas.

Although this period has been characterized as a "struggle," we can also see why the cooperative, with its lower delivery quotas and rationing advantages, seemed to many the only choice. That the cooperative expanded considerably in 1950-51 with minimal resistance is thus understandable. Those farmers determined to make a go of it on their own resented the cooperative campaigners and felt threatened by their project, yet their opposition was rarely more than verbal. The founding president of the cooperative recalled only one situation where he was physically threatened. The individual involved had proven particularly resistant to the proselytizing of an initiating committee member, so they decided to go en masse to make a stronger impression. A group of 15

assembled and headed to his house where they found him on the balcony, splitting wood for kindling. As two of the group entered the yard, he began cursing and threatening them, insisting that they get off his property, then pelting them with firewood when they did not comply. They took cover behind a cart in the yard, whereupon he hurled the hatchet he had been using as well. According to the president, it whizzed right by his head, lodging in the side of the cart. At this point the rest of the group subdued the man, intending to take him to the police, but the president decided to let him go. Apparently, this incident was the pinnacle of forceful resistance in Zamfirovo

Elsewhere, the amount of coercion and resistance was more extensive and assumed numerous forms. The most overt were riots and revolts. Brisby (1960:40) claims that "widespread discontent led to riots in several parts of the country," but other accounts list only three specific examples of such unrest. Jones and Jankoff (1957:304) report that huge segments of the rural population in the Vidin region and around the town of Kula, both in the northwestern tip of the country, revolted in March of 1950. Details are not given, but they claim that "repression by the armed forces was bloody." Brown (1970:202) mentions the Kula incident, along with rioting in Teteven, northeast of Sofia, as responses to governmental pressures. It was officially admitted that

even members of the communist youth organization participated in the Teteven revolt which consisted primarily of plundering the equipment and animals of the collective farm.

The plundering of animals, crops, and equipment was a more general strategy of resistance evident in other areas of the country as well. Dobrin (1973:45) says

there was mass slaughtering of livestock and damage to durable cultures. In the few days prior to their scheduled collectivization many peasants cut down all their fruit trees. In some houses when the collectivization group arrived to pick up the inventory and livestock there were real battles with the peasant families, in many cases with loss of human life.

Drawing on published newspaper articles from 1950 to 1951, Jones and Jankoff (1957:304) relate three stories of peasants damaging farm machinery, sixteen accounts of arson, and one report of a massive slaughter of cattle in Stara Zagora. They assert that accounts such as the latter "appear constantly in the Party press." Similarly, Brisby (1960:44) traces the serious meat shortages of the mid-1950s to the "wholesale slaughter of animals which was the peasants' desperate answer to collectivization."

Further evidence of resistance was the continuing attempt by peasants to leave the collective farms. Langazov (1984:51-52) reports that 113 people left the cooperative in the village of Pushevo in late summer of 1951 as a result of "subjective mistakes" made at the beginning of the harvest. This probably had to do with

the right of people who entered the collective after the 1951 sowing to harvest their own fields privately, a conflict that developed in Zamfirovo as well. According to Brown (1970:202), it was officially admitted that four to five percent of cooperative members wished to leave the farms. Indeed, Chervenkov admitted in 1951 that such withdrawals were a sign of "strong hesitation on the part of peasants who were still not convinced of the righteousness of the cooperative idea" (Jones and Jankoff 1957:304). Such hesitation, along with other types of resistance, no doubt induced the government to moderate its drive for collectivization in 1951, and later to reduce the amounts of requisitions. Zhivkova (1989:168) says the cooperative in the village of Dobrodan received a "directive 'from above' to halt work on the formation of the TKZS." Zamfirovo officials whom I interviewed did not recall this particular communication among the numerous others they received in regard to collectivization, but it is reflected in lower numbers of cooperative joiners between 1952 and 1955 (see Table II.5).

Because collectivization depended upon local people in the villages, the effect of governmental directives and the potential for resistance varied from village to village. Early progress, for example, depended upon locals who were committed to agricultural cooperativism or communist ideals. Where such actors were missing, little if any progress was made. Although a new factor was added

with the arrival of government representatives to stimulate cooperative expansion, the role of these individuals was generally less significant than that of the local leadership. Once the government began insisting on cooperative expansion, however, local leaders and Party members became motivated by a wider set of circumstances, for they were now judged on the progress of the campaign. This accounts for some of the "excesses," as ambitious local leaders responded to the expectations of their superiors, even to the detriment of local concerns. Thus, as Gyurova (1989) points out, even the excesses of local authorities, which the central government sometimes castigated, were in part a result of the centralized top-down governmental structure itself.

This is not to argue, however, that the national government was separated from or unresponsive to local difficulties. This was especially evident in the halt of the collectivization drive in 1951, and the accompanying censure of "excesses." In one of the areas of rioting the entire local Party leadership was dismissed. While there was evident scapegoating here, it was still a response to local discontent. Similarly, the increase in private livestock limits in 1953/54 (from five sheep to 10, and one pig to two) showed national sensitivity to one of the major discontents of cooperative villagers. In this sense the Bulgarian case clearly conforms to Kideckel's (1982)

model of collectivization as a multi-level adaptive process between national and local forces.

The state, of course, often adjusted its strategies to aggregate local factors, that is, to general trends in the country as a whole, which did not necessarily apply to every locality. Thus, in Zamfirovo, as Zhivkova (1989:169) suggests for the village of Dobrodan as well, the halt in collectivization did not seem to have been necessary. In fact we see continued growth in the Zamfirovo cooperative in 1951, a year in which Brown reports that cooperative land increased only 3.2 percent nationwide, yet less expansion in 1952 when the national statistics on cooperative growth rebounded. Overall, though, the two major periods of cooperative expansion in Zamfirovo corresponded closely with national-level pushes for cooperative membership, first in 1950 and then again in 1956. Between these periods the dynamism of the village cooperative, with its alternating phases of expansion and consolidation, reflected mainly local patterns of political commitment and farm success.

The five year respite, of sorts, between 1951 and 1956 proved to be a major tactical success for the government. By the time the national push was revived full force in 1956 those who had previously resisted surely saw the writing on the wall. More importantly, their harrowing struggle to make a go of private agriculture in the intervening years likely eroded much of

their commitment to this form of production. At the same time villagers were starting to see industrial employment as a future option, so that land ownership and inheritance was less essential. Consequently, once collectivization was mandated again in 1956, it was accomplished with limited resistance in little more than two years.

In Zamfirovo three months sufficed. After receiving instructions from the regional Central Committee to bring outstanding farmers into the cooperative, the president of the village council and the Party secretary were able to mobilize only about 50 families. So, a new approach, combining carnival with psychological terrorism, was devised to garner the rest--some 500 families in all. The 200 politically active and/or cooperative members in the village were divided into "commissions" of at least three members, each including an Agrarian Party member and an unaffiliated villager as well as a Communist Party representative. Each commission was responsible for agitating in a different area of the village. After presenting their arguments to each private proprietor in their area, they reassembled with all the other commissions for a "mass attack." In two large groups, each backed up by a musical band, they canvassed the village, going from house to house playing music, shouting, singing, and presenting household proprietors with declarations of cooperative membership to sign. As one participant described it, "The people were so shocked

by the music and crowds that they hardly knew what was happening. They were frightened and joined because of the noise and excitement and the crowd pressure." One of the activists described the process more harshly as "an attack on the people, almost like a war. They did not know what was going on. They were frightened half to death and signed up." Those who signed were entreated to join the festivities, making the throng progressively more intimidating. Those who refused to sign up were sent to the town hall to meet with the president of the village council. He informed them of their new requisition requirements under a new schedule increasing private delivery quotas. These rates were exorbitant and further exaggerated for effect by the president. "When they heard these figures," the former president reported, "they usually signed up without hesitation."

The Zamfirovo campaign was so successful that a group of villagers was invited to the village of Giganitza to help with the campaign there. "We all rode to Giganitza in a big truck along with the band and, aided by the local activists, we completed massovization there as well." Not every village was so easily swayed. For example villagers around Belogradchik slaughtered some of their animals rather than hand them over to the cooperative, and cooperative members disbanded in support of the anti-collectivization forces. Many tried to run away to Yugoslavia, risking capture and imprisonment. Zamfirovo

informants interpreted the absence of such developments in their village as testimony to the good character of the villagers and the ingenuity of their tactics. While clearly self-aggrandizing, this interpretation underscores that no village experience could be universal.

The Zamfirovo strategy relied heavily upon village social relations. Once established, the cooperative had a snowballing effect due to the dense network of relations between villagers. As more and more villagers joined, it became increasingly difficult to function outside of the cooperative. As one man put it, "there was no one to help you slaughter your pig or help in the harvest because they were joining the cooperative. What could one do?" Some cooperative members refused to participate in labor exchanges with private holders for political reasons, but for most it was a matter of simple economics. Having given over most of their land and animals to the cooperative, they no longer needed help to farm the small plot they retained for private use, so why should they continue to help other villagers? Thus as collectivization progressed many were pulled into it by ties of interdependence among villagers. For those resisting, the sight of a hundred or more villagers descending upon their house--people to whom they were connected in multiple ways and with whom they had to interact daily--must have been daunting.

We can see the same considerations in the profiles of resistance in other villages, where what happened was often the mirror image of Zamfirovo developments: instead of everyone joining, everyone left the cooperative. In both scenarios the pressure of village social relations and ties of interdependence are revealed. I do not mean to minimize internal village conflict, which was often rife and at times a factor obstructing cooperative membership as previously suggested. The cooperative movement itself caused even more divisiveness and conflict between supporters and detractors. After a significant number of villagers were involved in the cooperative, however, such conflicts were neutralized by positive relations with other cooperative members.

Given the various considerations and pressures, we can appreciate that even for supporters of the collective idea the decision to join was rarely clear-cut or simple. Most people had attachments that they were hesitant to sever. For some it was to the land itself, but it was most movingly expressed to me in terms of animals. When the cooperative representatives came to collect the animals of new members, the scene was heart wrenching. "The women were crying and wailing like a funeral, and some of the men were so sullen that they could not speak at all. It was terrible. Baba Penka accompanied the animals all the way to the cooperative shed wailing the whole time."

The requirement to hand over animals was apparently not part of the original cooperative charter as few animals were included in the inventory of early joiners. It became mandatory later as the state extended control over agriculture, chipping away at the cooperative features of farm organization (see Ludzhev 1989; Michev 1990). Already, in 1950, the amount of production returned to members as rent on their contributed land was reduced and members were required to contribute all their property to the farm except for a small subsistence plot and a few animals. The sale of contributed property was also restricted. These controls continued apace until, by the time collectivization was complete in 1958, the farms were operating as national collectives rather than cooperative organizations. The completed transition was symbolized that year by the elimination of all vestiges of rent payments to original land owners. The transition from cooperative to collective, however, was probably less significant to villagers than the original transfer of their property, for we may recall that since the mid-1940s the state had been increasing its surveillance and involvement in private agricultural production, even setting and enforcing work schedules. Thus, the control of agricultural activity by the state was hardly a new adjustment.

Overall, what is clearly discernible in the collectivization process is a continuing attack on prior

cooperative arrangements. This included an assault on cooperative property, in the form of common pasture, a negation of cooperative labor exchanges which were rendered irrelevant, and the jural elimination of cooperative elements from the newly created collectives. Thus collectivization, which began as an expansion of pre-existing cooperative structures and arrangements, progressed by undermining these earlier forms, actually accelerating processes we suggested were underway in pre-war Bulgaria. In this way, socialist governments used collectivization to accomplish in eastern Europe what capitalism had achieved much earlier in western Europe through the enclosure acts and related attacks on cooperative arrangements.

Any sense of paradox is explained by the larger system in which the collective farms came to operate. Stripped of local cooperative mechanisms, the new farms were amenable to central control and planning. In retrospect the timing and coordination of this shift must be seen as either amazingly fortuitous or completely ingenious. By 1958, Bulgaria was fully collectivized, the second country in the world to achieve this feat, with a uniform system of centrally articulated cooperative farms amenable to centralized planning. This set the stage for the subsequent disengagement of villagers from agriculture, but it was only the beginning. The central

government continued to manipulate agricultural production and villagers initiated their own changes as well.

CHAPTER THREE

AGRICULTURAL REFORMATIONS

The collectivization experience established a general approach to agriculture which characterized Bulgaria throughout the socialist era. Bulgarian leaders were quick to embrace extreme reform measures, but just as quick to reverse or scale down programs in response to early failures and difficulties. Cutting back on reform measures, however, did not imply an abandonment of grandiose objectives, rather a practical approach to achieving them. The objects of post-collective agrarian reforms can be grouped into several categories. These include the size of farm units, the level of technology, the crop base of the farms, the organization of production, and the role of the "private" plots of villagers. Hardly unique to Bulgaria, these concerns are evident in various socialist agricultural systems (see e.g. Dunn and Dunn 1988; Karcz 1973; Kideckel 1979; Potter and Potter 1990; Salzmann and Scheufler 1986; Swain 1985). However, the sequence and particulars of change do distinguish the Bulgarian case.

As will be clear in what follows, these areas are not discrete categories, but overlapping dimensions of agricultural change. Not all of them have been the direct target of reform programs, but at the local level they

have all been affected by reforms in some way. This chapter looks at each of these concerns from the perspective of villagers who experienced them on a daily basis. It is not intended as an analysis of the Zamfirovo cooperative farm, nor of Bulgarian national agricultural policy, though it necessarily deals with both. Instead, the objective is to characterize the changing relationship between Zamfirovo villagers and agriculture over the last three decades. In so doing, we will see how continuing agrarian reforms following collectivization further enhanced local commitment to cooperative agricultural arrangements while also contributing to the process of village agricultural disengagement. Resolving this apparent paradox provides important insight into the interactive nature of socialism as a system of "conflicting complementarity," where something as deleterious as chronic shortage can be seen to have local-level benefits. This perspective, in turn, sheds significant light on the current difficulties associated with "transition."

The Economy of Scale

Attempting to capitalize on the momentum of collectivization, the state began consolidating the new collectives. Within a year of completing collectivization in Zamfirovo, the local farm was merged with that of Berkovitza, a town some 17 kilometers away. As in similar

cases throughout the country, poor performance was the official reason given for such incorporation. The tardiness of the farm in introducing strawberry cultivation, the decline in care of vineyards and the weak organization of the farm were cited in one document as reasons for the consolidation. In fact, it had more to do with state policy than local difficulties, as the state was convinced that socialist agriculture required large units of production. The limits of this dictum were soon apparent and the farms were separated again in the beginning of 1958. At this point, local difficulties did provide the catalyst, specifically the poor performance of the first year.

Similar scenarios were found throughout the country (Atanasov 1990), and elsewhere in eastern Europe for that matter (Bell 1983:138; Vasary 1987:89-90). In the case of Bulgaria, Achagu (1985) suggests that the mountainous and hilly terrain where nearly 30 percent of the arable land at the time was located made consolidation more difficult and less viable. The recurrent complaint about this period from villagers, however, was the mismanagement of the larger cooperatives after they were consolidated. In some cases villages brought under the administration of neighboring cooperatives even resorted to violence. Given that adjacent villages often had histories of bad relations and antipathies for any number of reasons, most notably disagreements over rights to communal lands, such

conflict was not surprising. As a Bulgarian rural sociologist put it, "villagers prefer smaller cooperatives corresponding to their village's land, and they want to control the disposition of their own products." They gained concessions in this regard but not a complete reversal. Before the end of the year, the separated Zamfirovo farm was augmented by the smaller farms of the neighboring villages of Purlichovo and Rashovitza, creating a large-scale cooperative farm that was more locally focused and administered. While some residents of the smaller villages continued to resent their lack of autonomy, this proved to be an optimal and viable compromise throughout the 1960s.

Bulgarian planners, however, did not abandon their prior goals, and by the mid-1970s they had again reduced Zamfirovo to a constituent element within a monumental agricultural unit centered at Berkovitza. This time the modus vivendi was the installation of the famous agro-industrial system, which represents the pinnacle of agricultural concentration in Bulgaria. The basis of this system was the amalgamation of the country's approximately 800 separate cooperative and state farms into roughly 170 large "agro-industrial complexes" (APKs).¹ The constituent farms (TKZSs) were renamed "complex brigades"

¹The exact number of constituent farms and resulting APKs varies from one report to another. The numbers given here are both the most recurrent and average.

to reflect their new position as mere work groups within the larger agricultural complex. This increased the size of the average Bulgarian agricultural unit nearly nine times (Entwistle 1972:246). Arable land averaged 25,000 hectares per complex. Even after the number of complexes was increased through division in 1977 to 274, their arable land still averaged 15,000 hectares, and Bulgaria could still lay claim to having "one of the most concentrated agricultures in the world" (Grozev 1981:291).

The motivations for such concentration were varied (see Wiedemann 1980). The ideological commitment to scale on the part of communist leaders continued to be a factor. The declining performance of agriculture in the late 1960s also spurred the eagerness for change. Increasing agricultural production was essential for both improving consumer satisfaction and providing crucial export products. Given limited investment resources, the advances scored in the past through increasing concentration, both in agriculture and industry, provided a proven model. Inspiration may also have come from elsewhere in eastern Europe, as the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia were embarking on programs of consolidation around the same time (see Salzmann and Scheufler 1986:114), though it is difficult to say who influenced whom in this regard. Perhaps even the capitalist trend toward agribusiness was a model, as there were certainly parallels in the two systems. Bulgarian leaders denied

the latter and insisted that concentration was necessary first and foremost to facilitate the application of the "scientific and technological revolution" to agriculture.

It is also likely that the idea was inspired in part by the renewed emphasis on central planning and control emerging in the wake of the Prague Spring in 1968, but it was already evident in the model statute on collective farms issued in 1967. The plenum of 1968 decided that localities lacked the comprehensive view of the economy necessary for efficient planning, especially in the circumstances of scientific and technological advancement. Hence the attraction of large complexes reporting directly to Sofia rather than to regional ministries. Clearly the timing was not coincidental, as experimental agro-industrial units were formed the following year and the national level program was officially sanctioned by the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the April plenum in 1970.

It is important to point out that the primary objective of the agro-industrial system was not, as is often assumed, the vertical integration of agricultural and industrial sectors, but rather horizontal integration between farming units. There were approximately ten "industrial-agricultural complexes" which attempted to coordinate agricultural production with associated industrial processing. However, for the vastly more numerous "agro-industrial complexes," the use of the word

"industrial" referred simply to the practice of agriculture on an industrial basis. In this sense the relationship between the agro-industrial system and the utilization of science and technology is clearer, since industrial agriculture typically involves both a large scale of operation and extensive mechanization.

At the local level the system appears much less formulaic. Some areas of the country were more amenable to an economy of scale, and APKs provided the foundation for a highly specialized industrial agriculture. The prime example is the southern Dobrudzha in the northeast of the country, where massive grain fields were established. The area around Zamfirovo, like much of the country, is predominantly foothills with a varied crop base. If this terrain was a barrier to cooperative consolidation following collectivization, as Achagu (1985) suggests, then the same can be said of agro-industrial consolidation. There was much less to be gained here from industrial style organization, and consequently the APK was much less effective (see Boyd 1990).

The deficiencies of the APK system in the area of Zamfirovo became evident only as the system evolved. According to official reports, these complexes were in place by 1972, but Zamfirovo residents and farm workers dated their entry into the system to 1974. This two-year difference reflects a change in the role of agro-industrial functioning probably beginning in 1974, toward

greater central control. Increasingly, the offices of the APK became less a coordinating center and more a direct administrator, steadily usurping the local farms' decision making responsibilities. That this trajectory was part of the original plan is verified by Ivanov's (1972:66) statement from 1971: "Conditions for a higher degree of integration [of APKs] and their ultimate transformation into single production units will be created gradually."

This process began impinging on Zamfirovo administrators in 1974 and peaked in 1976 when, as one farm worker put it, "everything went to Berkovitza for administering and organizing. All management and record keeping, as well as all our funds were transferred there. The APK used up all the funds [several thousand leva] in one year and there was nothing left. They got all the papers and everything in such a mess that they had to give it all back to the village to keep track of in 1977."

The unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the constituent farms as administrative entities reveals the importance of local forces in the larger agricultural system. Following this failure, the agro-industrial system, despite continued emphasis in the national media and scholarship, was in retreat. Starting in 1977 the complexes were reduced in size. The Berkovitza complex lost three farms, leaving it with six constituent units including Zamfirovo. The APK was further challenged by the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1979 which advocated

decentralized decision making, a reduction in the number of plan indicators, and increasing emphasis on contractual arrangements between enterprises. These reforms, which, as Boyd (1990:72) points out, "show many similarities to those implemented by Mikhail Gorbachev in his economy-wide perestroika," challenged the power and role of the APK. Thus, one villager claimed that since 1977 the APK consisted of "over thirty officials who do not do anything. They have a specialist for every type of agricultural activity imaginable, but they really do not do anything."

When Bulgaria began its own official version of perestroika, these officials were targeted. In 1988 the staff in Berkovitza was cut to 12 people and their authority further reduced. Instead of being pleased, Zamfirovo officials were disappointed that the APK had not been eradicated altogether as apparently happened elsewhere. Rumors circulated that it had survived only because the director in Berkovitza had family connections with agricultural leaders in Sofia. Villagers got their wish in 1989, for while the cooperative farm continued to function after the collapse of communist control and even after the legal means for reclaiming cooperative land were established, the APK basically disintegrated. Again, however, it was a process that can be traced to the late 1970s.

Villagers resented the APK as an extraneous drain on village resources. The farm had to pay the APK a thousand leva annually for its administrative services. "Why should we hand over money to Berkovitza every year? For what?" The APK also required the farm to grow crops and raise animals that were unprofitable. This was partly an aspect of the centralized planning system in general, but it was reinforced by reforms in the late 1970s aimed at achieving regional self-sufficiency in basic agricultural products. The reforms were intended to reduce energy use and transport costs, but this increased the need for farms to produce products they might not otherwise grow. In so doing, they contradicted prior reforms that had increased enterprise autonomy in decision making.

By 1987 I heard little reference to the goal of regional self-sufficiency, but the APK was still dictating particular products. Pork is a good example. In the early 1980s, following the decentralization of the NEM, the farm stopped raising pigs which, given state purchasing prices, had become unprofitable. Apparently, many other villages did the same, and after a shortage of pork developed the APK required the village to recommence pig raising in 1985. Workers also complained that second-crop autumn strawberries, which they sold to the APK at low prices, showed up at exorbitant prices in the market. "It is stupid. We sell them to the APK for stotinki when we could get leva for them at the markets in town."

Another villager summed it up: "The APKs role is to take from the farms." It is plausible that such discontent with the APK helped stimulate a degree of reform sentiment in the village.

Yet some villagers saw the benefits in the APK, particularly its role in guaranteeing the inputs for village production. For example, through a local machine tractor station (MTS) located in the village, the APK provided and maintained the machinery for the farm. Farm machines remained at the village station and were run primarily by villagers, but the unit itself was administered by Berkovitza, the cooperative farm contracting for the services. The farm could have managed its own machinery, but assuring replacement parts would have been difficult. The APK also advanced other basic inputs such fertilizer, seed, and fuel. In an economy of shortage, this was not insignificant, and several people involved in the farm insisted that the cooperative could not have managed alone. Only in the 1980s did this role become less essential, as reforms stressed contractual arrangements between firms, and farms became more responsible for finding their own inputs and markets.

While the APK became progressively less essential, the trade relations between enterprises which had originally been linked through the APK remained important, limiting the actual effect of enterprise autonomy. Enterprises simply tended to perpetuate the same

connections established under APK auspices because they were mutually interdependent in numerous ways. Thus at a cooperative farm meeting in 1988, a man complained that the farm was not getting a good price for plums from the state purchasing organization in Mihailovgrad, and they should find a better deal. This was unlikely, however, because there were many other relations between the farm and this organization, of which plums were only a part. Such connections formed the foundation of the barter arrangements that emerged in the crisis of the 1990s as a basic means of economic exchange. As in the Soviet Union (Humphrey 1991), barter became a common way of exchanging goods. While this was a consequence of the dislocations of the 1990s, it grew out of contract and exchange networks enhanced by reforms of the 1980s.

Mechanization and Labor Supply

As we have seen above, changing technology was closely connected to the increasing size of agricultural units. The early cooperatives often had very little, if any, mechanized technology. Zhivkova (1989:165) says that agricultural practice in the early cooperative in Dobrodan was little different from laborious agriculture before collectivization. The units were larger and the people worked them in larger groups but they were doing the same work in the same way. Furthermore, their compensation was often less. Consequently, the early collective years were

often more difficult than those of the preceding decade. One informant described it this way: "The cooperative had no machines. The work was hard and the pay very low--only 80 stotinki a day and any pay in kind was deducted from that. People were worse off. Even the poorer people who joined the cooperative with little land felt worse off." One woman told me she earned only 30 to 40 stotinki for a day's work. She remembered walking several miles in the worst heat of the summer with two other women going to a nearby town. When they arrived they had to share one six ounce soda among them because they could not afford to buy more.

In the 1960s the level of mechanization in the farm increased. This was especially evident in the expanding stocks of the machine tractor station and the construction of irrigation facilities. As a result the nature of agriculture began to change drastically. Since 1963 the farm has constructed three reservoirs with irrigation pumps. By 1975, irrigated land accounted for 2,500 decares. By 1985 it amounted to 6,400 decares. The largest of the three stations supplied water to over 4,000 decares with three large pumps propelling the water through underground pipes to surrounding fields, where it was dispensed with pistols. A single tall pistol irrigated a circle 90 meters in diameter and short pistols could water a circular area 30 meters in diameter. The latter were used for strawberries, and temporary pipes

were laid down to rotate the pistons through the field. Large pistons were used primarily to irrigate corn fields. Local farm administrators still complained that the amount of irrigated land was insufficient and a major limitation for the farm. It was unclear, however, whether the major culprit was limited water resources or lack of hydraulic machinery.

The increasing reliance on technology was especially pronounced in regard to farm machinery. Whereas the early cooperative had no machines and only limited access to those in neighboring towns, the village got its own MTS in the 1960s. By 1987 the Zamfirovo station operated 33 tractors with attachments for every conceivable agricultural activity, five wheat combines, two silage combines, and a hay bailer. The machines were Soviet made with the exception of two grain combines and one silage combine made in East Germany. The MTS employed over 50 workers, earning an average of 300 leva a month. The workers still complained, however, about technological limitations. Much of the equipment was old and prone to breakdown. Other specialized machinery was not available. A brigade leader insisted at a meeting of the cooperative farm that the plows were inappropriate for viticulture.

Some areas of livestock production, especially dairy enterprises, were also significantly mechanized. All cattle sheds had mechanized milking machines. One had a system for transporting the milk directly from the cow to

a central collection point, though most required workers to collect the milk at each cow and empty it into milk containers. Most were constructed so that food could be delivered directly from trucks which drove down the center of the shed, spreading feed into troughs on either side. This allowed drivers to deliver freshly cut silage, for example, during the day when the milkers were not present.

Interestingly, mechanization was driven at different times by two radically opposite forces. In the 1960s, infusions of farm machinery were part of the socialist industrialization strategy. Mechanized agriculture produced a greater surplus for industrial investment while freeing village farm workers for industrial work. By the 1970s, however, the process had gone too far and rural areas were experiencing labor shortages. The focus on mechanization continued subsequently as a necessary replacement for dwindling agricultural labor.

Most Zamfirovo villagers working full time for the cooperative farm in 1988 were either administrators, technicians or machine operators. This farm, with over 30,000 decares of cultivated land, had only two brigades of less than 20 workers each, devoted to field labor. This was a major change from the early days of the cooperative when nearly the whole village was engaged in agricultural labor. As in Romania (Moskoff 1978, Cernea 1978), the few full-time field hands were predominantly women, but what is more significant, they were all,

including the few men, beyond retirement age. Full-time farm work in much of Bulgaria has been relegated to older people who are retired and wish to continue working, or who have not yet worked a sufficient number of years to qualify for a state pension. The superior status of industrial work and the elastic, labor-absorbing capacity of socialist industry sapped workers from agriculture. Older villagers who did not learn other skills or trades were the only ones left for agricultural work. Others ended up in the same predicament after retiring from non-agricultural jobs because their pensions were inadequate and they lacked alternate sources of support.

The resulting age profile of agriculture did much to further diminish the social status of agricultural labor in the village. Full-time manual field labor came to be seen as an obsolete occupation, an idea that was both symbolized and reinforced by the age of brigade workers. In fact, villagers commonly referred to the two brigades of the cooperative farm as "the grannies" or "the old women."

Bearing this in mind, the much discussed "feminization" of agriculture (Cernea 1978), at least in Bulgaria, may have been simply a demographic and social derivative of the "gerontocratization" of agriculture. Since women live longer and retire five years earlier than men in Bulgaria, they predominate in a geriatric agriculture. The reliance upon retirees has negative

consequences. They are not able to perform all types of strenuous labor and since they work at their own discretion the brigades, small to start with, rarely have a full working force.

The shortage of agricultural labor was a recurrent constraint for the Zamfirovo cooperative while I was in the field. Large areas of vineyards were not pruned. Some crops, such as walnuts and tomatoes, were not completely or regularly harvested. In 1987 the crop from a small pear orchard was gathered from the ground after the pears fell because there was no one in the brigades able to climb the trees and pick them. Consequently the crop had to be used for preserves rather than being sold more lucratively as fresh fruit. Any extensive manual work, such as the grape harvest, depended upon temporary brigades supplied by other enterprises in the village and even from neighboring towns. To return to the issue of strawberry sales to the APK, one of the reasons the farm did not have its own booth at town markets was the lack of anyone to work there, so the APK got the strawberries as well as other products. Even mechanized labor was often in short supply. When the man who plowed the vineyards for the cooperative died, the vineyards were not plowed "because there was no one to drive the tractor." Similar stories with more disastrous consequences were reported in the news media from other areas of the country. These reports were often sensationalized for political effect,

but my experience in Zamfirovo confirms the deleterious consequences of the agricultural labor shortage.

Crop Profile

Just as the labor shortage drove mechanization, the two together altered the profile of farm products. In 1987, the Zamfirovo farm raised primarily corn, wheat, alfalfa, grapes and strawberries, with orchards of plum, quince, walnuts and pear. Other crops, including cabbage, tomatoes, fodder beets, beans, cucumbers, and watermelon, were grown on a much smaller scale primarily for local uses. Livestock raising, for the most part sheep and dairy cattle, was as important as the major crops, accounting for approximately the same percentage of farm output as agriculture. The village thus conformed roughly to the pattern described for the area by Gergov (1984:65), namely, "grain growing, livestock raising and pig producing."

This profile, however, is constantly evolving--it has changed drastically since collectivization and was still changing while I was in the field. Cousens (1967) points to significant changes already evident nationally by the late 1960s, notably the increase of fodder crops, particularly corn, at the expense of wheat. Zamfirovo had clearly been increasing the amount of land in corn production, much of which was cut green for silage. However, as labor became increasingly scarce and machinery

more available, local farm managers increased the area devoted to wheat as well as corn since both could be plowed, planted and harvested by machines. Actually, the acreages of wheat and corn were interdependent, the fields being rotated between these crops on a regular basis. Some wheat was also designated for use in a mixed concentrated animal feed produced at the farm's feed plant.

By 1987 then, both of these mechanized crops were expanding at the expense of labor intensive ones, such as vegetables and fruits, even to the point of eliminating some of the latter. The pear orchard which could not be harvested in 1987 was chopped down in 1988. A large expanse of vineyard along the road leading into the village was apparently slated for a similar fate. When I inquired about the obvious neglect of the vineyard, I was always told that it was old, that there was no one to take care of it, and that they were going to cut it down soon and use the land for grain. I also heard debates about the rationality of keeping the walnut/quince orchard because of the lack of labor for harvesting the nuts. It was my sense from such discussions that were the walnut trees not inter-planted with quinces, which are more easily and quickly harvested, there would have been little support for keeping the orchard. In some of these cases the trees or vines at issue were indeed old, with diminishing productivity, but there was no talk of

replacing them with young plants, only mechanized wheat and corn. Farm administrators often rationalized their declining interest in vegetable crops as a response to limited water supplies, but as described above, large irrigated plots which could have been used for vegetables were used for corn production instead. Clearly farm officials preferred to produce the corn, which was not labor intensive and which they used primarily for fodder.

The increase in grain and fodder cultivation underwrote the significant expansion of village livestock production over the last three decades. In 1987 the farm had 620 cattle giving milk and over 1,000 young cattle to be sold, fattened for veal or raised for eventual dairy production. Adult sheep numbered 2,465 with about as many lambs per year. The number of pigs averaged about 20 for the year. While the expansion of fodder acreage was important in this development, another crucial factor was the concomitant increase in irrigation. Irrigation reduced the yearly fluctuation of corn production, previously so dependent upon precipitation rates, increasing both the quality and security of the silage. Thus, while Ofer (1980:311) attributes increases in the relative share of animal products and feed crops to national economic policy, they were, in fact, largely a consequence of changes occurring at the local level.

All these changes were reflected in the diet of Bulgarians as per capita meat consumption increased

dramatically after 1960. In fact, one Zamfirovo grandmother drew upon meat consumption to epitomize the changes in her lifetime: "When I was younger, even after my son was born, we rarely had meat, except for holidays or special occasions. Now if my son does not see meat on his plate at every meal he complains." Similarly, people no longer consume much corn meal, a pre-war staple, though it still disappears quickly from store shelves because, being cheap, it makes good feed for household livestock.

While the productive profile described above was a response to technological and labor supplies, other political and economic factors played their part. As Swain (1981:240) notes for Hungary, profitability was a concern. Administrators sought to use their scarce labor resources on products for which the price set by the state was relatively high. In most cases, high prices were restricted to those products exported to western countries for hard currency. In this way international trade, though centrally controlled, affected local farm decisions in Zamfirovo. This was clearly the case in regard to strawberry production, much of which was exported. After the strawberries were picked, workers from the commerce cooperative washed them and packed them into barrels which were loaded directly onto large refrigerated transport trailers from Holland. When the trailer was full, a Dutch driver arrived to drive it directly back to Holland. Villagers said that in the past the strawberries were

often taken directly upon harvest to the nearest airport and loaded onto planes headed for northern European countries such as Belgium. The hard currency value of this crop allowed higher payments to the growers which further stimulated the expansion of strawberry cultivation. Other local crops were also exported, but since they went primarily to east European countries, their prices remained low and did not stimulate expansion.

Another factor affecting farm decisions was the disposition of the product. Most staple crops and all animal products were monopolized by the state. All wheat had to be sold to the state purchasing organizations, as well as all meat, milk, and wool. For other crops, the farm had more options, and while prices were state controlled, the prices for products often varied according to their disposition, allowing room for profit-minded decision making. In general, Zamfirovo farm administrators were attracted to those products over which the farm had more control. This explains a paradox of local viticulture. As previously described, farm administrators spoke of reducing their vineyards for labor reasons. At the same time I overheard farm managers making plans for a new vineyard. The new vineyard, however, was for dessert grapes rather than wine grapes. The latter had to be sold to the state winery, "vinprom," whereas dessert grapes could be sold by the farm as it

decided--hence the different attitude toward identical production processes.

The impact of the above considerations was ultimately constrained by the important role of central planning. Most of the crops and animals raised were dictated by the APK, which received its directives from the National Agro-Industrial Union (NAPS) and passed them on to the various constituent farms. In fact the regional specialization in grain and animal production was nationally dictated. Ideally, these planners considered local possibilities and resources, and even historical agrarian traditions (see Gergov 1984:15), in distributing the assignments. In the absence of market mechanisms central planning guaranteed the production of necessary items. We have already mentioned the example of pig production. The Zamfirovo farm did not want to raise pigs because it had difficulty finding people to take on the job and they always posted very poor results. However, the APK periodically required them to raise a small number of pigs to satisfy national needs. To compensate local farms for the losses incurred producing required products, NAPS paid the farm a subsidy. Thus, while Zamfirovo farm administrators claimed that livestock production was unprofitable, and indeed farm records showed annual losses of 166,000 leva in 1987 and 115,000 leva in 1980, they received a substantial subsidy from NAPS for this production. In 1980 it amounted to over 250,000 leva just for animal products. This is a

significant amount of money, but it is still a relatively small percentage of the nearly two million leva produced by the Zamfirovo livestock sector.

While central planning was a dominant force in cooperative farm decisions, it was not a static one. For example, the previously mentioned attempt at regional self-sufficiency strengthened the hand of the APK, which became responsible for ensuring production of regional subsistence needs, in addition to allocating the national plan among its constituent farms. Similarly, reform programs usually focused directly on the loci of decision making, generating variation in the impact of central planning as reform fortunes rose and fell. Reforms did not have to "succeed" in order to affect the local farm. Local administrators often responded to reforms as they were instituted, only to find out later, after land was already committed, that reform promises were not being actualized. Conversely, farm administrators with higher level contacts were sometimes able to capitalize on reform programs stymied elsewhere by middle-level obstructionism.

The Organization of Production

All of the changes discussed above overlap significantly with changes in what we might call the organization of production--including the locus of decision making, the organization of labor, and the system of remuneration. These have been in an on-going state of

experimentation since the installation of the NEM in the late 1970s and early 1980s. With many ups and downs along the way (see Crampton 1988), the general trends have been: 1) decentralizing decision making even to the point of instituting "self-management"; 2) making enterprises more responsible for the acquisition of resources and disposition of products; and 3) tying wages more closely to worker production and enterprise profitability.

The idea of worker self-management was fairly superfluous in the Zamfirovo cooperative farm, given that most of the agricultural work was done either by machines driven by APK employees or by temporary brigades from other enterprises. Field laborers amounted to a handful of retirees, and the rest of the agricultural employees were technicians or administrators. Clearly the benefits to be gained from worker input were limited. Also the continuing role of centralized planning limited the decisions over which "self-managed" enterprises had control, so self-management, like prior decentralizing reforms, was more operative in the implementation of policy than in its formulation. Nevertheless, as previously described, the farm did benefit from periodic increases in its latitude of decision making, especially in 1987 and 1988, allowing administrators to redirect small amounts of land and resources into more profitable ventures. While increasing control over product dispensation provided similar possibilities, we have

already noted that farm employees complained about managers not capitalizing on these opportunities.

Changes were more readily evident in the area of labor remuneration. In the first wave of reforms in the mid-1960s, continuing the general trend away from true cooperativism, local farm workers began to be paid on the "norm" system. Instead of receiving a portion of cooperative profit based on the number of labor days provided to the farm, they were paid according to personal production. In this sense the norm system was a euphemism for piecework, typical of the machinations devised by socialist governments to blunt the ideological contradictions of the wage relation (see Salzmann and Scheufler 1986:51-58 for an extreme example). Daily wage rates were established for every type of agricultural work. Workers were paid on the basis of a day's work, but they received a full "daily wage" only if they fulfilled the "norm." The norm was the amount determined by the state that a worker should accomplish in one day. If the norm was not fulfilled, workers were paid on a strict piecework basis--a flat rate per pound of product harvested, per area hoed, and so forth. There was a premium for norm fulfillment so production even slightly below the norm was less remunerative. Depending on the nature of the work, production might be measured either on an individual basis or for the brigade as a whole, divided equally among the workers.

For some activities the norms seemed reasonable, for others they seemed difficult, and for still others they seemed quite impossible. The norm for a day of plum picking was 500 kilograms, for which workers were paid 15 leva. It would have been difficult for an average worker to pick such a quantity, but it could have been done with approximately 9 hours of diligent work. However, the majority of harvesters, remember, were retirees incapable of such diligence. Many could not climb the trees and used long sticks to knock the plums to the ground. Clearly they could not fulfill the norm in this manner.

The norm for grape harvesting was only 250 kilograms, but it was also difficult to fulfill given that vines were often low, requiring the worker to bend over to pick them. Other confounding factors also rendered the grape norm, which was possible in theory, impossible in practice. When one of the brigades in which I participated arrived at the vineyard, we had to first load our van with empty crates at the weighing station because there were no empty crates at the area being harvested. After one hour, we had filled all these crates, but since the van had left, we had to walk back to the weighing station, 10 to 15 minutes away, and bring back additional empty crates by hand. Unable to carry many crates at one time, we ended up making three such trips in the course of the day, each brigade member losing about an hour of work time. Furthermore, by 4:00 we had filled all the crates at the

weighing station and had to quit picking altogether. We also had to separate the grapes according to quality, which took additional time. Finally, the condition of the vineyards was an impediment. The vines had not been hoed or tied, which diminished the density of the crop and forced us to search among the weeds for the grapes, taking care not to slice our hands on the many thorns. Under these conditions the norm was not possible. We ended up getting about five leva for the day's work, two leva less than the norm.

Hay raking could also be problematic. The amount of hay was usually not enough in the marginal areas where it was gathered by hand to allow workers to fulfill the norm. In contrast the norm for stacking up machine-bailed straw or hay was very reasonable. In half a day of very hard and hot work, workers earned 15 leva, though this particular brigade was a temporary one made up of young office workers rather than field laborers.

Livestock work was much more remunerative. Dairy workers could earn nearly 400 leva a month depending on milk output. In a typical dairy enterprise, three and a half employees cared for 126 cows. Two workers milked the cows, filtered the milk, and fed the cows--all twice a day, working a split shift. The first milking started around 4:30 in the morning and the second around 3:30 in the afternoon. Another worker cleaned the premises and a technician was responsible for maintaining equipment such

as the milking machines and automatic water dispensers in two different farms.

The picture is quite different when we move to the sheep enterprises. Shepherding paid lower wages and was essentially unmechanized. Some of the folds were still made of thatch, and the workers at one enterprise reported that electricity had just been connected there in 1987. The shepherds had to live at the fold, which was usually far from the village and close to pastures where the sheep grazed daily from March to November. Sheep were kept for five years then sold for slaughter and replaced by lambs. The sheep were milked for five to six months between lambing in February and mating in September. During the first two years of the five-year cycle they were milked three times a day, with the flock returning to the fold at noon for the second milking. During the third, fourth and fifth years they were milked only twice a day--in the morning and evening. The milk output was the same, but their carrying capacity increased over time. All the milking was done by hand. At one enterprise two workers milked 220 sheep in an hour and a half.

Until 1987 shepherds were paid according to the amount of milk, wool and manure their sheep produced. Wages averaged 300 leva a month. This was good pay for one individual, but not much when a husband and wife did the job together as was sometimes the case. While the wage was less than dairy workers earned, shepherds

received income on the side. In the summer they took in young privately owned goats, habituating them to going to pasture. For this they were paid approximately 20 leva per goat per month, and I counted more than 10 kid goats at one sheep farm one summer. Furthermore, shepherds kept a ram for servicing the flock and were paid five leva for the ram's stud service by villagers with privately owned sheep. They might also grow a garden near the fold, since they had access to all the manure they could use for that garden and any others they might have. The manure at dairy farms, in contrast, was carted away mechanically and was less accessible.

These perquisites apparently did not offset the negative aspects of shepherding, and the farm had great difficulty getting shepherds. As one villager explained, "people do not want to stay there with the animals all the time and have to go out in bad weather. It pays well but it is unpleasant and mostly gypsies do it." The gypsies were then criticized for their performance in a job few others wanted, being described as notorious for coming to the village, taking the job, getting an advance on the sheep products, and then leaving. One such shepherd actually abandoned his herd in a distant field and the farm administrators only found out after they wandered onto the pastures of another village.

Given the difficulty securing shepherds, it is paradoxical that the farm actually tightened the wage

system for shepherds in 1988 as a result of the ongoing reform drive. In the past shepherds provided the labor while the farm supplied animal food and other overhead costs. As of 1988 these costs were to be deducted from the value of the production and shepherds were to be paid according to the "profit" rather than output alone. This continued the ongoing reform trend toward increasing enterprise financial accountability and profitability. It was intended to promote efficiency and constrain the general socialist penchant for increasing output simply by increasing inputs.

The shepherds were very pessimistic about their new prospects:

I think we will get less money this way. Now we have to pay for everything the farm provides--the food for the sheep and even the transport expenses to bring the food here. And you know all winter long the animals must live off hay and fodder from the farm, which is very expensive. We will have to wait and see.

The shepherds were also not certain they would actually have much control over inputs, which were specified by the central plan. This limitation alone would contradict the objectives of the reform. Furthermore, shepherds probably had little leeway for cutting expenses. As one shepherd put it, "What can I do about the costs, starve the sheep?" In fact, theoretically shepherds might find it more profitable to cut production slightly if doing so significantly reduced their input costs. Such an approach would surely be at odds with farm and national objectives.

A village administrator, commenting on these potential conflicts, replied simply, "All this is so new that right now nobody really knows how the system will work." Time, however, proved to exacerbate rather than resolve the uncertainties.

The reforms in the remuneration system for shepherds were partly connected to the drive, beginning in 1987, to extend the akord system of labor payment, which had recorded successes in selected agricultural sectors. This contractual arrangement was similar to the much-discussed "job responsibility system" in China (Gonzalez 1982; Chan *et al.* 1984:267-275); the similarly labeled acord global in Romania (Kideckel 1979:198); and to a lesser degree, the Soviet "collective contract" (Laird and Laird 1988). In the Bulgarian version, the farm allotted villagers tracts of land to grow a particular crop. In return the worker agreed to provide the farm with a given amount of the produce at minimal or no cost. The produce exceeding this contractual amount was purchased by the farm at lucrative rates. The costs of any inputs provided by the farm were then deducted from the value of the excess produce and the workers received the balance in cash. Contractors were also allowed to take a small prescribed amount of the produce for their own personal use at no cost.

The unit contracting land could be either an individual, a family or simply a group of villagers

working together. The vast majority were family groups, and most people usually referred to the system as the "family akord." In Zamfirovo the only contract group larger than a family was the one growing watermelons, in which five families cooperated. Quite successful, this group took over watermelon cultivation from the farm in 1986 starting with 20 decares, the same amount the farm brigades had previously cultivated. Production statistics were not available for that year but the enterprise was clearly profitable as the following year the group took on an additional 10 decares. From 30 decares they gathered 60 metric tons of watermelons, which they sold for a total of 20,000 leva. This was enough to merit mention on a Bulgarian television program devoted to agricultural news. The workers paid half of the total to the cooperative farm for seeds, plowing services, fertilizer, taxes and land use, leaving them with 10,000 leva, or 2,000 leva per family. This is not a bad supplement given that an average annual salary was only slightly more. Spurred by such success, the group increased its contract yet another 10 decares in 1988, but they actually produced less than the previous year due to poorer weather conditions.

From this example it is already clear that there were deviations from the akord arrangements previously outlined. The use of cooperative land for watermelon cultivation could be recompensed in cash because watermelons were sold almost exclusively by the farm to

the local population, making the difference between a set payment in kind and the equivalent value in cash moot. This fact also enhanced the income for the workers since the farm could sell the watermelons as a "cooperative market" for 33 stotinki a kilogram, instead of the 25 stotinki specified within the commerce cooperative system. The latter would be essential, however, if the farm grew large quantities of the product, necessitating national or international distribution.

Such was the case for strawberries. The village was famous for its strawberry cultivation, which began in the late 1950s and expanded quickly. Strawberries were an extremely profitable endeavor for the farm because of their export value. Cultivation, though, required manual harvesting, so with decreasing labor supplies it was a perfect venue for the introduction of akord arrangements. In the first year that such contracts were offered, several villagers, most connected to the cooperative farm, took over small amounts of land while the farm continued to work the bulk of strawberry acreage. After others saw the money made by the first contractors their interest in the arrangement grew rapidly. Within a couple of years, the majority of village families were involved and the whole village strawberry operation was on an akord basis.

The farm provided the plot of land already planted with strawberry plants, plowed between the rows with a tractor, irrigated the fields when necessary, and provided

straw and fertilizer. The contract workers hoed the plot several times, put the straw around the plants, and harvested the crop. Upon harvest they were required to turn over all the crop to the cooperative farm except for 15 kilograms per decare for personal consumption. There was little attempt to monitor the amount for personal consumption, and people took close to the limit each time they picked, which was every two or three days during the harvest period. Their yield was weighed at the site and recorded by farm officials. For the first 300 kilograms per decare they received no payment; beyond this amount they were credited 80 stotinki per kilogram. The vines were cut off after the harvest in order to induce a very small second crop in the fall. For this crop there was no production quota--workers were paid for every kilogram delivered, and at a much higher rate. After the season was finished the costs of farm inputs, including the strawberry plants if new, the straw, the water and the plowing, were deducted from their accounts and the balance paid to them in cash.

As in all agricultural endeavors, the outcome was variable and somewhat unpredictable, but for the most part the returns were high. From one decare of strawberries a family could earn between 700 and 1,000 leva depending on weather, the age of the vines, and other factors. This was a significant addition to the household income, especially given that it required only a couple of months

of part-time work and that some families contracted for more than one decare.

The successes of the system no doubt inspired expansion. The akord system began in Zamfirovo in the early 1980s, and was clearly an outgrowth of the NEM. Although already on the wane in Romania in the 1970s (Kideckel 1979:232), when I arrived in Bulgaria in 1987, the akord system was elemental to agrarian operations and expanding. Sociologists and agronomists described it to me as the primary solution to shortages of agricultural labor for intensive cultivation. However, when I met with government officials in the National Agro-Industrial Union, they stated unequivocally that the akord system was to be installed throughout the farm economy, not just in labor intensive operations. Clearly, I entered the picture between an official change in policy toward the akord system and its dissemination throughout the society.

Subsequently, I witnessed this change as it trickled down to the local level. When I arrived in the village strawberry cultivation was the only major operation conducted solely on an akord basis. Vineyards were available to villagers on that basis, but less than 200 decares were contracted out. Between 1987 and 1988 numerous other activities were put on the akord system, including fodder beets, tomatoes and cucumbers. The previously noted change in payment for shepherds was seen as a step in this direction as well. Even drivers at the

MTS were assigned particular plots for which they were individually responsible, their income depending upon the productivity of these plots. The APK called this an akord arrangement although it hardly followed the ideal system. Elsewhere in the country the same process was evident. In Bulgaria's famous rose valley, for example, the hoeing of rose plants came under akord contracts, as a step toward moving the entire operation to such an arrangement.

These developments, however, should not be seen as simply the local consequences of national reform policy. Akord arrangements spread because of various factors acting in concert, including increasing international pressure for reform and prior local successes. At the same time, the expansion encountered obstacles at the local level, limiting its achievements and driving the reform process in other directions. Thus the success of strawberry cultivation in Zamfirovo generated enthusiasm among farm administrators for grape cultivation under akord, but the latter was disappointing. People did not take on grape contracts because the terms were not as lucrative, reflecting the fact that Bulgarian strawberries were in greater demand in western markets than Bulgarian grapes or even wine. Also, villagers grew grapes on their own personal plots so the akord allowance for personal consumption was no incentive. The limited interest in grape contracts certainly contributed to farm management's decision to alter the crop profile of the farm, expanding

strawberry cultivation and cutting back the cultivation of wine grapes.

The attempt at both the local and national levels to expand akord arrangements underlines one of the major complications of reform programs: the socialist penchant for uniformity. While reforms may have redressed very specific difficulties, all too often they were generalized and applied beyond the sector or area where they were most appropriate. For example, making producers responsible for the costs of their inputs may seem like a legitimate way to rationalize an economic system, but when there is limited worker control over inputs, or a major labor shortage, as in shepherding, such a reform might lead instead to job desertion.

Especially glaring in this regard was the attempt to assign tractor drivers a designated plot of land and pay them according to the harvest. In general, such attempts at tying remuneration to productivity may have been reasonable where worker attention and diligence significantly affected output, and they had been effective in both industrial and agricultural brigades. Combine drivers, however, had limited control over the wheat crop. How could they vary their effort? Even the directors of the cooperative farm were hard pressed to explain the rationale of this idea. Perhaps it ensured timely attention to their particular plot, but it diminished their concern for the rest of the farm and insured that

they spent any extra time working in the "private" sector of the village rather than for the cooperative farm.

Personal Agricultural Production

The issue of "private" sector production brings us to the final point in the discussion of Zamfirovo's changing agricultural situation. In nearly all collectivized agricultural systems, the cooperative or state farm provides workers a small plot of land to cultivate for household consumption. This sustained the economic viability of the disadvantaged agricultural worker in the socialist economy. In Bulgaria, most farms allowed villagers five decares of land for such use, including the yard around their house which they actually owned privately. If their yard was small, as in most cases, then the farm allotted them the full five decares from cooperative property. The few villagers with larger yards received enough land to bring their total area to five decares. Typically, villagers used three decares of this land for corn and wheat production, usually on an alternating basis. The remaining two decares were divided more or less equally between a vineyard and vegetable garden.

While these plots have been an aspect of cooperative agriculture since the earliest stages of collectivization, their role has not remained the same. In brief, since the completion of collectivization, reforms have moved

fitfully but inexorably toward the expansion of the "private" sector and its increasing articulation with the state (see Wyzan 1990). By 1987 most of the "private" agricultural activities of villagers were closely tied to the cooperative farm. This relationship renders the commonly criticized but persistent comparison of "private" and "cooperative" sectors in socialist economies fallacious. For the same reason, Bulgarians use the term "personal" rather than "private" to refer to this arena.

The land granted for personal use remained the property of the cooperative farm. In the early years after collectivization, the farm often repossessed these plots for its own use, giving individuals different plots in return. Once the farm had established large blocks for mechanized cultivation, however, this occurred much less often and the security of tenure approached that of private property, even to the point of being inherited. While I was in the field there was only one exception, involving the repossession of several personal vineyards by the farm in order to establish a cooperative vineyard of dessert grapes. In compensation, the cooperative granted each prior holder a different plot to plant a new vineyard and allowed them to harvest an equivalent section of the cooperative vineyard while their new vines matured. Most were satisfied with this arrangement, though one man gave up viticulture altogether because he claimed the area they offered him was not as good and the cooperative

vineyard was in such poor condition that it was not worth the trouble.

The latter issue has been mentioned previously, and may have been a legitimate complaint. In fact a recurrent comparison made to me by villagers was between cooperative vineyards in poor condition and personal vineyards impeccably maintained. If such conversations occurred near both cooperative and personal vineyards, I was likely to be taken to see for myself. The comparison was also brought up by the cooperative farm president in a cooperative meeting in 1988. Since viticulture was the activity within the personal economy least integrated with the cooperative farm, the opposition was perhaps merited. Apart from the land, the farm provided no inputs for personal grape cultivation. Vintners hoed, sprayed, harvested and pruned their vines by hand. They made their own wine and consumed it themselves or gave it to friends and relatives.

Despite the subsistence nature of personal viticulture, it did spill over into the cooperative sector. The must was distilled into brandy at a still operated by the commerce cooperative, for which the villagers paid a fee. Villagers also paid a tax on their total wine and brandy production. When the national government announced a massive increase in the wine tax (not coincidentally on the heels of Gorbachev's anti-alcohol initiative in the Soviet Union), there were

vehement complaints, including a threat to stop growing grapes. Within two months the legislation was reversed. Not only is this a clear example of how local sentiments, without demonstrations, affected central decision making; it also suggests that viticulture was not simply a subsistence issue. Why else should the national government be so troubled by a threatened reduction in the personal production of grapes? As we will see in Chapter Six, grapes and wine from personal plots made their way illicitly into the wider economy, contributing importantly to the provisioning of the society at large.

The connections between the cooperative and personal sectors were much more explicit in grain production. Personal corn and wheat plots were plowed and sown by tractors from the MTS. Corn was hoed and harvested by hand, but wheat was even harvested by MTS combines and in most areas the straw left behind was bailed by the MTS bailer. In fact, the only operation in personal wheat production not performed by the cooperative sector was the broadcast application of fertilizer. On farms in the Danubian plain, nothing was done by villagers at the time of my fieldwork. Personal grain plots were no more than allocated segments of the cooperative's grain blocks. Clearly this was not "private" cultivation.

Villagers used all the products from their corn and wheat harvests, including corn stalks and field stubble, to feed their livestock, the products of which were

sometimes sold back to the cooperative farm. Typically they raised one goat, several sheep, a pig and several chickens. The goats and sheep were pastured communally in neighborhood groups on cooperative farm land. This arrangement expanded after collectivization because villagers had to work for the farm and could not keep enough animals to warrant daily trips to pasture.

Prior to collectivization, communal grazing was limited to families with few animals and was usually organized by a single shepherd, who received cash from each owner plus a portion of the milk produced. After collectivization, all families began to participate, and with few shepherds around they had to take turns at the job. For goat owners this meant going to pasture one day for each goat owned, three or four times during the grazing season. Shepherds rotated on the basis of one day for each pair of sheep. The animals were pastured in cooperative forests and meadows that the farm was not harvesting, either because of their inaccessible location, steep terrain, or poor productivity. Shepherds were fined if caught on cooperative meadows exploited by the farm, and conflicts emerged between the cooperative farm and individuals over these resources.

This is a perfect example of the interwoven conflicts that have confounded socialist agriculture. The farm needed hay from the meadows for its livestock production, but at the same time it allowed villagers to use these

resources for their personal livestock holdings, knowing it would benefit from purchasing livestock products later on. The system represented a balance of concerns--what I call a "conflicting complementarity." This balance involved the non-agricultural sectors of the economy as well since most people had to take off work in order to fulfill their shepherding responsibilities.

The animals were raised for milk, meat, and wool as well as for sale. Wool was sheared in the spring and washed at home. Some women still carded and spun their own wool, but most used the facilities provided by the cooperative farm for mechanical carding and spinning, paying a small fee. Older women made socks, sweaters or tufted bedspreads from the wool. Milking took place from early spring after kids and lambs were partially weaned, until mid-fall when the females were impregnated again. In the early spring and fall the animals spent only half a day at pasture and were milked by their owners before and after. If there were children in the household the milk might be given to them, or it might be fed to a small piglet to fatten it quickly. More often it was taken to the village square, where a cooperative farm worker collected it and kept a record of how much each family sold. The milk was then transferred by the state purchasing agency to milk processing plants. Farm administrators estimated that villagers sold 100,000 liters of milk to the cooperative annually in this way.

At the end of the fall when the milking had ceased, the farm compensated villagers for their milk with high-quality animal feed. One family with only one goat got 80 kilograms of wheat. This was in addition to a small amount of milk consumed by household members and several liters sold to another villager.

From mid-spring to late summer, the animals stayed all day at pasture. Owners took their goats to the neighborhood pen early in the morning after milking. The goatherd then drove them to pasture and brought them back to the pen at lunchtime for milking, keeping all of the milk for his own family or, perhaps, selling it to the farm. He took the goats back to pasture for the afternoon and returned them at nightfall to their owners, who milked them again. Unlike goats, sheep spent the night at the fold and were not returned to their owners at all during the period of intense pasturage. The shepherd for the day milked them in the early morning and at night. Entitled to all the milk, he usually transformed it into feta cheese, sometimes mixing it with goat milk purchased informally from the goatherd.

Families slaughtered a kid goat or lamb on special occasions throughout the spring, summer and fall, including any of the following: May Day, St. George's Day (the Patron Saint of Shepherds, referred to officially as the Day of Shepherds), Easter, the annual village fair, and the 9th of September. Villagers decided when to kill

them according to the number of lambs and kids they had in a given year and their personal preference of holidays. They also reserved animals for special family occasions such as birthdays. Often they sold a kid or lamb to the cooperative and received part of the payment in fodder to help feed their other animals over the winter. Very young animals sold in this way were often exported for hard currency, usually to the Middle East. For accounting purposes the cooperative farm technically acted as an agent for the state meat purchasing agency, which sold the animals abroad, but on occasion the farm delivered the animals directly to foreign representatives in nearby towns.

I attended one such collection in May of 1988. The farm posted notices that they would buy kid goats meeting certain weight limits. A dozen villagers showed up on the designated day at the farm livestock scales with their kids in tow. A farm representative weighed them there and recorded the weight beside the name of the owner. He complained that the previous year they had collected twice as many and he could not understand why there were fewer this year. The kids were then loaded onto a truck and taken to Berkovitza, where a representative from the United Arab Emirates looked them over before accepting them. In the past he had refused solid white animals for "religious reasons," and for a period after the Chernobyl disaster he also checked for radiation. Apparently the

hazards of both radiation and sacrilege had diminished as he only checked for general health and size. He accepted all the kids from Zamfirovo, as well as all those in a subsequent truck from another village. The animals were taken by truck to the town of Burgas on the Black Sea where they were flown to the United Arab Emirates for ritual slaughter on Bakra eid. The representative of the United Arab Emirates spoke fluent Bulgarian and told me he collected anywhere from 500,000 to 800,000 kid goats a year in Bulgaria. He also bought them from Greece and Syria. His company paid the Bulgarian state purchasing agency three dollars per kilogram for the goats, but the local villagers received only three leva a kilogram, plus twice the weight of the animal in feed grain.

Villagers sold other animals through the farm to the state purchasing agency on a similar basis, especially pigs and young sheep. These arrangements were much like the akord system in agriculture. The young lambs and piglets were purchased from the cooperative farm. Some of the piglets were raised originally by other villagers who sold them to the cooperative farm. The farm also provided fodder if desired. The individual raised the animals for several months and then sold them back to the state meat purchasing agency.

Pigs were the most common animal raised for sale. The farm collected pigs twice a month, generally taking in around 20. Most villagers raised at least one pig for

sale, and many raised several. The major risk in this endeavor was the high death rate of piglets--one woman said she lost two at one time and another said she had lost 10 in the last couple of years. If they survived, the pigs brought 33 stotinki a kilogram or 23 stotinki a kilogram plus four times the weight of the pig in fodder. The profit depended on the number of months the pig was fed. For five months of feeding one could get 100 leva per pig plus fodder. There was a consensus that selling pigs without the fodder supplement was unprofitable, and only a few villagers elected for complete cash payments. Other villagers questioned the profitability of raising animals for sale even with the fodder payment, and this led to numerous arguments between villagers. Those who sold animals said it was profitable, while those who did not accused them of not keeping accurate records of their expenses.

Whether or not they raised a pig for sale, most villagers raised at least one pig for household consumption. It was slaughtered before New Year's Day and provided the meat for the rest of the winter. Every Saturday and Sunday in December I awoke to the screaming of pigs going under the knife. A horrible sound, it pervaded the village like a perpetual echo, first from one direction, then more distantly from another. It was a major event for the household. Family members came from throughout the village to assist and neighbors were called

upon to help hold the animal while someone slit its throat. Neighbors were then given shots of brandy on their way out and the family set about the task of butchering. The animal was skinned and the skin sold to the commerce cooperative for 10 leva. The layer of fat was cut off and rendered, the intestines washed out for sausage casement, and the remaining guts used to make a stew. As soon as possible, because the exquisite fresh flavor diminished quickly, a large piece of meat was cut out and given to the women to cook for lunch. Most of the remaining meat was then sliced into cutlets, salted, packed tightly into jars and sealed over with a layer of rendered fat. It kept this way in cold cellars for several weeks. Along with homemade sausage it provided meat for much of the winter.

The winter diet also consisted of vegetables canned from the garden plots of villagers. The major crop in the gardens and in the Bulgarian diet was peppers, which were eaten and canned in a variety of ways. Tomatoes were a close second, and beans, often inter-planted with the corn crop, a third. Cucumbers, lettuce, and squash were also grown for summer consumption. The crop profile of the garden plot changed a little from year to year as gardeners responded to market supplies. For example, during my first year in the village few villagers grew potatoes in their garden. That year there was a major shortage of potatoes, and the following year almost every

household planted them. Cabbage was an important vegetable for villagers, but the cooperative farm grew enough cabbage to provide villagers with their winter needs so they did not have to waste the land of their personal plot growing it.

Villagers worked on their personal plots and with their livestock continually during the agricultural season. Able-bodied retirees occupied themselves full-time just with their personal sector activities. This was one reason why the farm brigades had few laborers--most retirees able to work spent their time and energy on their own personal plots. Younger people worked in their personal fields after leaving their official job, and all day on weekends. As we will see in Chapter Six, many villagers found ways to get even more time and resources for their personal economy, generating additional conflicts between personal and cooperative sectors. Apart from this, villagers still devoted extensive licit efforts toward their personal economy.

The Agricultural Balancing Act

The apparent paradox of an agricultural system in grave need of field laborers that nonetheless provides potential workers with alternate possibilities for agricultural work technically "outside" the cooperative underlines the importance of seeing the agricultural

system in its totality. We need to look at the numerous factors bearing on agriculture and how the system balanced these factors. Equally important is how this balance evolved over time. As previously suggested, the growth of the personal sector was made possible by reforms, starting in the mid-1960s, which encouraged personal plot production. Subsequent reforms, especially after 1979, focused on capturing more of this personal productive effort for the cooperative sector. Concomitantly, the local cooperative farm tried to minimize its own demand for labor by shifting its crop profile and increasing mechanization. It continued to grow a few basic subsistence products for villagers, such as cabbage, freeing up more personal resources for the production of goods integrated with the cooperative sector. The akord system, then, was founded upon the prospect of tapping even more energy from the personal domain. Success of the akord in Zamfirovo strawberry production stimulated the spread of this arrangement to other crops such as grapes, fodder beets, tomatoes and cucumbers. These attempts failed precisely because they could not be integrated into the wider network of interactions.

This network of connections illustrates well how reforms can inspire or stimulate other reforms, sometimes escalating into quite radical transformations. Part of the dynamic underlying such an outcome is conflict between the component elements. As Humphrey (1983:266) has

demonstrated for the Soviet case, the numerous elements of the cooperative farm often find themselves at odds. In Zamfirovo conflict was most pronounced in regard to labor shortages. During most of the peak agricultural season there were never enough workers to accomplish all the necessary jobs, and some were left undone. The competition between various labor needs was summarized succinctly by one brigade member, a retired woman, while en route to the fields one day. The van driver asked who was picking strawberries and who was going to harvest watermelons, whereupon the woman reeled off a list of about six different jobs that now needed doing and asked, "How are we supposed to do everything? Pick plums, pick strawberries, harvest melons, gather hay, load bails..., Stop already!" Consequently, for example, tomatoes sometimes rotted in the field for lack of pickers. Tomatoes became a priority only when the farm had a delivery contract to fulfill. Brigade workers harvested enough to fill the order and went on to more pressing work.

Tomatoes were only grown under duress from the APK, so it was not surprising that they received low priority. Here we see an amazing possibility--shortages may have actually empowered local farm management. While much of the productive profile of cooperative farms was dictated by the APK and ultimately by central agricultural planners, the shortage of resources at the farm level,

especially of labor, allowed local managers to allocate labor according to their own preferences. This gave them more control over farm production than was apparent in the formal administrative structure. Thus, shortages, which are often seen as the bane of the socialist economy, may have been instrumental in resisting the weight of top-down planning. Only at the local level do we see that these two "fatal flaws" of the socialist economy may have actually been integrated in a way that facilitated local action.

Transport was another resource which often did not meet farm needs, allowing for local allocation preferences. In peak periods, the breakdown of a single truck caused major problems. Food had to be delivered to the livestock enterprises, so this often took precedence over other types of transport needs, sometimes leaving the limited number of field laborers without anything to do or, as recounted for the grape-picking brigade, lugging their own empty crates to the fields. In a fitting conclusion to the ill-fated grape brigade, after filling all the available crates, we had to lug them back into the vineyard to hide them from potential thieves during the night because there was no truck available to pick them up. In another case I accompanied a brigade going to load hay bails. When we got to the work site, the truck had not arrived, so we waited. After an hour and a half the van returned to pick us up--it seems we were not going to

load hay after all because there was no truck available; they were all busy hauling silage. After wasting a couple of hours we were taken to work elsewhere.

These examples reveal a potential problem for any reform that increases the productive responsibilities of farm workers. If such workers depend extensively on unreliable farm transport, to what extent can they really control their own system of production? In my experience, the less responsible the cooperative farm was for a particular activity, the lower the priority it assigned that endeavor. Farm management directed resources first to those areas for which the cooperative farm was directly and completely responsible, and only subsequently to those areas where workers bore greater responsibility themselves. Thus, the people growing watermelons on akord complained that the TKZS and the APK never did anything for them except take their money, probably because their product was their own responsibility and intended only for local consumption.

Political factors must also be taken into account for, as Humphrey (1983:266) notes, allocation decisions were often influenced by political considerations. In Zamfirovo, people complained that the agronomist for the farm was unduly influenced by political concerns, which adversely affected people's returns on akord contracts. One specific case concerned the watering of strawberries. The strawberries in one region were rotting due to over-

watering and someone put the blame on the agronomist for simply watering them whenever the Party secretary, who had no agricultural training, expressed concern about the strawberries "looking dry." The Party secretary also had input into decisions about the allocation of labor and other scarce resources. The conflict generated by the secretary's involvement was itself a reflection of agricultural disengagement. When the majority of villagers were working in agriculture, the Party secretary for the cooperative farm was the major village political leader. As villagers took up other jobs, political power shifted as well to an autonomous village Party secretary. As this position was not connected to the cooperative farm, villagers filling it often had less knowledge of agriculture and less experience with the farm. Thus, their engagement with agricultural management became more problematic.

We have already pointed out several conflicts between the personal sector and the cooperative sector. We need not repeat them, but it is important to include them among the other tensions and potential conflicts that had to be effectively managed by the farm. This tension has been evident since the completion of collectivization. A report on the village's agricultural activity from October 1956 says that "many of the draft animals are used for personal work and this has slowed down the plowing and sowing."

Balancing these often conflicting demands was an essential part of the socialist agricultural endeavor. This need sustained the official apparatus of socialism until the late 1980s when ideas of perestroika began to cut agricultural units and individuals loose. In so doing, the reforms made the apparatus itself less necessary. Radical reforms, however, must also be seen as a response to problems generated by prior solutions. The APK system, for example, was intended to increase agricultural productivity, but the internal division of these large units by type of farm activity generated conflicts. As Smollett (1980:54) describes for a village in southeastern Bulgaria, the creation of an APK-wide transport section led truck drivers to drive furiously in order to rack up miles for the transport enterprise. In so doing, they damaged the fruits and vegetables grown by the agricultural sector. Such conflicts, like others discussed above, were not necessarily terminal. They provided the basis for new reforms and adjustments. Through perpetual reform, new solutions emerged and unsuccessful ones were superseded or abandoned.

The process was not one-sided, but an ongoing negotiation. Not only did the cooperative change through attempts to tap personal sector resources, but the personal sector itself changed in response to the cooperative farm. Just as the farm increasingly emphasized grain production and animal husbandry,

villagers focused their personal economy increasingly on sheep, goat and pig raising, devoting much of their personal plots to fodder production. Cows, however, declined drastically in the personal economy of villagers in marked contrast to their role in the cooperative farm. After collectivization most villagers had a cow, but by 1987 few villagers owned one, and while I was in the field three of the remaining cattle owners also got rid of their cows. This profile reflects the increasing integration of cooperative and personal sectors. Given the mechanized support provided by the farm, a household's need for the draft power of cows virtually disappeared. The ease of mechanized grain cultivation, however, maintained the viability of raising other animals.

The increasing attention to grain and livestock production came at the expense of garden plots. The cooperative has also helped in this regard by supplying some traditionally important garden products such as cabbage and watermelon. Conversely, the cooperative sector can rely upon the personal sector not only to supplement production but to stave off disasters. In the early 1980s, several successive dry years caused a severe shortage of grain, and villagers were required to hand over a peck of corn from their personal production for the cooperative sector. This requisition sustained the cooperative economy. Furthermore, as we will see in Chapters Four and Six, the extensive out-migration of

villagers created networks for the movement of personally produced goods into the cities, guaranteeing a minimum well-being for the population of the country as a whole.

Given that akord arrangements were in effect extensions of personal plot production, it is not surprising that their ultimate success depended upon their articulation with the personal economy. Thus, strawberry cultivation was a major success not only because it paid well, but also because it fit well with existing personal plot cultivation. The work on strawberry plots was concentrated in mid-spring before personal plot work intensified. Furthermore it was concentrated in a short period of time, so it did not overlap with most other activities. The cultivation of grapes, tomatoes and cucumbers was just the opposite. These crops required continual attention from late winter to early fall, and demanded intensive work exactly when villagers were most occupied with their own vineyard and gardens. Once strawberry cultivation became a part of the picture, it also inhibited other types of akord arrangements. A major drive to get villagers to raise silkworms failed miserably because sericulture required intensive work around the same time as strawberry cultivation, but was not as lucrative. The village government was given several thousand worms to distribute, but officials at the town

hall ended up raising them because no one else was willing.²

Compatibility with the personal sector affected not only akord crops, but the crops grown entirely by the cooperative farm as well, especially as restructuring granted farm management greater latitude in planning its overall profile. This is seen in the farm president's plan to expand Zamfirovo's plum orchard. Plum production was strictly a farm activity, but it was viable for the farm because it articulated well with both cooperative and personal involvements (and the small subsidy paid by the government probably did not hurt). Labor requirements were minimal except during the harvest, which occurred around late August and early September. Plums were harvested all at one time, each tree being picked clean in turn over a period of less than three weeks. In Zamfirovo no important labor demands, either on the cooperative farm or in personal plot cultivation, competed with the plum harvest, so the farm could accomplish the task easily with brigades. Moreover, as the work was considered rather pleasant by agricultural standards, and since many people relished the possibility of getting plums for themselves,

²This also reveals the extent to which state power had eroded. The retired village mayor was appalled when he heard about the officials raising silkworms. "What has happened to political power. When I was mayor I simply went to the villagers and said, 'Here are some silkworms, you have a mulberry tree, you have to raise them.' Now they do not have any power at all. Let them spend their day gathering mulberry leaves if they cannot take charge."

the farm did not have major difficulties raising additional brigades for this activity.

Unlike plums, the expansion of strawberry cultivation and other akord crops hinged on getting more people to take on akord contracts. Most villagers interested in such arrangements were already involved. A few people came from nearby towns to tend strawberries as a supplement to their income, but this potential flow of labor was clearly insufficient to underwrite significant growth. Consequently, the farm turned again to the personal economy. Technically, the right to use personal plots was a fringe benefit of working for the cooperative farm, but as villagers gave up farm work for other jobs in the village (see Chapter Five), they continued to exploit their personal plots. Given the importance of personal plot production for the village economy, the requirement of cooperative work was rarely enforced. On the contrary, the personal plot had come to be regarded as a right of village residence rather than as a benefit for cooperative laborers. At a meeting of the cooperative farm in 1988, tellingly on the heels of a complaint about the villagers' poor response to tomato and cucumber akord programs, the farm president announced his intention to revive the old requirement. Personal plots were to be provided only to those people who worked for the cooperative farm, with the important modification that akord work would now count as a cooperative contribution. In this way the farm expected

to force villagers not currently working land on akord to do so.

Notices were sent out informing villagers who did not work for the cooperative farm that they would lose their right to their personal plot if they did not take land on akord. The reactions were mixed and the outcome disappointing. A few people acquiesced and took on contracts. Several people were very angry about the threat and contrived counter strategies. One man said he would take a decare of strawberries, but not do anything to it. He expected the plants to bear without any work on his part and planned to harvest just enough to fulfill the contract, leaving the rest to rot. Others simply ignored the threat. As one villager confidently put it, "Never mind their threats. They say they are going to take back the personal plots? What are they going to do with them? They cannot get anybody to work the land they have now, what will they do with more? This is only an idle threat. People who are weak and intimidated by their threats will be eaten up, and those of us who are not will be left alone."

The irony of this and other agricultural reforms in the 1980s was not lost on older villagers. It is summed up best by one man's comment: "After the 9th of September they beat people to get them to give up their land; now they are going to beat them to make them take it back." The comment was made in 1987, raising doubts about current

analyses that treat the return of land to prior owners as solely an issue of "transition." By contrast, for Chan et al. (1984:267), the Chinese responsibility system, which was similar to the Bulgarian akord arrangement, was already part of a process of "decollectivization." The management of the Zamfirovo farm also went further in this direction in 1988, concluding a trial contract with a villager to work 30 decares of land under a sharecropping arrangement with the cooperative farm. The farm even sold him a tractor for 6,000 leva. This was arranged quietly on an experimental basis and was far from constituting private cultivation. Still, it clearly shows that the socialist system was generating some quite radical experiments and ideas--ones that could even be seen as threatening the bases of a socialist agriculture--before the collapse of communism.

Conversely, the collapse of the communist edifice did not clear the way for a private agriculture. Even after the post-communist government managed to enact a land law authorizing the return of land to its prior owners, few people pressed their claims. The land law was enacted by the Grand National Assembly on February 22, 1991, and over half a year later no Zamfirovo residents had yet reclaimed land for private use. Their preference is to lease their land back to the cooperative farm. If this actually occurs--and outcomes are still far from certain--it will, ironically, facilitate the practice of agriculture on a

truly cooperative basis, one which was circumvented by collectivization and subsequent reforms. If collective agriculture continues, even in an altered form, it would certainly be ironic that such a quintessential component of communism should survive the discrediting of the system it epitomized. Apparently this irony is too much for the self-proclaimed "victors" of the cold war to bear:

U.S.A.I.D. gave Bulgaria a 10 million dollar grant in July 1991 to energize the agricultural privatization program.

The limited zeal for private agriculture in Zamfirovo, and elsewhere in eastern Europe for that matter (see New York Times 4/16/90), can be understood in relation to the system described in this and the previous chapter. Many people have rights to only small holdings of land. This land could hardly underwrite a thoroughly modern agriculture, even by the standards of the contemporary Bulgarian farm. Even those with rights to larger holdings do not have tractors, much less combines, nor are they assured of irrigation facilities--all of which are now seen by villagers as essential. Furthermore, they lack the capital to make such investments. At the same time, they are producing most of their subsistence needs from their personal plots, which have become even more strategic as a result of the inflation generated by the current transition. Given the role of the cooperative farm in the personal economies of villagers, and the redoubled value of personal plot

production in the contemporary situation, it is understandable that villagers are loath to see the system disrupted at this point. This result fits the hypothesis of the previous chapter, which suggested that decollectivization would be less certain where economic factors had strongly influenced the original collectivization decision.

There are other ingredients in the current equation as well. Most villagers are no longer employed in agriculture and are not enthusiastic about full-time agricultural work for both physical and ideological reasons. Even if they were, they lack the labor in the household for an extensive household-based agricultural enterprise. These factors are themselves the outcome of other changes interacting with agricultural developments, specifically industrialization and demographic transitions. In the next two chapters we deepen the analysis of agrarian disengagement in light of these two changes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITIONS

During the socialist era, extensive out-migration became a new fact of life in Zamfirovo, the ramifications of which were amplified by an earlier and continuing fertility decline. Together these developments account for much of the rural labor shortage and attendant agricultural reforms discussed in the previous chapter. As such, these population changes were inextricably bound up with collectivization and its policy counterpart, industrialization, but in the unfolding of these processes, population dynamics became a policy concern in their own right, constituting yet another important strand in the ongoing process of reform and transition.

This chapter examines the interconnected roles of migration and fertility decline in the transformation of village life in Zamfirovo. We begin with a description of the rural exodus of the late 1950s and 1960s, then place this in relation to the shifting demographic trends since World War I. Next we look at the contemporary "fallout" of these processes and the responses of the Bulgarian government. We conclude with an examination of how these processes have figured as both object and stimulant of wider change.

The data necessary for a thorough analysis of population processes are not available for the village. Official statistics from the national to the local level are excessively aggregated and focus primarily on overall or gross population changes. Until the mid-1970s, population records were kept in the form of household registers, but they were less than meticulously maintained. Dates of events such as marriage and death are often missing, and while there was usually a notation when someone moved out of a household, the date of their separation and their destination were usually not noted. Consequently, it was difficult to distinguish household fissioning within the village from village out-migration. Contemporary data were further clouded by the difference between "relocating" and officially "changing residences." Everyone in Bulgaria had an official place of residence. It could be changed for reasons we will discuss later, but people could also live elsewhere with special permits for long periods, even permanently. These individuals were not counted as having migrated since they did not officially change their place of residence. Furthermore, official statistics did not distinguish various segments of the population, that is gypsies and Muslims who are thought to have much higher birth rates and greater geographical mobility. These limitations restrict, but do not exclude, an examination of the processes at hand. Rather, they necessitate a somewhat impressionistic

approach, with statistical rigor playing a supporting rather than starring role. Luckily, there was no shortage of impressions and observations offered by villagers regarding population change.

The Rural Exodus

In addition to collectivization, the exodus of village residents was one of the most frequently mentioned changes in the socialist era. Several village officials recounted dramatic statistics from the early 1960s when "in a few years' time, more than 1,000 people left the village." This number does not appear in official statistics, possibly owing to the difference between relocation and an official change of residence mentioned previously. However, the appraisal was offered by enough different individuals to suggest that it was perhaps more reliable than the statistics, which, nonetheless, do show a sharp increase in out-migration during the early 1960s, especially in 1962 (see Table IV.1). Regardless of the exact numbers, it was certainly a shock to the village to lose such a chunk of its population in a relatively short span of time.

This shock was perhaps even greater in the context of what appears to have been a relatively stationary population. One does not want to imply that rural to urban migration is a socialist phenomena. As Todorov (1983:314) has shown for the Danubian port of Lom, only

Table IV.1: Village migration statistics for Zamfirovo, two-year totals

<u>Years</u>	Number of individuals leaving the <u>village</u>	Number of individuals moving into <u>the village</u>
1950-51	160	42
1952-53	183	86
1954-55	153	39
1956-57	166	14
1958-59	231	24
1960-61	216	41
1962-63	359	38
1964-65	159	29
1966-67	213	50
1968-69	182	16
1970-71	170	14
1972-73	165	11
1974-75	88	25
1976-77	97	16
1978-79	42	4
1980-81	73	19
1982-83	56	27
1984-85	40	10
1986-87	83	6
1988*	41	5

*This statistic does not include the last quarter of the year (October through December).

about 50 kilometers due north of Zamfirovo, there was clear evidence of in-migration by villagers in the mid-18th century. This movement probably continued and perhaps increased in the late 19th century with repatriation of rural Bulgarians to neighboring towns freed from Turkish control. Supporting this view, an interesting analysis of early 20th century Bulgarian literature suggests that this influx was at the crux of a

new literary genre, the trivial novel, which "intended to give moral and practical instruction to the newly-arrived and newly-literate hordes of villagers moving to the cities" (Roth 1989:20). Population statistics for two towns close to Zamfirovo suggest that such a process may have been operative in the region at the turn of the century. Population growth in both was much greater between 1892 and 1900 than it was in the five years previous, even allowing for the three-year difference in time period (see Table IV.2).

This earlier period, however, is beyond the memory of village residents, and life history informants always responded to queries about past migration with discussions of temporary labor migration, suggesting that the movement of villagers in the inter-war and early post-war period was primarily temporary in nature. Assessing the frequency of such temporary migration was difficult, but several older men with whom I discussed this issue had been involved in migrant wage labor away from the village, both in other areas of the country and abroad. One such man reported working from May to October every year for several years for a "rich man" near Lom. His employer owned approximately 60 hectares of land which were given over primarily to corn and wheat. He employed two seasonal workers to do the work with the help of horse power. They worked all day and in return received their room and board. At the end of the harvest they were paid

Table IV.2: Population statistics by year for Zamfirovo and neighboring towns

<u>Year</u>	<u>Mihailovgrad</u>	<u>Berkovitza</u>	<u>Zamfirovo</u>
1887	2738	4977	-
1892	2875	4998	-
1900	3794	5607	-
1905	4468	5784	-
1910	5104	5932	2516
1920	6064	6078	2561*
1926	7174	5961	3067
1934	7708	6081	3455
1946	9874	6876	3719
1956	15122	9227	3624
1966	28344	11917	2925
1976	42510	16438	2554
1986	52993	16842	2408

*data from year 1917

Sources: For years up to 1965, Predvaritelni Rezultati ot prebrovavaneto na naselenieto i zhlishtniya fond na 1 Dekemvri 1965 godina. Tom 1: Broy na nacelenieto po naseleni mesta. Sofia: Tsentralno statisticheskoe upravlenie pri Ministerskiya Suvet, 1966, page 9. For 1966, Statisticheski Bornik: Okrug Mihailovgrad. Mihailovgrad: Okruzhen otdel da Durzhavnoto upravlenie za informatsiya, 1969, p. 24. For post-1966, unpublished tables of the Mihailovgrad regional statistical bureau.

Note: These statistics should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. I found conflicting statistics for Mihailovgrad for the years 1900-1956, and am skeptical of the village statistics since the 1950s in terms of many people being counted who no longer lived in the village.

a lump sum of 4,000 leva, which, before the currency reforms, was a paltry amount. According to my informant, the employer's son received about half that amount from his father to fritter away at the annual regional fair.

In addition to agricultural work, one man reported working every summer during the early years after World War II near the Danube making bricks. Other men had experiences of working away from the village but less regularly and for shorter periods, usually just for the harvest period, in the more fertile regions of the country.

Two men in their late 60s worked in Czechoslovakia as gardeners and farm hands for one to two years in the early post-World War II period. They were paid in Czech currency, which they could not convert to leva. This was not a problem, however, as Czechoslovakia was better supplied with consumer goods than Bulgaria and money could be used to buy goods to take home. As one of these men put it, "there was plenty to buy, there were goods there, as many as you wanted." He bought a bicycle. The other man bought household textiles and glass items that are still used and displayed with pride in his house.

Working abroad in agriculture was apparently an established tradition, as Bulgarian "market gardeners" were famous in other parts of Europe for their agricultural skill. The Hungarian ethnographic dictionary, for example, claims that by the turn of the 20th century there were numerous Bulgarian market gardeners working in the vicinity of Budapest and other large Hungarian cities, growing peppers, tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers intensively on small rented plots with

elaborate irrigation techniques.¹ A folklorist told me that these labor excursions influenced the folk music of the Danubian area, as Bulgarian guest farmers returning from the West via the Danube brought violins and guitars back with them. Many returned to Bulgaria during the Balkan Wars and World War I. After 1920 their position abroad was not as advantageous and their numbers were greatly reduced. Still, if the two men described above are not radically anomalous, then it seems that a few villagers continued to pursue this option up until the end of the 1940s, when travel was curtailed by the Communist Party.

These cases from the village document temporary migration in the period between 1920 and 1950, but I could locate no evidence or statistics regarding permanent rural to urban migration for the same period. In fact there are few statistics on migration until 1950. A rough idea of movement can be approximated by combining village birth and death statistics with official population statistics for the village. If we assume that migration accounts for the difference between the natural growth indicated by local birth and death records and the net population growth indicated in census statistics, then between 1927 and 1934 there was a net loss of 546 individuals from the village, or an average of only 19 per year. A limited

¹. Thanks to Beata Vidacs for discovering this information and translating it for me from the Hungarian.

role for urban migration prior to World War II is also suggested by nationwide statistics, putting the post-World War II urban population at only 24.7 percent of the total population (Dobrianov 1978:152). Clearly, with such a percentage, rural to urban migration in the country as a whole could not have been extensive in the inter-war period.

It is little wonder then that the large number of migrants from the 1950s onwards made a lasting impression on villagers. As one informant put it, "everybody was leaving the village. Every day somebody else was moving out." The contemporary situation supports this impression in that there is not a single village family of which I am aware that has not been affected directly by the process of migration. Most villagers have numerous close relatives living in cities. As one informant put it, "over half the village has relatives in Mihailovgrad," and I would add, the other half probably has relatives in Sofia or Berkovitza. Villagers have moved to other cities as well, but most ended up in one of the three above destinations. In fact, it was common to find villagers who had relatives in all three places. An uncanny number had a sibling or child in both Mihailovgrad and Berkovitza, as if the possible destinations had been divided among family members like some sort of migrant inheritance.

Two examples will help illustrate the situation. One woman approximately 70 years old came from a family of 10 children, of which four died in childhood or infancy. Of the six siblings surviving to adulthood two moved to Sofia, one moved to Mihailovgrad and one moved to Berkovitza. Only she and her youngest brother remained in the village. They each raised two children in the village, but all four of these left as young adults. Recently her youngest brother died, leaving her sister-in-law alone in the old house. As she says, "they all took off to the cities, here and there, and now she is alone in that house," and one might add, alone in the village as well. Another man aged 63 came from a family of four children. He and his sister stayed in the village but their two brothers migrated, one to Sofia and the other to Berkovitza. The extent of such movement was reflected in the numerous deserted houses in the village.

The trend I discovered in Zamfirovo was apparently repeated throughout the country. According to Rouskova (1987:27), between 1960 and 1975, 1,299,775 people moved from villages to cities. Totev (1984:119-120) points out that at the peak of the migration process in 1965, 185,000 people migrated in one year, the vast majority going from villages to towns. As one sociologist phrased it in a personal conversation, "nearly half the population of the country migrated during the last 40 years."

One does not have to go beyond explicit national political and economic policy to find the explanations for this process. Indeed the process itself can be treated as part and parcel of the Soviet development strategy, the objective of which was a structural transformation of the economy from an agrarian to an industrial base. The labor and capital necessary for industrialization were to come respectively from the rural population and the devaluation of agricultural production rendered expendable and extractable by the concomitant process of collectivization.

Villagers clearly associated the flight from the village with the process of collectivization. One villager who otherwise did not express negative assessments of collectivization recounted that "it was right after collectivization that masses of people ran away from the village." At the same time, we know that the village experienced economic hardships prior to the completion of collectivization in 1956, and at least one villager cited this as a factor affecting migration:

The years after the war were very difficult and hard. We couldn't get materials to work with. The sewing cooperative, for example couldn't get cloth or thread or equipment, so we couldn't produce. It was hard and that is the reason people began leaving the village. By the 1950s people were selling their plots and moving to the cities because life was so hard here and in the cities there were better paying jobs.

This description suggests that perhaps collectivization itself was not the sole culprit; the general economic

difficulty of the period, including the weakening of village crafts, also played a role. As we saw in Chapter Two, these various difficulties were all part of a singular national strategy. The attack on crafts was intended to undermine local production, making farmers dependent upon government provisions, these goods being rationed only to villagers who joined the agricultural cooperative. Collectivization, in turn, provided the conduit for channelling investment surplus toward industry.

For many of the villagers who followed the path of investment to industry, factory labor was not the panacea that migration statistics might suggest. Their most vivid memories were of the difficulties in getting industrial employment and the hardships in the jobs they got:

One had to take all sorts of terrible jobs. When I told people I was moving to Sofia they told me how hard it was and that I couldn't manage, but I worked at various terrible and difficult jobs for several years and managed to get better ones by and by. Times were very hard then.

One village couple who left the village in 1959 recounted a particularly circuitous route. First they moved to the nearby town of Vurshetz where the wife had been offered a job as a store clerk. The job never materialized, so they loaded their belongings onto a horse cart, selling an heirloom wardrobe and other pieces of furniture that would not fit, and set out for Sofia in 1960. Unable to find work there, the husband was forced to take a job as a coal

miner in the nearby city of Pernik. After several years he landed a position at the infamous steel plant in Kremikovtsi, on the outskirts of Sofia. Such accounts suggest that the "push" from the village must have been greater than the attraction of towns.

Collectivization not only provided a reason to leave the village, but made leaving more conceivable by its affect on the context of local village life. Breaking the property relationship to the land was instrumental, but the context was also affected by changing social relations in the village--relations that interacted with political and domestic processes as well as with economic transformation. These factors are easily overlooked by analyses focusing on macro-scale motivations to migration. Clearly not everybody left, despite being equally exposed to the pressure of collectivization and the promise of industrialization. It is by examining social relations in the village that the bases of migration decisions take on a more accurately complex character.

Certainly, migration decisions were influenced by the relationship of individuals to the newly ascendant power holders in the village. The new communist administrators were from the village and came to power with pre-existing social connections intact. When it was time for them to allocate scarce resources, these relations were influential. This is not to question their genuine commitment to communist ideology, nor to minimize the

extent to which state policy and higher-level officials circumscribed what could be done. I also do not intend to lend support to "modernization" analyses vilifying peasant traditions such as "familism" and "patronage" as obstacles to development. Rather, I hope to illustrate how various commitments, obligations, and objectives interacted for specific people in specific contexts, and how this interaction simultaneously altered the context for others.

For example, Ivan was born in 1945 in Zamfirovo. He was raised there and at the age of 20 married a woman from the village. At that time both of them wanted to stay in Zamfirovo, but the cooperative farm director would not give him a job:

I was trained and had experience as a woodworker, but he [the farm director] said they had no use for a woodworker in the TKZC. Mind you, not before he had asked about my family connections and figured out who I was. So I took a course for a truck and heavy equipment operator. I passed it and asked him for a job as a driver. He said they did not have any openings for a driver either, but that if I could wait two or three months he might have a job for a truck loader [a manual loader of goods onto trucks]. When I heard this I decided I had to move away. We moved to Sofia and lived in a small dorm room for almost ten years while we waited to get an apartment.

It was impossible to document such influences for even a small percentage of the migrants who left the village, but it was clear that the families of village leaders were much less affected by migration and had more family members in the village in the late 1980s. This suggestion foreshadows the importance of the household as a locus of

forces affecting migration decisions, which we will take up in Chapter Seven. At this point, however, it is important to note that household considerations interacted with the privations attendant on urban residence to create a predominantly young migration stream. Only those individuals with a "safety net" of able-bodied parents remaining in the village would gamble with urban migration.

The Demographic Context

The ultimate result of the massive village out-migration was amplified by the demographic context in which it occurred--that is, a population where fertility had been declining since World War I. Like the rural exodus, fertility restriction was one of the changes that life history respondents often cited as a difference between contemporary and past village life. Also, as with migration, the local evidence of the fertility decline was dramatic. In the generation of Zamfirovo residents over 65 years old, almost everyone was a member of a sibling set of four or more, many having eight and nine siblings. When these people began having children, however, two was the modal number of offspring. Thus, in the local village context a major demographic transition seems to have occurred in the span of one generation. Of course the members of this generation are spread over a rather broad period of time, so that in terms of years the transition

is more gradual. A sample of entries from the village household register, for example, reveals several instances of couples having more than two children after the 1920s. Visual evidence of these larger families is missing from the current village profile partly due to out-migration in the 1950s. Still, these cases notwithstanding, the village fertility shift was dramatically evident within one generation.

The comments of older villagers thus promised to be enlightening--having grown up in a large family context, they chose to restrict their fertility. When asked why, they invariably cited economic problems and the increasing difficulty of providing for children. "Times were really hard and we couldn't support a lot of children," was a typical response. At the same time, the discordant experiences of this transitional generation were reflected in other comments that revealed their ambivalent acceptance of fertility restriction. Older women who had restricted their fertility often recited the Bulgarian proverb that "children are the wealth of the peasant." One woman added the commentary, "now we are poor in this regard as well." A related and often repeated aphorism was that "a house without children [is like a] graveyard." I vividly recall a virtual lecture given to me by a 67-year-old mother of one, whom I fortuitously interrupted in a futile telephone attempt to mobilize her daughter for an

unstated activity. As her most convenient sounding board, I was exhorted to have several children:

You should have several children, certainly more than one or two. When you only have one, like me, or even two, look what happens. One moves off here and another is busy somewhere else and there is never anybody around--not like it used to be. When I was a kid there were always many people around the house doing something. Listen to what I tell you, you must have several children.

Mind you, this same woman would often shake her head in disapproving disbelief when discussing the one village woman and neighbor who had four children. Such contradictory comments reflect the intermediate position of these older villagers in the fertility transition; the younger generation was not so conflicted.

Available statistics document the fertility decline, although less dramatically and less reliably than the ethnographic perspective. While age specific fertility rates are not available for the village, the general birth statistics available from 1921 provide some idea of fertility patterns (see Table IV.3). The year 1926 shows the first substantial drop in the number of births, 20 fewer than the previous year, and while there was a rebound in 1927, the number of births in 1928 dropped again by 48. This presaged a steady decline, punctuated periodically by a distinctively low birth year usually followed by a slight rebound and a return to a more gradual but steady decline. While there is an overall downward trend in the number of births, if we look at

Table IV.3: Birth and death statistics for Zamfirovo, five-year averages

<u>Years</u>	<u>Average births per year</u>	<u>Average deaths per year</u>
1920-24	177.8	87.8
1925-29	149.8	73.0
1930-34	135.0	73.4
1935-39	149.4	85.2
1940-44	131.8	85.0
1945-49	121.2	69.0
1950-54	102.2	54.0
1955-59	78.0	41.4
1960-64	59.0	33.0
1965-69	44.2	37.0
1970-74	36.8	43.8
1975-79	29.0	48.2
1980-84	30.0	38.0
1985-88	29.5	40.0

yearly data instead of the five year averages recorded in Table IV.3, more distinctive periods can be discerned: the period from 1920 to 1927 with an average of 173 births/year; 1928 to 1947 when births numbered around 137 annually; 1948 to 1955 with approximately 102 births per year; 1956 to 1961 with an average of 72 births per year; 1962 to 1972 having 44 births per year; and 1973 to the present, with approximately 30 births per year.

It is no coincidence that there was a significant drop in births in 1956, as that was the year when collectivization was completed. Similarly, the next major drop in the 1960s reflects the cumulative impact of increased out-migration. Given a generally declining population after the 1950s, and the increasing average age

of village residents over the same period, the relatively minor difference in average births/year between the 1960s and the most recent period may not represent a decline in age specific fertility rates at all. In fact, given these contributing factors, the data may actually reflect a slight increase in the age specific fertility of Zamfirovo women, as McIntyre (1980:156) has suggested for Bulgaria as a whole.

This trajectory of fertility change illustrates wonderfully the kind of long term processes that we are trying to illustrate in general. There is no doubt that a demographic transition was underway in Zamfirovo (and throughout Bulgaria) before World War II. There is also no doubt that this transition gained further momentum during the early socialist era, but may have reversed somewhat during the late 1960s. This process no doubt figured prominently among the factors generating reform programs and the ensuing transition away from socialist structures. The problem is accounting for the motivations and mechanisms. This is difficult given available data, but we can look at some of the changing circumstances of people's lives and get a better idea of the context in which these processes occurred.

In its context the Bulgarian case deals another blow to the discredited but often resilient association of fertility restriction with "modernization." As McIntyre (1980:147) points out, "by the 1920s relatively low

overall fertility levels had been achieved in what remained a backward agrarian society." In general terms this "achievement" [the semantics of "modernization" creep in even in its objective absence] can be attributed to a large extent to a combination of "dashed dreams of development and prosperity on the one hand and intensifying rural poverty on the other" (McIntyre 1988:24). Certainly the liberation of the country and the selling of Ottoman holdings to Bulgarians created an environment of opportunity, and owners apparently responded by maintaining high birth rates--according to Lampe (1986:55), the highest in the Balkans in the period 1906-1910. This was even in the wake of an agricultural crisis brought on by low levels of rainfall during the years 1897-1900.

Their remaining optimism was soon tempered, however, by an amazing concatenation of forces and events including three consecutive wars, a large reparations burden from World War I, the continued operation of partible inheritance, the difficulties of repaying debts incurred to purchase the abandoned Ottoman holdings, state extractions, and shifting international agricultural prices, especially in the volatile grain market. As discussed in Chapter Two, these forces created periods of economic crisis in the inter-war period, including a near-famine in 1918 (Lampe 1986:43). Decline and impoverishment following closely on the heels of optimism

may have been a motivation for fertility restriction, especially given the continuing, if not increasing, uncertainty of the economic environment. Ironically, a single positive development in the life of Bulgarians at this time--a decline in mortality rates since 1918--actually exacerbated these economic difficulties.

An early indication of changing strategies that may have been a harbinger of fertility restriction was the redirection of grain production from the marketplace to household consumption in the early 1900s, as described in Chapter Two. As Lampe (1896:26-27) suggests, the rural population "rationally chose to feed and provide for its growing numbers," despite the fact that wheat prices were actually up "40 per cent for 1906-10 over their 1895 low point." When redirection reached its limit Bulgarians apparently began to restrict fertility. This coincides with older villagers' explanation for fertility restriction. As previously stated, they inevitably cited the difficulty, indeed impossibility, of providing for several children.

What "providing," entails, however, is a cultural issue. In the case of northwest Bulgaria after liberation, building upon a history of large extended households, it included both supplying children's basic needs and insuring their future viability with land and/or a respectable dowry to insure marriage. When these became difficult to provide, due to a combination of increasing

land scarcity and declining mortality, the peasants began to restrict births. As a 70-year-old mother of two put it: "My husband's family didn't have much land and he had three brothers to boot. How could we have more children? Oh my God, with our property it was hard to provide for two children." Similar motivations are recounted by Verdery (1983:299) for the decline in fertility among Romanian villagers. Both verify the Schneiders' (n.d.) suggestion that "traditional" cultural ideals can be a motivation for fertility restriction rather than a barrier, as is often suggested by modernization theorists.

In the context of the small-holding agriculture of Zamfirovo after liberation, with high birth rates, declining mortality and a system of partible inheritance, an impasse in providing for offspring in culturally accepted ways was reached rather quickly. This accounts for the striking change in village fertility in a generation's time. As we will see later, these same cultural factors also influenced the mechanism of fertility restriction. This does not mean that "cultural" ideas about providing for children did not change as well. In fact, they changed drastically during the socialist period, a factor that drove both reform programs and the consequent transition.

If the ideas suggested above are accurate, families with more usable land after liberation should have been slower to restrict their fertility. This is a difficult

proposition to substantiate because of the limited degree of differentiation in the village and because the enduring negative political valence attached to inter-war land ownership by the communist government made informants jittery about identifying old "kulaks." Furthermore, even available data on the amounts of land owned by villagers could not be equated directly with economic status since land in the foothills is quite variable in quality. The few families that I could confidently identify as coming from substantially land-rich backgrounds, through a confluence of self-identification and evaluation by others, did have larger numbers of children in the period after 1920.

Additional support for the above proposition can be found in the village household registers. As disclaimed previously, these registers do not exude an aura of precision, but they do include substantial data for the period from 1920 until 1950. I closely analyzed the family register for one of the five administrative zones of the village. It included 156 families. Of the 28 couples starting families between 1921 and 1925, 10 went on to have more than three offspring. For the 21 couples starting reproduction in the next five-year period, only five had more than three children, while the period between 1931 and 1935 saw four such families out of 30 new parents. By the late 1930s only one couple in this region started a family of more than three offspring. Questions

about these larger families revealed that one was a gypsy family, and only three could be considered "in good circumstances," one conspicuously so by the inclusion of a servant in the entry. Of the remaining cases, however, the male "head" of each family was the member of a small sibling set and had either one brother or no brothers at all. Consequently, it is likely that these families had not yet felt the squeeze of partible inheritance as tightly as families in which the head had come from the large sibling sets characteristic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such figures are far from conclusive, but they are valuable in the ethnographic context, where they are corroborated by the comments of older villagers who accounted for their own fertility restriction in terms of their inability to provide for children.

Such statements appear to lend support to Caldwell's (1982) influential model of demographic transition, which maintains that people restrict fertility when the traditional flow of wealth from child to parent is reversed and wealth begins to flow from parent to child. Closer examination, however, challenges such assumptions. While Bulgarian parents expressed concern about providing for their children, the expectation that children would provide wealth for parents may have been behind this concern. For a child to fulfill such expectations, he or she would have to be adequately provisioned with essential

resources such as land. When this became difficult, it was most rational for Bulgarians to restrict birth, not because the flow of wealth reversed, but for the same reason Knodel et al. (1987) suggest for Thai parents--so that the children they did produce would be in a position to actually contribute wealth back to the parents. In other words, even if wealth is expected to flow from child to parent, it still makes no sense to produce a bevy of nearly landless and economically nonviable offspring, especially if doing so undermines the viability of all offspring, leaving no wealth to flow in any direction. Fertility restriction did lead subsequently to greater investment in fewer children, eventually creating a situation more congruent with the wealth flow model, but the original demographic transition may have been a cause of this wealth flow shift rather than a result. Furthermore, as we will suggest in Chapter Seven, "wealth" was not the only thing flowing from child to parent, and many of these other expectations persisted.

The next question is how fertility was restricted. At least one document suggests that abortion was a major means of fertility control. In a lengthy description of Zamfirovo written in March 1926, the headmaster of the village school wrote:

Unfortunately the peasant woman walks in the steps of city women and tries to imitate them in all things. She no longer wants to bother to have many children. Therefore she resorts to various means, and since she is often ignorant

and there are no doctors, she becomes a victim of her own folly. The consequences of this for the future of the nation if measures are not taken will be catastrophic.

Of course, coitus interruptus, widespread in western Europe, may have been practiced privately, beyond the purview of such social commentary. However, the above comment suggests that it was either not universally practiced or was not entirely effective, and that women were not averse to controlling fertility with abortion.

This contrasts with western and central Europe, where delayed marriage and celibacy were important depressants of fertility in rural as well as urban populations well before the fertility transition. For example, a major study by Wrigley and Schofield (1981) of several centuries of rural English populations shows marriage age to have been the main regulator of population to land. Given the role of sexual sacrifice or asceticism in these means, it is perhaps not surprising that west Europeans should have employed coitus interruptus to accomplish the substantial transition to very low fertility beginning in the 19th century. The Schneiders (n.d.) have shown that coitus interruptus--the major means of the fertility transition in Sicily--was viewed as a constraining but necessary sacrifice of sexual pleasure within marriage.

In Bulgaria the "sacrifice" represented by delayed marriage had never been part of the cultural repertoire. As numerous scholars have noted (Hajnal 1965; Sklar 1974;

McIntyre 1980), marriage continued to be early and nearly universal in Bulgaria, and in eastern Europe generally. In fact, given Orthodox religious beliefs and the historical role of large extended households, delayed marriage was simply not a cultural option. If, indeed, abortion was a major fertility restricting strategy, the "sacrifice" of sexual pleasure was not the major means of restricting marital fertility either.

This difference coincides as well with the more patriarchal gender relations associated with the Balkans compared to other areas of Europe. Coitus interruptus requires cooperation between the couple and suggests mutual responsibility; abortion leaves women to manage fertility and does not require men to sacrifice sexual pleasure. Similarly, Levin's (1989:175-179) discussion of Orthodox attitudes to birth control in the late Middle Ages focuses primarily on abortion, and suggests that "most provisions on birth control were directed toward women." These parallels suggest that the method of fertility restriction, like the motives behind it, reflect broader cultural issues.

This does not explain why we find the "sacrificing" regime in one area and the "non-sacrificing" strategy in another, but the consistency of the model does lend further support to the view of abortion as important in the fertility transition. During a discussion of fertility restriction with an older woman, the topic

turned to gypsies, who do not restrict fertility. When I shrugged my shoulders and asked what could one do, the woman mumbled the comment that "not every pregnant woman has to give birth," and quickly changed the subject.

McIntyre (1980:165) suggests that the extensive adoption of legal abortion in Bulgaria after the liberalization of abortion laws in 1956, following on the heels of a similar reform in the Soviet Union, with less impact on fertility rates than in other east European countries, indicates a previous use of illegal abortion. While this is not necessarily true, the ethno-historical comments cited here suggest his conclusion is tenable.

An interesting parallel case from the same period is found in the report of an American doctor who taught in the Soviet Union in the 1930s (New York Times 2/13/90). She states that the Russians could not get birth control resources:

How did the Russian people cope? By abortion--the only means of family planning...Women told me they had frequent abortions, from marital or non-marital relations. One morning I witnessed five abortions in five hours--without anesthesia--in a Moscow hospital. Although the process was slower and more clinically dangerous then, the women kept coming...One fellow complained that all his earnings went to pay for abortions of his girlfriends.

No one who reads Rybakov's (1988) novel about the Stalinist era in the Soviet Union can forget the intense description of the folk abortion induced by a boiling hot mustard footbath.

Whatever the mechanism of fertility restriction in Bulgaria, it was successful and set a trend that continued in the socialist era as well. According to one compilation (Berent 1970:249), the crude birth rate for all of rural Bulgaria dropped from an annual average of 25.1 per 1,000 population in the years 1946-49 to 14.2 births per 1,000 in 1967. In the local context this tendency is exhibited in the annual number of births in the village and in the set of village household registers begun in 1965. An examination of the register for the second administrative region of the village showed that of the more than 100 couples who had children in the period after 1945, only 11 went on to have more than two children and these couples all stopped at three. Furthermore, one of the cases had twins on the second birth.

It is in this context of decreased fertility that the migratory flight of the 1950s and 1960s took on even greater impact and importance for the village. The trajectory seems to be as follows. Villagers began limiting their offspring early in this century in response to economic constrictions and consequent problems providing for numerous progeny. Families with greater land resources or with lower fertility in preceding generations continued to have more children for a slightly longer period of time before land fragmentation was felt, but eventually, all families were affected. After the socialist development program got underway, the option of

migration was appealing to many individuals still unable to fulfill cultural expectations as a result of new considerations, which included increasing extractions, the advent of collectivization, and, for some, the existence of politically motivated discrimination based on their family's political or economic background. Thus young adults left their parents back in the village for security, and headed for the ideologically, if not materially, better off industrial sector.

Contemporary Consequences

This process caused an immediate decline in the village population, and more importantly it removed the basis for future population growth. Since most migrants were young people, the percentage of the village population of childbearing age was reduced greatly, and in a context of low and declining fertility, this nearly fulfilled the catastrophic prophesy of the Zamfirovo schoolmaster back in 1926. In fact, migration and fertility decline interacted to produce a nationwide calamity--not only were there too few people remaining in the villages to expand the agricultural economy, but there were too many people in towns and cities to be serviced by the existing urban infrastructure. While often treated as distinct problems at the macro-level, these were actually convergent developments, shaped by the same migration and fertility processes.

On the rural end, the demographic developments help account for the difficulties and inefficiencies of the cooperative farm described in Chapter Three, especially the labor shortage. It was indeed tragic in a country with shortages of various goods that crops should go unharvested due to inadequate labor supply. Related adverse consequences include the fact that most manual workers in the cooperative in the 1980s were pensioners, and the presence in the village of several elderly individuals and couples living alone who were incapable of adequately maintaining themselves. By the 1980s the latter trend had been reduced, for reasons that will be clear later, but those who were left alone in the past bear witness to the consequences of demographic processes.

On the urban end, the results were manifested in the housing crisis characteristic of major cities. This crisis resulted from what Ofer (1977) calls "economizing on urbanization" and what Konrád and Szelényi (1976) refer to as the "underurbanization" of eastern Europe. While underurbanization has symptoms similar to capitalist overurbanization, the cause is different. The latter results from urban population growth outstripping industrial growth whereas underurbanization results from "excessive industrialization at the expense of the infrastructure." They list Bulgaria as one of the worst offenders with only 2.9 percent of national income going to housing construction compared with 32 percent in "developed

capitalist countries" and 17 percent in the Soviet Union (Konrád and Szelényi 1976:165). It may be, however, that housing shortages were one of the few factors exerting a negative influence on the rural to urban migration which was undermining agricultural production.

At the same time, industrialization was not the only urban drawing card. Of the young people I met in the village, not one said they wanted to remain in the village after they finished school. Two of the households where I conducted extensive research had teenager members, and through them I was often invited to various gatherings of young people. Whether sitting around a table eating and drinking on some ritual occasion in standard adult form, or at a cook-out in the woods near one of the village reservoirs, they usually expressed amid their future plans the desire to reside in a large town or city. Not one of a group of approximately 15 young people with whom I periodically socialized said they preferred to stay in the village, although several acknowledged that they would most likely remain there anyway.

Their attitudes were partially a product of the fact that there was no high school in the village. After the seventh grade young people not only had to go to school in town, but because of limited bus routes they actually lived there and returned to the village only on the weekends. This pattern is understandable for those pursuing specialized education at schools far away from

the village, but in fact most went to school in one of the nearby towns and could commute in 25 to 30 minutes' travel time. Workers commuted on a daily basis to the very same towns and spent more time on the job than students spent in school. For the government it was better to house students, usually in private residences paid for by village parents, than it was to provide transport for students to and from every village. Of course the young people were quite happy with the arrangement as it relieved them of work back in the village. Obviously, this greatly aggravated the rural labor shortage--it forced adults to do most of the work in their personal economy, reducing the time and energy available for the state or cooperative sector. While this may have been good for their children's education, it reflects a major shift from a time when school schedules were modified to fit agricultural cycles.

This "modern" priority is at the crux of agrarian disengagement and the associated distaste for village life. It is part of a larger shift in the attitude toward agriculture from a valued and respected occupation to a secondary involvement that must be organized around more central requirements. The educational setup itself was not so much responsible for this change as it was a reflection of the changing attitudes, but such arrangements no doubt exacerbated the devaluation of agriculture and village life. In the final analysis,

these developments are manifestations of the socialist development strategy, which economically and ideologically devalued agriculture, so that agriculture was correctly evaluated by villagers as among the most difficult and undesirable types of work. At the same time there was a persistent identification between agriculture and village living, to the extent that the term "village economy" is commonly used to mean agriculture. It was the desire to escape agricultural labor and the daily requirements of the rural household economy that provoked people to leave the village and search for alternatives.

This was reflected not only in young people's ambitions, but also in the comments of adult villagers. To a person they maintained that the reason people left the village was because they did not want to work so hard. A few incidents will illustrate this. One night on the 8:30 bus from Mihailovgrad to the village, I was engaged in conversation by an elderly man sitting behind me. He was over 70 and lived alone with his wife in the village. They had a son and a daughter both living in Mihailovgrad. In the winter he spent weekends with the son and returned on Monday night to the village. His wife "preferred to stay home." He said he still worked occasionally in good weather on the brigades of the cooperative farm. He talked extensively about people leaving the village, invoking the image of deserted village houses to illustrate his point. He recounted several "house

histories," all following basically the same trajectory: the children left the village for urban life, their parents died, and the house was left abandoned. His concern with this process was clearly personal, as he concluded by saying that the same thing would probably happen to his own house, a prospect which obviously saddened him. When asked why people left the village he did not hesitate or equivocate: "They run away from the work. They are lazy and do not want to work hard. That, in a word, is why they leave."

His explanation was repeated by numerous villagers of all stripes. A man of 40 living with his parents in the village had harsh words for his brother living in Mihailovgrad: "He does not like to work. He does not want to do any physical labor such as pruning the grape vines, but he loves to drink the wine." Another woman complained about her daughter-in-law in Mihailovgrad: "She does not want to do anything outside her office. She absolutely refuses to do any agricultural work." Perhaps the most analytical observation of urban sloth came from a middle-aged village woman who lived in a household with her husband and her husband's elderly father. Both of her children had left the village. "They go to towns because they do not have to do any work there, and if you do not believe me just look at their fingernails. They have fingernails out to here," she said, indicating more than an inch's growth. "Tell me they do any work." I was more

cognizant of fingernails from that point on and while I did not attempt a regression analysis of fingernail length and place of residence, I do believe the incidence of long-fingernails roughly correlated with urban living.

Lest one think this is only the villagers' side of the story, the comments of urban village expatriates were remarkably similar. Granted, they did not describe themselves as lazy, but they did say that they preferred the town because the work was less arduous. While I was in the village the bookkeeper for the post office retired and was replaced by a young woman from Berkovitza. She had a grandfather in the village but her parents moved to town before she was born and she had lived there her whole life. She commuted back and forth to the village to work. When a villager suggested that it would be more convenient to live in the village, she replied indignantly, "I did not go to school and study in order to dig." Although phrased in "occupational" terms, her comment reveals the desire not only to escape agriculture as a vocation, but to escape the whole rural social milieu, of which digging and the hoe itself are epitomizing symbols. The symbols of urbanity, in turn, were interpreted as signs of laziness by villagers--the desire for varied activities and distractions, such as going to movies and bars, being construed as simply the flip side of not wanting to do the work that was always waiting in the village.

It is impossible to miss in these revelations the antagonism, bordering on hostility, that existed between urban and rural residents. As the above examples demonstrate, villagers were quick to label urban residents as lazy and often pretentious. Urbanites, for their part, viewed villagers as hicks and the village as backward. Such attitudes were full of ambiguity, as urbanites often had close relatives in a village and, as discussed before, did not hesitate to avail themselves of the rural agricultural bounty. I even came across one attempt to deny the village this contribution in the form of a cartoon in the Mihailovgrad newspaper. The cartoon pictured a man running along a street carrying a gigantic cornucopia overflowing with various food products. In the background were the tall apartment buildings of the city and in the foreground a street sign pointing in the direction he was travelling saying "village." The caption read: "Who says the village feeds the town?" Such comments represent an attempt to deal with the felt ambiguity and tension around urbanization. They were often most keenly expressed by people with closer or more recent village ties and were clearly an attempt to cut that conceptual link without undermining the material connection.

This conflict was not new--it dates back at least to the inter-war period, if not earlier. Alexander Stamboliiski, the Agrarian Party leader who became Prime

Minister in 1920, was famous for his anti-urban sentiments expressed most vividly in a statement equating Sofia with Sodom and Gomorrah (Stamboliiski 1921:43). John Bell (1977:155) claims that a few such extreme statements have been overemphasized, exaggerating Stamboliiski's hatred of urban life. Still, as Bell points out, there is little doubt that Stamboliiski preferred the village to the town and he frequently denounced the 'parasites' who inhabited the cities. Mouzelis (1976) argues that Bulgarians were open to such anti-town platforms in the inter-war period because they were more isolated and less integrated into urban centers, compared to neighboring Greek peasants of the same period. Crampton (1987:74), however, suggests that the long history of foreign control of towns by Greeks, as well as Turks and Armenians, contributed to anti-urban sentiment.

This is not the place to pursue the issue, but it is important to show that the continuing rural-urban opposition, seen most recently in post-communist election results, has a long history of interaction with political and economic processes. The policies of the communist regime played an important part in transforming this clear-cut distrust into a conflictual ambiguity. Industrialization, collectivization and massive rural out-migration led to a shortage of rural workers and difficulties for the village economy. Those who stayed in the village were exposed to heavy state demands, and with

declining labor reserves, they perceived those who migrated as increasing the burden of those who remained. Their resentment underlaid subsequent accusations of slothfulness. Since the "deserters" were likely to include kindred, an ambivalent situation arose for people who disliked urbanites and blamed them for their own exploitation, but had close relatives who were urban residents. Paradoxically, it was often their urban relatives, the ostensibly positive element in their ambivalent attitude toward the city, who in fact received the brunt of their resentment. It was between such relations that the mutual social and economic commitments were strongest and consequently the breaches most egregious. This ambivalence was increased by aspects of communist ideology, which associated modernity with urbanism, and valorized the working class over and above the farmer. Many villagers accepted these ideas, and at the same time resented the devaluation they implied for the countryside.

The ambivalence is given a material manifestation when the physical conditions of the city are considered. Much of the urban housing stock could hardly be considered modern. Many houses in Berkovitz, including ones where village migrants lived, did not have indoor plumbing. In new apartment blocks in both Berkovitz and Mihailovgrad the central heating was often still not operative several years after habitation. Telephone lines were also years

away from realization whereas most Zamfirovo households got a telephone line in the mid-1980s. Interestingly, when asked about their city, several urbanites said the main problem was that there were "too many peasants living in it. It is just like a village." In other words, they blamed urban deficiencies on rural migrants who brought their life-ways with them, transforming the urbane into the provincial. As these considerations reveal, the role of migration in the rural-urban dyad is densely textured--it cannot be understood in simply material push-pull terms.

At the same time, there were baseline economic issues, such as the limited selection of consumer goods in the village, which influenced the perceptions of "rural" and "urban" and structured the interaction between the two, including the movement of people. As one middle-aged villager stated, "We have to go to Mihailovgrad if we want a cone of ice cream on a hot summer evening. And Berkovitza is not much better than here. They never have produce like oranges or bananas when Mihailovgrad does. Berkovitza is just like a village."

Clearly the nature of rural-urban interaction was complex. Neither the city nor the village was unqualifiably attractive, nor was either entirely undesirable. For certain people in certain times and circumstances, the scales tipped one way or the other. This was the case during the exodus of the 1950s and the

1960s and it holds for subsequent migration as well. Employment continued to be a factor in this balance, but its role should not be over-emphasized. This fact was brought home to me in a discussion with a retired man in Berkovitz about my own future. When I began complaining about the difficulty of finding a job in anthropology after 10 years of training and the possibility of having to get a job outside of my field, I was dismissed and told that it was the same in Bulgaria, where "people give up training and experience and take on any job just to get into a city."

I was aware of one such case personally. In this case the young couple was from the village but had moved to Mihailovgrad. Their living conditions, however, were terrible--they lived in a small basement apartment which was inadequate for two children and often flooded in wet weather. Although trained as a machine operator, the husband worked on a five-year contract as a "general worker" for a building firm, which basically meant he did unskilled manual labor. Upon fulfillment of his contract he would get an apartment in one of the new high-rise apartment buildings being built around the city. He said he would then hunt for a better paying job, hopefully one for which he was trained. This issue is well expressed in the memoirs of the Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov (1984:162). He writes that:

A universally applicable law of our social order then, as now, decreed that a huge number of people should devote their energies to work for which they were not suited. Under this law, which led to the most inexplicable and impossible appointments, colleagues of mine who were specialists in rubber were sent to produce glass, specialists in glass found themselves in the pharmaceutical industry, while food experts ended up in heavy metallurgy. All this was partly the consequence of an almost hysterical scramble to remain at all costs in Sofia, where with good reason life was considered to be better than in the provinces.²

The possibility of getting employment without expertise or training reveals anew the influence of two factors we have been stressing--social relations and the nature of the socialist economy. The soft budget constraints of the economy made labor constantly desirable so that enterprises were less choosy about qualifications. In such a context connections with people in positions to influence hiring may have been more important or determinant than actual expertise or training. Such a situation reveals the distortion of unidimensional economic explanations suggesting that employment possibilities pulled people to towns. Rather it seems that the privations and difficulties of village life, in concert with the various amenities associated with urban

² This fact is not unique to Bulgaria. A New York Times story (1/12/84) reported that there were hundreds of young specialists, including doctors and dentists, out of work in Yugoslavia's big cities because they did not want to go back to smaller towns and villages where jobs were available. One such graduate of the medical faculty of Belgrade University chose to sell worms to fishermen along the Danube rather than leave Belgrade.

living, drove people to cities, where they took whatever jobs they could get.

A similar critique can be made of the role of education in the migration process. Education was important in migration from Zamfirovo for all the reasons Simic (1972:80) elaborates for Yugoslavia: 1) it creates an increased desire for participation in the world outside the village; 2) skills are acquired that often cannot be practiced in the countryside; and 3) higher education usually requires a period of residence in larger population centers. As described above, the latter was particularly true for Zamfirovo. This view alone is unidirectional, however, with exposure to higher education seen as creating motivations for migration. In Zamfirovo education was as much a strategy for migration as a cause. Young people certainly did leave the village because they were trained for occupations irrelevant to rural life, but they actively pursued such areas of study in the first place precisely to escape the village, and they often made these decisions before being exposed to higher education. Young people in the village often expressed their career ambitions in terms of occupations that would most likely take them into urban environments, attempting to train for careers that could only be practiced in cities. So while education may have generated migration desires, the desire to migrate generated the interest in higher education.

The role of education in migration has led some to suggest a village "brain drain," in which the village is losing its brightest and best, keeping only the less qualified and less capable, thereby deepening its social and economic problems. Taffee (1977:162-164) claims such a process was characteristic of Bulgaria, and other scholars (Konrád and Szelényi 1976, Bell 1984, Douglass 1975:151) have suggested the same for other countries. But looking at the role of social relations diminishes the potential damage of such a "brain drain." Many times it was indeed the most educated that left the village, but their education was often a reflection of their advantageous social relations rather than superior intellect. During my stay in the village, two individuals with similar levels of higher education left their jobs in the local administration for jobs in the nearby town. One was uniformly acknowledged to be "very smart," the other universally held to have gotten her education only through social connections.

Young people also candidly admitted that urban residence was a factor in spouse selection. For a village young person living in a town while going to school, finding a spouse from the city was one way to forestall a return to the village. Urban residence was usually mentioned when a young person described the characteristics and qualities of their boyfriend or girlfriend, either actual or potential. This was brought

home to me in a somewhat reverse way by a typical piece of village gossip. A household that I frequently visited had a neighbor with a 19 year old daughter. Friends of the family in Sofia were trying to match-make her with a neighbor of theirs. "He is single and has his own nice apartment in Sofia. All she has to do is take off her shoes and go in." After a contemplative pause, she added, "Although, if he has an apartment in Sofia and no marriage prospects, then there is certainly something bad wrong with him."

Besides revealing the attractiveness of urban residence, and by extension, urban residents, the above example, along with the case of the "general worker" recounted above, illustrates that the issue of urban residence is hardly distinguishable from the problem of urban housing. The attraction of urban places combined with inadequate urban infrastructural investment led to problems of urban overpopulation and a concomitant housing shortage. The housing problem was severe, especially in the largest cities. One resident of Mihailovgrad, which was certainly not one of the more desirable urban addresses in the country, said that "there is no serious housing problem here. The wait for a new apartment in the building zone is only three years or so."

We should also remember that infrastructural investment in the villages has not been adequate either, which clearly fuels rural discontent. The village was

provided with electricity in 1958, and people recounted wondrous stories of turning on electric lights for the first time. In the mid-1960s houses got running water, but in the late 1980s most houses did not have indoor toilets, though many had indoor showers. While I was in the village they were in the process of installing steam heat in the school, which was still heated by individual wood-stoves in each room. The crisis was a spiralling one--as people left the village it became less viable, less attractive, and less deserving of investment, which increased the desire to migrate.

This process, in combination with the fertility decline, eventually led to near crisis conditions in regard to the rural labor force, as described in the previous chapter. The increasing need for urban infrastructural investment and agricultural investment to offset labor shortages threatened to undercut industrially driven development. While the labor shortage in agriculture was dangerous, with declining birth rates the labor prospect for all sectors of the economy was getting bleaker as well. Measures were taken to correct these imbalances on both the demographic and migratory fronts.

Responses

On the demographic front the government attempted to increase fertility by a combination of abortion restrictions and pro-natal financial incentives. Abortion

laws, liberalized in 1956 following Soviet precedent, were revised between 1967 and 1970, and again in 1972 (McIntyre 1975:367), to be more restrictive, but abortion was never completely outlawed as in Romania. Informants confirmed that the regulations in 1988 remained similar to those described by Berent (1970:280ff) in 1970: married women with three or more children could obtain legal abortions, whereas married women with less than three children could not. They also said that all unmarried women were able to get legal abortions. As very few villagers had more than two children, either the letter of the law was not observed or alternate forms of birth control were used. Other legal methods included the pill and condoms.

Being legal, however, did not mean that birth control products were always available. This was brought home to me by a radio program on AIDS. After the health expert discussed the transmission of the disease and the precautions to be taken, including the use of condoms, a listener called in to ask why condoms were not available in drug stores. The expert had no answer. Given the problems of availability, I suspect that illegal abortions and possibly coitus interruptus continued to be a primary means of fertility control, supplemented by more modern techniques, when available. As our earlier historical discussion indicated, Bulgarian villagers were controlling their fertility for decades, and jural constrictions,

short of the kind of interventions found in Romania, were likely to be of less consequence than planners intended.

Perhaps in recognition of this fact, the government also began at the same time an elaborate pro-natal campaign based on financial incentives. The system was extensive and changed often, but more in the amounts of compensation than in the general categories. These categories included a very liberal system of maternity benefits, a lump sum payment at birth, and a monthly wage supplement. The rate of compensation varied according to the birth order of the pregnancy as summarized in Table IV.4. In addition, women could extend their maternity leave with a reduction in compensation for up to four years: they could remain on leave until the child's second

Table IV.4 Pro-natal financial incentives in Bulgaria, ca. 1987

	<u>1st Child</u>	<u>2nd Child</u>	<u>3rd Child</u>	<u>Addit- ional births</u>
Birth Payment (<u>leva</u>)	100	250	500	100
Monthly wage supplement (<u>leva</u>)	15	30	55	15
Pregnancy leave (days)	120	150	180	120

birthday with a minimum salary of 120 leva a month, and elect to take an additional two years' leave without pay, but with a guarantee of receiving their previous position upon returning to work. As McIntyre (1975:374-375) points out, it is difficult to assess the results of such policies since they correspond in time with changes in abortion availability, to which he attributes more significance. On an impressionistic level, these policies did seem to have an impact on village birth spacing, as two years was a very common age difference between two siblings. The limitations of these programs, however, were verified by a demographic consultant to the government who concluded a lengthy discussion of the details of the system by advising me not to bother remembering them, as "the system is not really working and is being changed."

Incentives were only one side of the strategy to increase fertility. They were combined with financial dis-incentives to celibacy and childlessness in the form of special taxes. Men and women who were not married by the age of 21 were required to pay a "bachelor's tax." The tax rate was 5 percent of their income until age 30, then 10 percent until they turned 35, and thereafter 15 percent until they married or reached the age of 45 or 50, for women and men respectively. Once married, a couple had three years to produce a child. If they did not, they were each assessed a 15 percent tax on their income until

a child was born. Again, such measures did not reverse fertility declines, but they may have contributed to the continuing village pattern of early marriage and the early birth of at least one child. Finally there were moral incentives, as women having more than two children were given a medal recognizing their contribution.

When questioned, many informants said that the various incentives were simply not enough to make having more children desirable. The government, for its part, was constrained in the further expansion of incentive programs by the minority populations who, as one government official put it, "will have as many children as they receive financial compensation for." These groups were the gypsies and Turks whose fertility is higher than that of non-Moslem Bulgarians. The continuing failure of pro-natal policies among the Bulgarian population and the continued growth of Moslem populations were the motivating factors behind the infamous assimilation campaign of the 1980s (see Creed 1990).

While pro-natal policies were being implemented to promote population growth, restrictions were being formulated to keep the existing population in place. The convergent timing suggests a sort of watershed realization by the government/Party in the late 1960s of some of the unintended consequences of the socialist development strategy, including the mounting labor shortage in the rural sector. Officials in the town of Berkovitza said

that migration regulations were imposed in 1967. In Mihailovgrad they said that they were imposed "around 1970." A published listing of the migration regulations (Marinov 1985) dates most of them to 1974, though this date most likely reflects the increasing extent, formalization and enforcement of the regulations. The limitations were always referred to as "temporary limits to residence in cities," but they were never rescinded in the socialist era, and, in fact, were extended. As of 1981 there were only 121 small towns to which the migration limits did not apply (Marinov 1985:65-66). By 1985 the regulations and updates took up nearly 40 pages of print in Marinov's collection.

The regulations served a dual purpose. On the one hand, by restricting migration to urban areas they retained village populations and limited urban expansion; on the other hand by making urban residence a truly limited good, officials were able to offer it as an incentive or attraction for positions and jobs that were otherwise undesirable. The restrictions limited migration to most large towns and then granted various dispensations for people who worked a certain number of years in a specified job or place. The following entry from Marinov's collection is representative:

-workers and service personnel who have worked at least 6 years at the radio-relay and television station, "Botev Peak," upon a motion by the Ministry of Communication may be accepted

as residents by all restricted cities except Sofia (1985:53).

Two villagers from Zamfirovo were involved in similar labor activities and were planning to relocate when their time was served. One was working as a construction worker on a nuclear-power plant near the town of Kozlodui on the Danube and planned to move to Mihailovgrad. The other man was working in a lumber enterprise in Berkovitza and planned to move there permanently. This would be possible after five years of service with a promise to work five more. In the meantime he commuted from the village. There were numerous other exceptions granted, including those for spouses, government and Party officials, career soldiers, and even people designated as "heroes of socialist labor" in particular occupations.

A major exception was made for "young specialists," that is, young people fresh out of specialized occupational training, provided that their skill or knowledge was needed in the place they intend to live and not needed at their current place of residence. This possibility provided an opening for the creative career planning of young people described earlier. They were able to assess the situation and try for specializations that were not needed in their village. They often did not succeed, as these areas were also the most competitive and villagers were generally less prepared than urban youth, with less access to the relevant network of social

connections. Still, they tried. One village youth told me he was going to the University of Sofia after he got out of the army. Several months later I overheard a telephone conversation in the town hall where the director of the cooperative farm was assuring this young man's mother that he had taken care of the necessary procedures to get the son into technical school in Mihailovgrad on the basis of the needs of the farm and his future village employment. In contrast, another village young person was successful, gaining admittance into the Economics Institute in Sofia by arrangement of a firm in Berkovitza, where she was supposed to work upon graduation. Such provincial needs were one way otherwise unsuccessful applicants for higher education could be admitted.

Another specification allowed towns to admit new residents to fill "labor shortages." Given the chronic nature of this problem in the socialist economy, it is not surprising that the number of such positions was controlled by organs of the central government. A planning committee at the national level allotted each town a quota of workers they could accept each year for labor needs. The towns then allotted these positions to local enterprises according to their need and their importance in the local economy. Villagers who worked on contract with these enterprises, usually for about 10 years, received town residence status. To give an idea of the extent of the limitations during the late 1980s,

Berkovitz had an average of 27 such positions plus seven positions for "needs of a social character;" Mihailovgrad was allotted an annual average of around 100 workers, plus 60 positions for social needs.

This type of system clearly created a field for the mobilization of various social relations. Without going into every case, we can generalize that many of the opportunities for migration described above were not granted blindly. For example, when I told the young man with university ambitions that I knew a professor in his field at the University, he immediately asked me to arrange for them to meet. He then proceeded to tell me how difficult it was to get into the University because of the role of personal connections in the selection process, and that it would be a great help to him if he could meet a professor. Knowing the faculty member well, I did not have the same impression of the importance of personalistic relations in the selection process, but I do not doubt they were operative to some degree. Another village youth got an industrial job in a Sofia factory and moved there because his father was related to the local director of a branch of the factory located in the village. Finally, to return to the issue of temporary labor migration, the several cases of villagers working abroad for hard currency was understandable given that an influential village expatriate was married to the woman who coordinated the international labor arrangements. As

one villager put it, "she arranges it for our men." While migration and mobility were tied to social relations, as the system became more restrictive these relations were rendered less pervasively effective.

Villagers felt the restrictiveness of the new regulations, particularly as migration had been a mechanism of mobility, and this sense of deprivation contributed to discontent. Often they complained about not being able to move, targeting the restrictions on migration in particular. In one instance when I was sharing the mandatory snack and pitcher of homemade wine with a family following an interview, the conversation turned to another village family with whom I associated, specifically the older woman of the family, who was derided for being spoiled and lazy. Trying to be neither overly defensive nor critical, I suggested that perhaps the woman had grown accustomed to city living during the several years she worked in Sofia before retiring back to the village, and that now she did not enjoy village work. The woman replied, "I prefer to live in the city too, but I do not have the possibilities she does, so there is no way." At another encounter a man assured me that it was getting much more difficult to migrate to cities than it had been in the past. "Factories used to have housing and everything, and it was not too difficult to get to migrate. Now it is very hard."

The increasing restrictiveness was noticeable on the urban end as well. Posted advertisements in Sofia for less than desirable jobs, such as transit driving, specified that applicants had to have official resident status, whereas in the past these jobs were offered as a vehicle for acquiring such status. I was also told that a new regulation was going to tax Sofia enterprises two thousand leva for each non-resident employed by the firm on a temporary resident permit. A "crack down" was also verified by a Sofia student who complained that a friend of his was having problems getting a new temporary residence permit and was considering officially moving to a village outside of Sofia, where residence was not restricted, and living illegally in the city.

Reform and Restructuring

It would be inaccurate to say that the increase in migration restrictions and enforcement was a stated component of "restructuring," but it is clear that the motivations for each are to be found in the same context of socio-economic difficulty, created by a viciously cyclical and convergent interaction between reform and population processes. Previous agricultural reforms and increasing restrictions on movement were both responses to the labor shortage caused by demographic decline and rural out-migration. There were connections between these responses as well. A major component of the early

restructuring package was the promise of local-level financial accountability at both the village and the enterprise level. Migration required permission of both sending and receiving authorities, and the prospect of decentralized cost accounting made both ends more particular about their own resources. Villagers feared that either towns were going to be less receptive to migrants or villages less willing to let them go--either way, diminished possibilities for mobility, physically and consequently socially, would be the result. These concerns never materialized, but the perception of such possibilities was a source of discontent, fueling sentiment for greater change.

The more radical changes currently on the drawing board, however, are restrained by some of these same concerns, notably the antagonism between rural and urban sectors. The antagonism toward the rural sector is most evident among the more educated urbanites, especially intellectuals. There is a small group of intellectuals with a primary scholarly interest in rural life, and a small percentage who maintain nostalgic, idyllic or neutral views of it, but most other intellectuals have a pronounced anti-rural attitude. Many actually express negative evaluations of all villages and even those who do not directly disparage the countryside clearly do not appreciate it, respect it or know much about it. Painting all villages with the same strokes as the smallest and

worst examples, they find the village abhorrent to a degree that was not objectively justified in this observer's eyes.

I did not have to elicit these opinions because as soon as I revealed to other scholars that my research involved living in a village the outpouring began. "How could you possibly live in a village?" "They probably have no running water." "There is no one there except old women." And my favorite, "There has not been a child born in the villages in the last twenty years." The last comment tipped me off that these scholarly observations were less than scientific, as I had personally attended three christenings in Zamfirovo in less than two years, and knew of many more.

What might otherwise be treated as simply more evidence of the rural-urban opposition discussed previously becomes more ominous when we realize that these intellectuals are the leaders of the new political parties in the country. In fact, the person who expressed the absurd comment about births in the villages is now a presidential advisor on an issue that directly affects rural populations.³ This information helps explain why the opposition was concerned, in the months preceding the first free elections, about their base of support in rural areas and why they attempted to postpone the elections.

³ I will say no more for fear of identifying the person.

The results, of course, confirmed their fears as most rural areas went heavily for the Socialist Party. In Zamfirovo the Socialist slate received 1,111 votes to the opposition's 368. Urban areas, in contrast, preferred the opposition. Subsequent elections have seen an erosion of rural support for the Socialist Party, due to the continuing economic crisis, but the rural-urban divide continues to shape political developments.

Similarly, the demographic developments discussed in the preceding pages have also contributed to both the unfolding of reform and the profile of contemporary transition. Previously I suggested that people restricted births in order to provide adequately for their children. This desire may have driven reform in various ways. As a result of the decline in the number of children and the improving economic situation in the late 1960s, an inflation began in regard to what was required to "provide" for children. Expectations, however, were not as tightly controlled by the strictures of the command economy as production, and the escalating demands for investment in children quickly by-passed the capacity of the Bulgarian economy to satisfy them. Recurrent reforms attempted to deal with these increasing expectations and ironically, in failing to do so, contributed to the idea that such expectations should be met.

A related consideration in the increasing investment in fewer offspring was a change in the role of various

social relations. There is more here than just a general "reduction" in the importance of social relations as Handwerker (1986:14-16) maintains. For the Bulgarian village it would be misleading to say the role of such relations had decreased; even if they had declined in number, their influence remained great. Personalistic relations were still touted in the late 1980s as the most important and effective means to almost any objective, but there was an inflation in what constituted a useful connection. In other words, the number of connections was no longer as important as the positions these people occupied, and their positions were likely to be affected by investments such as education. So it is perhaps the continuing or even increasing importance of social relations that led to continued fertility restriction in the socialist era.

Handwerker's analysis, like Caldwell's (1982), is instructive, but both illustrate the problem of relying too heavily on a pre-transition/post-transition dichotomy. The fertility decline itself affected the larger context in which it occurred, likely affecting other social factors, such as social relations or the flow of wealth. If these factors look very different in the periods after the transition, it is possible that they were changed by their interaction with other developments, including declining fertility itself. We cannot then simply take this difference and say it caused the transition. This is

exactly the pitfall that we must avoid in regard to analyzing the political and economic transitions in Bulgaria--both the transition to socialism and the transition from it.

A dimension of demographic change that figures in the current political transition is the homogenization of the family life cycle, different in detail but similar in concept to that described by Anderson (1985) for Britain. We must add to this homogenization the different experiences of the generations in these families. Not only have most young adults experienced a very similar life trajectory to date, but it is one that is drastically different from that of their parents. Born since the 1950s, they grew up in the 1960s and 1970s when the benefits of socialist development were most evident. With one or no siblings, they benefited greatly from the major increase in investment in children. As young adults, they are not well-prepared to accept the country's structural barriers to their escalating expectations. At the same time, they did not experience the pre-socialist conditions and lack the related appreciation for the achievements of the communist system. They are also the first generation of adult Bulgarians in which the majority have never lived in the countryside. Their parents were among the rural exodus in the 1960s and their village experience was limited to occasional visits.

These circumstances, in concert with the escalating nature of reform itself, account in part for why discontent was greater, and agitation for radical change more successful, in the late 1980s than at any time previously. The focus on democracy as the vehicle of protest reflected both the unwillingness of these young adults to be told what to do and their association of democratic government with western style capitalism. In the context of failed socialist reforms, they saw capitalism as the only way to fulfill their desire for a higher standard of living, i.e. "westernization." Rural life represented the antithesis of this goal, hence their inability to politically embrace the rural population.

These same demographic changes also fueled conservative sentiments, especially in rural areas and among the older generation. To some degree, any reversal in the flow of wealth between parents and children was underwritten in post-war Bulgaria by state provisions such as pensions and fairly early retirement possibilities. Adults having made decisions with these state supports in the picture are now concerned about radical change and the possibility of having these supports removed. Consequently, many defend a continuation of socialist structures. In other words, the same forces contribute to different attitudes and responses depending upon one's position in relation to these forces at particular times of transition. While this is perhaps common sensical for

anthropologists, it is implicitly denied by the conventional perspective on socialism as a monolithic system affecting most people within it in identical ways.

The above discussion also suggests that it is not only the objective economic situation that structures the need for change, but the subjective perception of these conditions as well. That perception has been affected strongly by the changing demographic situation, but with different results for different people. These varied perspectives structure the outline of current political and economic developments.

A major component in this process, which we have only alluded to this chapter, is the policy of dispersed rural industrial development. This policy emerged in response to the trends of village out-migration and low rural population growth, but it transformed Zamfirovo life in ways far beyond the concern with population processes per se. The next chapter takes up this issue in detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS

In response to some of the population trends discussed in the previous chapter, and the attendant agricultural problems discussed in Chapter Three, the government began in the late 1960s to promote the idea of dispersed industrial development, whereby industrial enterprises were to be set up in rural and small town locations. Zamfirovo not only benefited from this initiative, but was in fact transformed by it. The idea first developed as state policy, but its implementation in the village engaged local factors which, when examined, further enliven our understanding of the interaction between the local and the national in processes of reform and rural development.

We begin with an extended description of the non-agricultural enterprises in Zamfirovo in the late 1980s. This is followed by an examination of how non-agricultural activities interacted with farming requirements, both historically and during the period of my fieldwork. With the increase in non-agricultural activities in the 1960s, the interactions became more conflictual, contributing to the cycle of reform and compromise symptomatic of socialism as a system of conflicting complementarity. The distinctive outcome was the adjustment of industrial

discipline to the exigencies and needs of rural agricultural concerns--the opposite of what is often assumed to occur with capitalist industrialization.

Meanwhile, these processes have surprising parallels to those currently transforming capitalist economies. As we will see here, the village industrialization project centered around a collection of subcontracting deals. In most cases these relied heavily on personal relations between the contracting units as well as between local managers and employees. As is well known, the proliferation of personalistic sub-contracting arrangements is also central to the current capitalist trend referred to as "de-industrialization." Under Bulgarian socialism, however, these processes were held in check at the community level and did not fragment further into separate household contracts.

While clearly redressing the rural dynamics discussed in the previous chapters, it can certainly be argued, as Konrád and Szelényi (1976) do, that dispersing economic enterprises was as much a response to urban concerns as to rural ones, notably the dilemma of urban population growth in the context of communist distaste for infrastructural investment. As Smollett (1980:53) tactfully phrased it for the Bulgarian case, "these rural factories will reverse the growth of urban congestion, and allow people to work in industry while enjoying the pleasant conditions of village life."

In fact, the urban connection is just another of the numerous related factors that made rural industrialization an extremely attractive and economical prospect. The real and projected labor needs of agriculture, the problem of village depopulation, the strain on the urban infrastructure, the reluctance to divert investment funds from production to infrastructural supports, along with the need for even more industrial workers in the context of soft budget constraints and extensive growth, could all be addressed by locating employment of various types in villages. The existing rural infrastructure, ample if less than desirable, could be used to support industrial producers. Reciprocally, industry should provide some workers for agriculture, whether from the families of industrial workers or from local enterprises supplying agricultural brigades. Industrial work would allow villages to absorb educated and skilled young people. Also it would prevent the proliferation of non-functional villages that would have to be provided with basic infrastructural supports for their disappearing non-productive populations, a drain perhaps even more unacceptable than urban infrastructural investment.

Clearly, these arguments were more broadly related to a socialist ideology that dictated or required that all people and places be provisioned. In fact, dispersed development fit perfectly into the ideological structure which we have suggested was so important in both the make-

up of socialist political economy and the reform process that accompanied it. To begin, it redressed the ideologically unacceptable rural-urban inequities that had emerged in the headlong rush for industrialization at the expense, to a degree, of agriculture and rural society. It did so without sacrificing the industrial bias which was also virtually an ideological tenet of socialism. In addition, it promoted equal regional development by advocating a more even geographical distribution of productive activities, thereby increasing equality among individuals and between regions. In a real sense, then, the policy itself was a reform necessitated by historical developments in a context of both ideological and economic objectives.

As one might imagine, however, so harmonious a solution was not without dissonance when actually orchestrated. In some areas the strategy never even materialized, and where it did, as in Zamfirovo, conflicts accompanied it. Arising as an answer to problems of socialist development, the process of rural industrialization generated other problems that called forth further adjustments or reforms. At the same time, the establishment of industrial activities altered conditions affecting agricultural output, injecting additional considerations into the agricultural balancing act described in Chapter Two, thereby contributing to agricultural reforms. Thus, far from the suggestion Ho

(1979) makes for Taiwan, rural industrialization in Bulgaria was not really a way of "maintaining the rural social fabric," but rather a way of altering it drastically in order to make it more durable. In order to see these processes, however, we must look at the actual non-agricultural enterprises in the village. When we start from this point we not only get a micro-view of the implementation of state policy, but a new perspective on this process which includes a greater role for local factors and social relations than it does for state fiat.

Non-Agricultural Enterprises in Zamfirovo

On the road leading into Zamfirovo, the cooperative farm buildings and the Machine Tractor Station are the first structures one passes. Immediately beyond them stands the village "factory." Unlike other enterprises operating while I was in the village, this building was a stereotypical factory and as such served a symbolic as well as an economic function. With its factory name and requisite socialist slogan ("Restructuring: Work and Destiny of Everyone) plastered across the front, the building testified to the project of industrializing the village. Abutting the collective farm yard, the two adjacent structures encapsulated the agro-industrial base of the village economy.

The factory assembled stators for electrical motors. It was a branch assembly factory for the large machine

plant Vasil Kolarov in Sofia, which owned all the machinery in the factory. As a branch unit it received its production plan from the Sofia plant, which was also responsible for providing the necessary materials-- primarily sheet metal, bar aluminum and electrical wiring. The Sofia plant delivered the materials to the factory in Zamfirovo, where they were made into stators. This process involved molding the base of the stator from molten aluminum, cutting sheet metal into pieces which were stacked into the aluminum forms, and attaching the necessary wiring. The factory produced about 15,000 such units a year. The stators were picked up by the parent plant and trucked back to Sofia, where they were assembled into electrical motors for various types of machinery, ultimately destined, I was told, for Africa.

The factory employed about 150 shift workers, consisting of 90 women and 60 men, divided between morning and afternoon shifts. Women were primarily engaged in two activities: operating the presses that cut the sheet metal into appropriate pieces and attaching the wiring to the final product. Men were involved in making the forms, assembling the pieces, and hauling the materials and products around the factory. In addition to these workers the factory employed about 30 more people on a regular salaried basis. Working a regular work day, they overlapped both shifts. This group included the factory

managers, their administrative support staff and skilled technicians.

Workers worked on the "norm" system, which required, as we saw for agricultural workers, a certain minimum production per day, although there was a guaranteed minimum wage should they fall short. In line with the situation described by Haraszti (1977) for the tractor factory where he worked in Hungary, norms continually escalated (see also Burawoy 1985:167-171). As the director explained it to me, "there are increases in the norms with improvements of machines or improved organization, and so forth." Workers described the norms as "difficult but possible." Despite the difficulty, the average monthly salary for workers was a respectable 250 to 300 leva a month. Although this was considered a good wage, the work was hard, which may explain why there was substantial turnover in the work force. I do not have employment statistics to verify employee turnover, but based on the large number of people I spoke with in other contexts who had worked in the factory in the past, I suspect there was significant fluidity. One middle-aged man working in another village enterprise told me he had made more money in the factory but had changed jobs because the work was too tedious and demanding. A current factory employee said he was in the process of looking for another job for the same reason. Apparently, the wages attracted people to the work but some tired of the

difficult and more rigorous regime and eventually looked for other jobs, perhaps even less lucrative ones. The "technicians" did not work on the norm and received a flat salary, "slightly higher than that of the workers."

These salaries represented a fairly recent and significant increase. In 1986 most of the machinery in the factory was replaced and the salaries raised. Beforehand, the maximum wage for workers had been 200 leva, and certainly many were below that mark. The salary increase also reflected changes in the system of remuneration. Wages had always been tied to production by some mechanism, but until 1988 salaries were determined by the factory's total output. That year, the factory began working on a brigade system in which the workers were remunerated according to the productivity of their particular brigade rather than the factory as a whole. Furthermore, the brigades were made individually responsible for the distribution of their pay among the brigade members. This was clearly an implementation of national reform policies that advocated for all sectors of the economy a tighter link between individual worker productivity and salary.

This change actually dates back to 1978 when the Party Conference mandated the brigade organization of work for all productive enterprises, including the idea of brigades being self-supporting in terms of cost accounting. According to Thirkell (1985) 70 to 80 percent

of manual workers in productive industries were organized into such brigades by 1983. It was not until 1986, however, that the brigade unit took on real social significance. In that year the new Labor Code was adopted with "self-management" as its modus vivendi. Brigades of a "new type" were created with a smaller number of members now charged with direct participation in decision making and execution for the enterprise (Stoilov 1987:26; Petkov 1987). The new system of brigade remuneration was one of the vehicles intended to unite the interests of the newly self-managing bodies and the enterprise. As we shall see later, it was not a perfect marriage, but it was indicative of the reach of centralized planning that all these various national industrial reforms affected a small local branch factory and village workers.

The factory was opened in late 1969, following the national campaign to set up rural enterprises. In an attempt to understand the mechanisms by which this national policy was implemented on the local level, I asked questions about "why" and "how" the factory ended up in Zamfirovo. The answers inevitably focused on some characteristics of the village that made it an appropriate choice: "We are a large village"; "There are lots of people here to work in it"; "We are not too far from Sofia"; or "We needed it." Regardless of whom I asked I was unable to get beyond this type of explanation. I was soon left with the impression that the plant in Sofia had,

perhaps upon national directive, decided to establish a branch assembly shop, examined all the villages within a certain geographic radius, and had chosen Zamfirovo based on particularities of location and perhaps demography. While this idea ran counter to my own observations of an interaction between local and state levels, I could not dismiss the preponderance of evidence and reluctantly concurred. Besides, at least this characterization included a consideration of local conditions by the state enterprise.

Later in my stay I was having dinner with a family in the village on the occasion of a visit by their friends from another part of the country. On this occasion as on others, I was questioned about my impressions of the village. By way of lauding the many opportunities for work in the village, I mentioned the factory. As conversation then turned to its presence and history, one of the guests asked the host, "Who is responsible for the factory being here?" I knew at that second that I had been asking the wrong question all along--the issue was not why but who, and not just who decided, but who was responsible.

Newly sensitized to this concern, I began to observe how important for villagers was the attribution of responsibility in all manner of activities. Someone was "responsible" for every occurrence, whether good or bad, no matter how insignificant. Coming from the southern

part of the United States where agency is denied in conversations (i.e. things "get gone" instead of someone losing them; a fight "starts" rather than someone starting a fight, etc.) I was fascinated by this obsession with assigning blame or credit. It demonstrates, I believe, how the socialist system, in which systemic problems were always blamed on someone, had affected people's perceptions. This connection was verified by a villager's response to my expressed interest in the issue: "It is part of our political system and we have lived with this system so long it is natural for us."

When the question about the factory was asked in this "natural" way, the host answered it directly, telling of a villager who, having ascended to the upper ranks of the national government, had official relations with the parent plant in Sofia, and through them arranged to have the branch built in Zamfirovo. So my conception of the process went from one extreme to the other in a matter of seconds. Not only was the locality involved in negotiating the factory location, local connections were indeed the driving force, the national level doing little more than providing the basic policy in support of a local initiative. Later I discovered that the local initiative was actually a cooperative effort between village leaders and the villager in the national government; the former instigated the process and the latter facilitated it.

Similar processes figured in the history of other local non-agricultural enterprises.

Two other important non-agricultural enterprises in the village were actually units of the local commerce cooperative. The cooperative's primary responsibilities included provisioning the village stores, running the village restaurant and buying up various products produced by villagers in their personal economy. Responsibility for purchasing most agricultural items from villagers had been transferred to the cooperative farm, but the commerce cooperative retained responsibility for some items, notably sheep and goat skins.

Supplying, rather than buying, was the most important activity of the commerce cooperative. It supplied local shops and the restaurant through direct contracts with productive enterprises, primarily in the region but also from other regions when necessary. This responsibility put it on the firing line when there were shortages of various products in the village. Villagers, however, maintained an accurate monitoring system of the national economy. Thanks to extensive out-migration, they had contacts with people in various places and were able to determine when shortages were systemic and when localized. Thus, they could distinguish cases when the local cooperative was to blame for shortfalls from cases when national or enterprise problems were at fault. Since purchasing contracts between cooperatives and enterprises

tended to be maintained over time, most shortages were, in fact, the result of production problems rather than a failure of the local cooperative. Occasionally, however, the cooperative director would be taken to task for not finding alternative sources of products when traditional suppliers were disabled.

The village commerce cooperative did not attempt to supply the variety of goods available in nearby towns, but it did provide all the basic needs and a little of everything. There was a fairly large "general" store with housewares, clothes, furniture and farming supplies. In addition, there was a central grocery store with a small meat section, and several satellite kiosks that sold non-perishable items throughout the village. There was also a fish store which operated when fish was delivered, and a fruit and vegetable store which never operated because there was no one to work there.

Shortages and lines for products in short supply certainly existed, but they were not endemic. At any given time there was likely to be some standard product unavailable, but such lapses were usually temporary, due to either a problem at the factory or demand patterns that peaked at particular times. For example, sugar might become short during the wine-making season, or soft drinks in short supply before holiday feasts. Nor did lines necessarily indicate an absolute shortage of a given product. Meat was delivered to the village twice a week,

so if you wanted or needed meat you had to line up, and since there was only one distribution outlet with limited working hours, the lines were that much longer. Yet, many times I returned to the store later to find the product still in supply after everyone had been served. It is true that such lining-up behavior was a response to the larger system in which supply and demand were not coordinated, and shortages did occur. Still, we should be aware that the infamous lines of socialism were not just the result of product scarcity.

A good example of the multidimensional aspects of lines is the case of bread buying in Zamfirovo. There was no shortage of bread in the village during the whole time I was there, even though it was sometimes purchased in large quantities to feed pigs being fattened for sale to the state. Despite apparent bounty, there were often lines at the bread bakery for several reasons. The buyers' preference for very fresh (preferably warm) bread, the somewhat limited hours for selling bread at the bakery, and the working schedule of the consumer all conspired to create lines in the absence of a shortage. Bread was delivered to neighborhood kiosks, but it was not as fresh and was unreliable since the small deliveries might sell out quickly or might not be delivered at all if there was a problem with the truck. Direct purchase from the bakery was more desirable and reliable, so everyone stopped by the bakery on the way home from work, creating

long lines. It would not have been useful to produce fresh bread throughout the day since most people wanted it fresh for lunch and dinner, and it clearly would have been wasteful, in the given economic context, to invest in additional facilities of a subsidized product simply to alleviate the lines.

The bakery was one of the two "productive enterprises" in the village commerce cooperative. It employed eight workers divided into two shifts (one all-male and the other all-female), producing over 500 loaves per day. The workers were paid according to the number of loaves they produced, and monthly salaries ranged between 200 and 250 leva. Production was automated, with mixing, kneading and portioning all done by machine, but the machinery was antiquated and villagers complained constantly about the quality of the bread. Its texture, they pointed out, was coarse compared to that available in Sofia or even in the smaller village of Burziya located between Sofia and Zamfirovo. Situated on the main highway, the Burziya bakery was a common stopping point for travelers in either direction. Apparently, attempts had been made to improve the local product as there was a large new dough mixing machine covered up with plastic in the corner of the bakery. Unfortunately it had never worked right. When I asked why it had not been returned, one of the bakers gave the one-word explanation, "bureaucracy." There was evident embarrassment around

this issue, which prevented me from pressing for a fuller explanation.

The other productive enterprise managed by the commerce cooperative was a cookie factory, which ranked as the second most significant non-agricultural enterprise in the village after the machine factory. While the bakery made bread almost exclusively for village consumers (which no doubt accounts for its lack of concern with quality), the cookie factory produced cookies that were sold by the commerce cooperative throughout the region. The factory made 12 different kinds of cookies, with a production of about 560,000 boxes per year, and a leva value of approximately 1,250,000. The cookie factory employed approximately 60 people, mostly women. This number included the supervisor of the factory but not other administrative workers, as these jobs were handled by the office workers of the commerce cooperative. This number also reflected a 10 to 15 person shortage of labor in the late 1980s. Wages, tied to production, averaged around 180 to 190 leva a month--not bad but less than many other jobs in the village.

The work was not difficult, though perhaps monotonous. Most of the factory production was devoted to making waffle-type cookies, which were assembled by hand with the workers applying a glutinous sugar filling between large sheets of a thin waffle-like pastry. After several layers were assembled in this manner, the large

block was mechanically sliced into small cookies and packed in boxes. Some types were covered in chocolate. There was a machine for this procedure unless the cookie coating was to be on only one side, which necessitated hand dipping.

The linchpin of this enterprise was the large Austrian-made waffle machine. It was almost fully automated and required only one full-time worker to sit and remove the waffles as a long conveyor belt, fitted with several irons, moved by her. She deftly and quickly removed the waffles, which were then taken to be assembled as described. Like the motor assembly factory, the waffle machine was not placed in Zamfirovo by state planners attempting to implement the policy of dispersed industry. While the purchase of the machine could not have occurred without the mobilization of people in higher positions, the initiative and push came from the local level. The president of the commerce cooperative researched the machine and pushed through its purchase using personal political and business connections. Financing came from proceeds of village agricultural production along with the backing of state loans granted on the potential of the enterprise to produce profits. Integrated into a national commerce cooperative network, the village cooperative was well-positioned to initiate such endeavors.

Sixty percent of the materials needed for the cookie factory were provided by the National Commerce Cooperative

office in Sofia. The remaining 40 percent had to be secured by the village cooperative itself through contracts with primary producers. Once established, these contracts were usually maintained year after year. They got sugar from the sugar beet refinery in Lom and most other ingredients came from firms in Sofia.

All prices were set by organs of the central government and, with the exception of sugar prices, were fairly stable. Sugar prices were raised in 1979 and again in the summer of 1988. This was clearly threatening to a cookie factory, but the director told me that the state reimbursed them for the increase in sugar costs so the selling price of the products could remain the same. Given such subsidies to enterprises, the price increase in sugar was apparently directed at consumers who used it for home canning, and perhaps more to the point, for wine making. The latter was under administrative attack following Gorbachev's anti-alcohol measures in the Soviet Union.

The marketing of cookies was done by the local cooperative through contracts with the other 14 village cooperatives in the region. Distribution was basically restricted to these outlets by a state policy stressing regional self-sufficiency in various domestically produced products. The underlying motivation of this reform was to cut down the extent of transport in order to conserve limited domestic energy resources (a concern reflected in

the previous chapter in the refusal to transport high school students to school on a daily basis).

The commerce cooperative previously included other productive enterprises, but in 1983 these activities were constituted into a separate unit called the bitov kombinat. "Bitov," somewhat difficult to translate, basically means "related to everyday life," so that such a sector produces goods and services related to "everyday needs." In this case those needs were primarily children's toys, plastic lids, plastic bags, and small metal structures such as those used for retail outlets. It is a reflection of the position of consumer goods in the state hierarchy of economic priorities that such diverse items as housewares, hardware, and toys were lumped into a single production category.

These activities began one by one in the late 1960s and 1970s, each initiated by the local management of the commerce cooperative. In 1983, with several different enterprises operating, the directors of the cooperative and village leaders decided the commerce cooperative was overloaded. Their solution was to form a new economic unit, the bitov kombinat. The timing was perhaps not coincidental, as it followed the institution of the New Economic Mechanism, which was directed toward decentralizing productive enterprises. The new enterprise remained a unit of the larger national commerce cooperative system and was managed by the previous

director of the local commerce cooperative, who was replaced at his previous post by his assistant. The bitov kombinat also included within its responsibility various services such as a barber, a beautician, a cobbler, a woodworker and a tailor, but control of the much more important brandy still was retained by the commerce cooperative.

The production activities of the bitov kombinat were divided into three main units, one making small metal buildings, one finishing various products from plastic, and the other making children's toys and costumes. The metal buildings were used for retail outlets throughout the region by the Central Commerce Cooperative, which also provided the necessary materials to the local workshop. The workshop employed 37 men. The plastic workshop for bags and lids, employed about 20 workers, both men and women. Their products were sold to other enterprises in the region for packaging purposes.

The largest of the three units, employing approximately 50 women, made children's toys and games. In 1987-88 its main production was in costume "hats" simulating the heads of various animals and insects, such as butterflies and ladybugs. The annual production was approximately 20,000 hats, sold in sets of five. All were hand cut and sewn together on simple sewing machines. A box of such caps was very expensive, over 100 leva, so it is not surprising that they were not sold directly to

consumers. Most were sold to the productive division of the Scientific-Production Organization in Sofia, which provisioned the elementary schools and kindergartens around the country. In 1986-87 they also exported 5,000 hats to Czechoslovakia through contract with the National Commerce Cooperative, but this was rare. To compensate for the limited domestic market they changed products every two to three years. During my fieldwork, they were planning for a line of children's professional uniforms (doctor, nurse, fire fighter, etc.) to replace their hat line.

With the exception of the metal workshop, the bitov kombinat had to secure all raw materials necessary for production. This was done through contracts often negotiated or concluded at the annual "contract fair" in Plovdiv. The director complained of the difficulty he had guaranteeing the necessary materials and said that resulting shortages were the main constraint on his production. "It is very hard when we have to get the necessary materials ourselves. Very hard. There was a period last spring when half of the people in the firm were not working because of lack of materials."

This situation represents a reversal since the installation of the New Economic Mechanism around 1982. Toward the NEM's goal of raising the efficiency of production and the quality of products, reforms reduced the state's role in distribution (Crampton 1988:340).

Enterprises previously supplied by the state had to find both suppliers and customers through direct contracts with each other. This strategy was intended to inject competition into the system, but in practice, it simply shifted the locus of constraint. Previously, the main problem had been locating markets for the products; after the reform the limiting factor was securing raw materials. According to the manager, the latter difficulty was much more constraining and detrimental. There had been a small reduction in the work force of the enterprise which the director attributed to "increasing efficiency of labor," but which was probably due to the increasing difficulty of acquiring materials and the subsequent national insistence on enterprise self-sufficiency.

Another objective of the NEM reforms was to increase the role of enterprise managers and workers in the planning process through a requirement for "counter plans" (Thirkell 1985:36). The state drew up its plan but local organizations were to develop a counter scheme detailing the application of the general targets. Although "the counter-plan was not to be used as a surreptitious method for increasing work-norms or plan targets" (Crampton 1988:338), the locally generated plan had to be approved by higher levels in the village and the National Commerce Cooperative, both of which expected increases. According to an enterprise accountant, "the plan we propose must be

higher than theirs...it's expected." This trend multiplied the problem of locating materials.

These developments illustrate how the reform process, responding to problems and inefficiencies in the system, created new problems and inefficiencies. Low worker productivity and the one-sided concern with quantity led to calls for competition and decentralization. The transferal of acquisition responsibilities to the enterprise, however, made it difficult for them to acquire necessary materials, which seems to have reduced production and possibly undermined local motivation for initiating new productive activities. Clearly village-level production was declining in the late 1980s.

The workers of the bitov kombinat received an average monthly wage ranging from 160 leva to about 200 leva a month. This variation was attributed generally to variations in productivity and problems with material supplies. Thus a reform theoretically intended to increase worker motivation by providing wage incentives, actually prevented people from realizing this possibility by restricting their access to materials.

The bitov kombinat, like all other non-agricultural enterprises in the village, provided workers for agricultural brigades to help the cooperative farm during peak periods of labor demand. In the case of the bitov kombinat, this contribution amounted annually to 320 "work-days" harvesting grapes and 45 "work-days" of

tractor driving. Village enterprises with more employees provided more assistance, those with fewer workers provided less.

Subsidiary Enterprises of the Cooperative Farm

The possibility of expanding this latent agricultural labor pool motivated cooperative farm leaders to initiate their own supplementary enterprises, some related to the farm's agricultural production and others completely distinct. Of the former the most significant was the processing of animal feed. This involved the drying, grinding and/or mixing of various grains, hay, straw, and other fodder into a concentrated "flour" feed or a mixed fodder food. Some of the feed was used by the cooperative livestock farms, the rest being sold to cooperative farms in the region. The percentage sold depended upon local needs and the availability of alternative foods for livestock.

Most of the raw materials for feed production were grown on the Zamfirovo farm, but supplements were sometimes brought in from elsewhere in the APK. The output for the year 1987 was nearly 3,000 metric tons of feed, a significant decline from 1980 when 4,000 metric tons were produced, of which about 3,000 were sold to enterprises outside of Zamfirovo. The cause of the decline was not clear, but workers complained most about the machinery, which they said was primitive, too old and

in poor condition. The annual farm report stated that the grain-drying oven was very worn and needed be replaced. This problem was compounded by the lack of adequate storage facilities, including warehouses and silos. Consequently, grain left exposed often blew away or was ruined by rain. There was a great deal of head shaking and complaining about the fact that several tons of wheat from the bountiful harvest of 1988 rotted from dampness.

The other agriculturally related enterprise of the cooperative farm was a small cannery which opened in 1962. Like the feed processing plant, its machinery was antiquated and worn. Jars were packed and capped by hand, then fed into a mechanical sealer. They were then loaded manually into large round metal cages, which were transferred by overhead crane to a large pressurized vat for processing. There were two such pressure cookers, but only one was operative while I was in the field, and it was used without pressure since the top was defective. Consequently the jars had to be cooked much longer, often throughout the night. The maximum production of the cannery was about 2,500 jars a day. It operated for approximately six months a year, with an average yearly production of approximately 200,000 jars.

The cannery was never intended to be a major supplier--the larger and more modern cannery of a neighboring village served this role for the local APK--so most Zamfirovo production was consumed locally. In fact,

a significant portion went to the village school cafeteria and to the canteen of the cooperative farm. The rest was sold through the regional branch of the state purchasing agency in Mihailovgrad, destined mainly for retail outlets in the immediate region, but occasionally for export. In 1988 the cannery sent 17,000 jars of pickles to Czechoslovakia: "a Czechoslovak truck drove right up here and we loaded the pickles on and they drove off." The previous year a freight car load of plums was sent to the Soviet Union and a similar amount of pickles to Poland. Export agreements for canned goods were handled by the state purchasing organ, but the local enterprise was made aware of the arrangements since goods for export had to be packaged differently. As the director put it, "It is better for us if they are not exported because for export we have to pack them into cardboard boxes with separators [instead of the standard metal crates], which is a lot more work." Either way, the cannery received the same payment from the purchasing organization. Since trade within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was conducted primarily on the basis of negotiated balanced exchanges, it required such a centralized coordinating purchasing system.

Supplies of jars and lids were insured by the APK, as was some of the raw produce, notably cucumbers, which were not a major crop in Zamfirovo. For the most part, however, the raw produce came from the village's

cooperative farm itself, connecting the output of the cannery closely to that of the farm. In 1987, for example, the cannery put up 2,000 jars of pears, but in 1988 there were none as the pear orchard had been felled. In 1988 the decision of the cooperative to plant ten hectares of tomatoes produced 120,000 jars at the cannery instead of the 20,000 canned the previous year. The cannery was also affected by variation in farm output due to climatic problems, especially drought and late frosts to which the fruit orchards were particularly susceptible (see Table V.1 on yearly variation).

Table V.1 Zamfirovo Cannery Production

Produce	Number of jars produced	
	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>
whole pickles	15,000	22,000
sliced pickles	25,000	12,000
strawberries	14,200	25,000
plums	62,200	130,000
quinces	6,200	12,000
tomatoes	20,500	120,000
pears	2,000	---

The cannery employed 11 workers during the summer and fall when fresh produce was available for processing. Of these, only the female manager and her male assistant were permanent employees of the cooperative farm. The rest were retired women who worked seasonally to supplement their pensions. They were paid three stotinki a jar,

which divided between them came out to approximately seven or eight leva a day, or about 150 per month when working. Their products sold for 48 to 68 stotinki a jar, with the exception of strawberries which brought 1.25 leva.

Masked by the rather limited production capacity of the cannery was its significant role in salvaging farm products that might otherwise have been wasted. It could, for example, preserve fruits and vegetables that were too ripe or otherwise unsuitable for shipping and selling as fresh produce. In fact, after telling me about this possibility a friend of mine winked and said, "Now you know why everybody prefers to can their own goods," suggesting that the quality might therefore be questionable. I was aware of cases where strawberries refused by the purchasing organization ended up being canned by the cannery, although just because they were not accepted as fresh does not mean they were beyond preserving. Additionally, batches of fruit with only minor deficiencies were sometimes refused by larger processing facilities because they lacked the labor for the time consuming processes of selecting and sorting. Returned to the farm, these products could be sorted by the workers at the cannery, and the acceptable portion processed there.

Indirectly, then, the cannery contributed to the farm's output, but it did not redress the shortage of field labor, especially since the cannery and the fields

required labor at the same peak periods. A better fit in this regard was achieved by the farm's sponsorship of two enterprises unrelated to agricultural products, the employees of which were available for brigade work in the fields during the peak agricultural periods.

The major subsidiary involvement of the cooperative farm was referred to as the "textile enterprise" and actually included four different textile related activities. The workshops were located in two buildings on the cooperative farm yard. Two were branches of urban textile factories, while the other two were smaller local enterprises primarily devoted to servicing the local and regional populations. The former two operated on a subcontract basis with factories in Mihailovgrad, in much the same way as the village motor factory. One of the two units spun polyester and nylon threads into thicker plies and transferred them from the small spools of the manufacturer onto large spools used by the knitting and weaving machines. The spooling workshop occupied the bottom floor of a large building and housed four long machines holding approximately 50 spools each. The machines were provided by the Mihailovgrad factory and the local workshop employed about 25 women divided over two different shifts, who loaded and unloaded the spools, transferring about 340 metric tons of thread a year. There was an identical though smaller workshop in the neighboring village of Perlichovo, which was also included

within the Zamfirovo cooperative farm. Workers in the Zamfirovo workshop made over 200 leva a month, but this was not enough to resolve a serious shortage of workers, which the 1987 annual report of the cooperative farm blamed on the noisy and dusty working conditions. The report also cited problems with the machines and the sporadic delivery of material input from the Mihailovgrad factory. The parent factory agreed to replace four machines, but there were no promises regarding the flow of materials. This reveals the subordinate position of Zamfirovo in such subcontractual arrangements; there was little the village could do about the factory's breach of contract short of terminating the relationship altogether, which clearly would have been counterproductive.

The other subcontracting textile arrangement was with a clothing factory in Mihailovgrad, itself a branch of a large Sofia-based clothing manufacturer. The Zamfirovo workshop, inaugurated in 1979 and located on the floor above the spooling shop, received from the Mihailovgrad plant precut fabric pieces which 32 young women at individual sewing machines assembled into dresses. The work was organized on an assembly line basis with each operator doing only one procedure, such as putting in the zipper or sewing in the sleeves. The workshop operated only one shift and assembled about 72,000 dresses a year. All of the production was exported to the Soviet Union. Workers were paid according to their own production, but

the enterprise as a whole received a bonus of 40 percent if it reached the given production norms at an acceptable level of quality. This dividend was divided between workers, creating peer pressure to work quickly and efficiently. The resulting average wage was 240 leva a month, which was good, but the work was tedious and difficult given the time pressure. Furthermore, the wage premium for quality was made less achievable by Soviet perestroika, which upped the ante of quality not only for Soviet production but for what they accepted in economic trade from eastern Europe as well.

Walking through the sewing room, one entered the next workshop of the textile enterprise. Coming from the hectic hubbub of people and sewing machines it presented a drastic contrast. Here one heard only the subdued voices of the workers and the occasional dull sound of a loom's cross bar being engaged. This workshop produced hand woven tufted wool "rugs" that were used primarily as bed spreads. There were only nine women working on individual handmade wooden looms, weaving designs created by the brigade leader herself and hand drawn on papers hanging over the loom. The women annually produced about 200 full-sized spreads on a made to order basis. The client ordered the spread and provided the requisite eight kilograms of wool.

The juxtaposition of these two workshops was almost a metaphor of the changes in the village economy and culture

over the past few decades: with "modern" machines on the one hand and handmade looms on the other; with mass produced identical dresses on one side of the wall and individually designed and produced traditional Bulgarian spreads on the other; with young women born after 1944 at the sewing machines lined up in rows bespeaking industrial discipline in one room, and older women, close to retirement, at the hand looms distributed around the perimeter of the other room. The comparison extended to wages as well, with the seamstresses getting a modern wage of 240 leva and the weavers only 150.

In reality, however, the rug workshop was as much a product of development as the sewing shop. The weavers produced a traditional Bulgarian product in a traditional way, but such a workshop would not have existed in "traditional" times, because until the 1960s most households had such a loom and someone who could use it to produce any spreads needed for the household. The fact that this workshop was opened in 1970 reveals the degree to which traditional Bulgarian handicrafts had declined in the village and the extent to which market relations had affected household production. In other words, these very different workshops bespeak similar and related economic processes.

At the same time, the difference in the salaries of the weavers and seamstresses reveal the devaluation of indigenous products in comparison to that of factory-

produced "modern" goods. A village report in 1987 suggested that the pay of the weavers be increased, but to my knowledge this was not enacted during my stay. There was a local market for the spreads, but I sensed that urbanites found them provincial and not worth the cost. Urban dwellers would have to put out the wool to the village producers, and while this would not be impossible given the intricate rural-urban network, it probably contributed to their general lack of enthusiasm for what I considered very beautiful pieces.

The wool used in making the spreads was generally processed by the fourth and final workshop of the textile enterprise, which carded and spun about seven metric tons of wool per year. Its ultimate source was the personal economy of villagers as the wool produced by the cooperative sheep farms was sold to the state purchasing agency. Wool working was thus a sort of service to the village population, but as not every village or town had such facilities it attracted customers from the whole region. It was a common sight in the summer to see older women on the village bus loaded down with large plastic bags of wool being brought to Zamfirovo for processing at a cost of 2.10 leva per kilogram. At the workshop the wool, cleaned at home, was fed into large combing machines that transformed it into a smooth, nearly translucent blanket. This felted product made a perfect filler for the warm comforters basic to Bulgarian households and many

people took it home in this form. Most, however, had the wool sheet turned into a coarse thread by the spinning machines of the workshop, which separated and spun the blanket of combed wool into about 20 separate spools of thread. Finally, there was a dying facility where the thread could be dyed if desired. Often people preferred to do this themselves at home. The thread could be used to produce the tufted spreads mentioned above, or more commonly it would be knitted into very warm socks and sweaters worn and valued by older villagers and soldiers. Like the tufted spreads, these hand knitted products were not commonly seen in urban areas nor, for that matter, among the village youth.

There were three combing machines in the workshop, but on my several visits there was only one in operation, the others being broken. The workshop employed only a few workers and the conditions were considered bad, with the predictable problems of noise and poor air quality being the primary culprits. I was also struck by the insufficient lighting of the workshop, which was in a long, low building adjacent to the other textile building. It was so dark that even flash photographs did not come out very clearly. The annual report of the cooperative farm listed the former two conditions as problems needing correcting, but did not mention the issue of lighting. The report also suggested that an increase of wages was

due to the workers, as the pay scale had not been reevaluated in ten years.

In terms of working conditions and salary, clearly a better situation was in the pharmaceutical packaging workshop, the second of the cooperative farm's non-agricultural subsidiary activities. This workshop employed approximately 20 women. When the workshop opened in 1984 these positions were to be filled by older women who could not do strenuous work, but by the late 1980s there were many younger healthy women working there. They were attracted by the relatively easy task which involved packaging different kinds of medicine or, as those jealous of these positions phrased it, "putting pills in boxes." The medicines, including tubes of ointments and liquid medicine in addition to pills, were manufactured in Sofia at the state pharmaceutical enterprise. The cooperative farm sent drivers to Sofia to pick up the products and the cartons. The women then assembled the boxes, filled them and wrapped several together into a package. The wrapped packages were trucked back to the Sofia factory in exchange for another load of materials for village packaging.

The wages averaged over 200 leva a month and given the nature of the work this was extremely attractive. Nevertheless, the supplies from the Sofia factory were not always reliable and the workers were periodically out of work. Since these were usually second, third or fourth

incomes in their respective households, such temporary unemployment was not enough to render to position less attractive. Whenever I was forced to accept wages for work I did on the cooperative farm, the embarrassed commentary equated my salary for a day of manual labor with that of half a day's salary in the packaging workshop. The point of such comments by my co-workers was to emphasize the devaluation of agricultural labor, but it also revealed their favorable view of the packaging workshop.

The pharmaceutical factory in Sofia maintained these subcontracting arrangements with several towns and villages. Thus, the manager of the village workshop was adamant that the driver get to Sofia early on the day he was to make his pick-up and delivery, in order to assure that he got products before they were all given out to other villages. This meant departing the village at 4:00 a.m. to be in Sofia by 6:30. From the point of view of the Sofia plant, it was important to negotiate contracts with enough places to ensure packaging for the maximum production of the factory. Since the production was often below maximum, however, a competition between subcontractors emerged, and if one did not fare well, its employees had less work and less pay. Being the early bird was a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for succeeding in this competition. In addition, the director of Zamfirovo's workshop insisted on going in

person with the driver, claiming his presence was required to secure the goods.

The latter fact reveals the personalistic nature of the contract arrangements. The local manager could acquire goods because of his personal relations at the Sofia factory; without those relations the village could not have maintained the workshop. In fact, the very existence of the workshop was owed to the personal relationship between the local director and a Party leader at the Sofia pharmaceutical plant who, not coincidentally, migrated from Zamfirovo in the 1960s. The long-standing connection between these two men provided the inspiration for the arrangement, and the elevated position of each in his respective domain facilitated its realization. Their relationship also gave the village a privileged position in getting supplies compared to other villages having similar workshops. Finally, social relations with these men influenced employee selection at the workshop, and clearly took precedence over the reputed objective of the workshop to employ older disabled women. The extent of personalistic relations in such enterprises makes the comparison with capitalist processes of de-industrialization particularly apt.

The social relations that served as the basis for initiating these enterprises could be expanded or passed on to successors. For example, the man who started the cookie factory used his connections to guarantee the

supply of materials and to purchase the waffle machine. These relations were then taken up by his assistant when he moved to the bitov kombinat. The assistant probably lost some of these connections, but was able to initiate others through his own personal network.

The importance of these relations secured the position of the manager at the same time they guaranteed employment for villagers. The latter was repeated to me many times as the primary reason for setting up non-agricultural activities--a dedication to the village and its future. I do not doubt the social goals of those who pioneered non-agricultural possibilities for the village, but such activities had individual benefits for them as well. Ultimately, these developments proceed from an interaction of numerous factors, including individual motivation, social relations, government policy, restrictions on migration, the lack of fuel resources in the country, and the location of the village which limited the role of commuting as an alternative to rural industrialization.

Commuting

The role of commuting has been a central theme in analyses of rural eastern Europe. Daily commuting provided a means of increasing the number of urban industrial laborers without attendant investments in the urban infrastructure. Thus, in many ways, it was an

alternative to establishing rural industrial enterprises. There were of course costs in this as well, primarily in time, energy, and transport. Consequently, it is not surprising that Romania, well-provided with domestic energy resources in the 1970s, was noted for its extensive degree of commuting (Moskoff 1978:443, Cole 1981:78-79).

The extent of commuting in Bulgaria was less clear. One sociological study interviewing 3,819 village residents from middle-size villages found that nearly 25 percent commuted to work in other locales, but of that number the vast majority did not travel more than 15 kilometers. People commuting over 15 kilometers made up only 8.6 percent of the sample (see Table V.2). In general such statistics should be viewed cautiously as it was my impression that the extent of commuting varied quite radically from village to village depending upon the location and internal economic possibilities. Zamfirovo was not ideally located for commuting. Since it was not on the main road through the region residents could not take advantage of the more numerous bus routes running to and from Mihailovgrad and had to rely only on those buses specifically destined for the village. Daily there were three such buses going to Mihailovgrad, with a fourth one returning at night; and four going to Berkovitzia with a fifth one returning at night. Day laborers had to catch the morning bus, which in either case was very early--5:45 or 6:30. In addition the buses

Table V.2 Commuting percentages according to distance and settlement size for a sample of Bulgarian villages

	Villages that are county seats	Villages with mayor but not county seats	Villages without mayor
number interviewed	200	3819	144
% retired or not working	44.00	43.70	48.61
% commuting to work up to 3 km.	6.00	5.08	13.19
% commuting to work between 4 and 15 km.	9.00	16.18	15.28
% commuting to work more than 15 km.	3.50	8.59	0.69

Source: Tsentralno statisticheskoe upravlenie 1988: 345-346.

Note: Zamfirovo falls into the second category of villages.

were not reliable. Many times I waited for buses that never arrived. An additional bus was sent around in the morning by the Mihailovgrad construction enterprise to collect workers from the villages in the area. This was only for construction workers, however, and no other enterprise provided such a service to Zamfirovo. Many villagers owned cars and some drove them to work in

neighboring towns. I was aware of this because when the morning bus did not arrive there was a scramble by the stranded workers to secure rides with people driving to the city. I am also aware that the number of such cars was not enough to transport the busload of people left in the lurch, some of whom consequently missed a day of work.

I took the 6:30 a.m. bus to Mihailovgrad once a week along with 40 to 50 passengers, some of whom were going to town for activities other than work. I was usually waiting for that bus when the bus for construction workers arrived and picked up its dozen or so riders. I also took the 5:45 a.m. bus to Berkovitza numerous times, accompanied by some 10 to 20 workers. Taken together, and allowing for commuters in cars, my estimate of the number of daily commuters from the village was between 125 and 150, almost all men. This is slightly lower than estimates I received from villagers when I asked them how many people commuted to work in town, which varied from 150 to 200. This is not a negligible number but is less significant than the impression one gets from the literature on Romania and Hungary (Moskoff 1978, Bell 1984).

With regard to workers' views of commuting, most claimed not to mind, and younger men said they appreciated having less time to work in the village--the return bus to the village did not leave Mihailovgrad until 5:35 p.m., the bus from Berkovitza not until 6:00 p.m., giving

commuters some free time in town after work and less work time upon arriving home. Most, however, also complained about the early hour, the unreliable bus system, and the inconvenience of conforming to schedules. This does not mean, however, that they would have preferred to live in the city, as Konrád and Szelényi (1976:177) insist even in the face of villagers' statements to the contrary. While some preferred to move to the city (and they said so, as we saw in Chapter Four), others would have preferred to have their existing work places in the village vicinity. At least two villagers I knew had given up better jobs in Mihailovgrad for jobs in the village. This last option was of course shaped by the availability of non-agricultural work in the village. Villages with fewer work possibilities and those closer to towns were likely to have a higher rate of commuting. Many villages, for example, were so close to towns as to be analogous to suburbs, and in these cases a large percentage of villagers commuted.

Zamfirovo's location was no doubt a factor in the attention village leaders devoted to securing rural enterprises in the first place, this in turn obviating the need to commute. In short, we should not view commuting as a homogeneous option that is either desirable or undesirable. Local circumstances affect its appeal and, more importantly, individual household and personal factors make it more or less attractive for different

individuals at different times, a fact that is ignored in all studies of commuting in eastern Europe and that will be clearer when we address the village household in the final chapter.

A Case of the Peasant-Worker?

Between commuting and rural industrialization a paradox was created whereby Zamfirovo, like most other villages, was conceptually equated with agriculture and was still significantly agricultural (see Table V.3), yet sustained by non-agricultural enterprises. This situation is not unique to Bulgaria or even eastern Europe, and has been documented for other places including, for example, China (Byrd and Quingsong 1990, Sigurdson 1977) and Israel (Swartz *et al.* 1986). In the case of Israel, moshavs opted for industrial activity when their increasingly intensive agriculture could no longer employ all community members. While this situation is the opposite of that in Bulgarian villages, the installation of rural industries created similar problems in each case.

The moshav case, however, does not have the same devaluation of agricultural occupations that we have described for Bulgaria. In a context of such devaluation, the development of industrial occupations contributed to the ambivalent attitude toward rural life noted in the previous chapter, for as Biselle (1973:87) points out for Poland, the rural worker is not able to replicate the

Table V.3 Total annual output value in leva of the Zamfirovo cooperative farm by sector and year

	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Subsidiary/ Industry</u>
1984	1,540,000	1,792,000	1,421,000
1985	1,226,000	1,619,000	1,345,000
1986	1,806,000	1,666,000	1,641,000
1987	1,170,000	1,748,000	1,197,000

lifestyle of the urbanite. The ambivalence in Bulgaria was heightened by national propaganda which drew upon industrial or other "non-village-like" characteristics in promoting village life. I witnessed several television shows emphasizing the high quality of life in villages, usually stressing their diversified economies. The same was done in the newspaper media, and while I was in the field Zamfirovo was the subject of one such spread (Kooperativno Selo, 8/4/88). The article stressed the numerous economic enterprises in the village and included an interview with a family which had returned to live there after having spent several years in a nearby town. Interestingly, this piece appeared in the one major newspaper with a predominantly village readership. The name of the paper was in fact Cooperative Village, and I always had difficulty locating it at Sofia newsstands. This suggests that the objective of the campaign was to help villagers accept their predicament, rather than

convince urbanites of the advantages of rural life. In drawing on non-agricultural activities to make their point, the promoters inadvertently implied that the agricultural sector in which all villagers were involved was in some way still inferior.

Given a society with a stark historical dichotomy between urban and rural sectors, what is at issue here is the social position of workers or producers who straddle this socio-cultural divide--individuals often referred to in anthropology as "peasant-workers." The "peasant-worker" concept has had a very erratic history and its destiny is still somewhat unresolved. The original interest in it emerged from the struggle to define a "peasant" in the various circumstances of developing capitalist relations. As Silverman (1979) points out, one of the two major perspectives on the peasantry followed from Steward's focus on material conditions and stressed the position of these agricultural producers within larger systems of power. Wolf's definitive work Peasants (1966) exemplifies this perspective. Defined by specific political and economic relations, the analytical category was probably not intended to outlast these economic forces and relations as they changed. Unfortunately, many students of the peasantry became more attached to the category itself than to the social and economic relations which Wolf and others had attempted to characterize.

The idea of "peasant-workers" and "worker-peasants" came out of this attachment with much ado, epitomized by a special issue of the journal Studies in European Society in 1973. The idea of a peasant-worker was an attempt to amend the concept of the peasant to sustain its validity in face of changed circumstances. It was a more substantive alternative to the idea of "post-peasants" (Geertz 1962), but as the radically different theoretical perspectives of the mid-1970s emerged, it suffered the same fate as the peasant concept on which it was based. It was, after all, unable to accommodate the discoveries of ecological and political-economic perspectives which revealed a variety of outcomes from economic development, such as petty commodity production. These studies showed that such variation existed both cross-culturally and within single societies, revealing significant differentiation within the peasant-worker category.

The term has subsequently become more generalized and less utilized, though recently Douglas Holmes (1983, 1989) has focused an analysis of the residents of Rubignacco around the concept. In general Holmes' work is laudable for attempting to wrestle with the issue directly after a long avoidance on the part of anthropologists, but his analysis reveals the limitations of the concept, as he is repeatedly forced to distinguish various arrangements within this worker-peasantry. In its most general meaning of someone combining agricultural and non-agricultural

work the peasant-worker is a valid category, but on that level almost everybody in Zamfirovo would be included, so it is insufficient for characterizing the profile of village productive arrangements. When the numerous variations are revealed, the concept itself is superseded.

In Bulgaria it is best to see almost everybody as accessing multiple productive possibilities. As in similar cases elsewhere (Painter 1984), this situation reflects the inability of most people to provide adequately for themselves and dependents with single occupations. Thus, many urban workers actually worked gardens either on the outskirts of the town or in villages where they had connections. Even urbanites who never touched a hoe were implicated in the peasant-worker project by informal exchanges with village relatives who worked the land and provided agricultural products. A similar criticism applies to the category "workers" as well--at least in Bulgaria. Given the numerous involvements of non-agricultural workers with agricultural activity, structural analyses of the "working class" (e.g. Triska and Gati 1981) should be approached with the same apprehension suggested for the peasant-worker category.

The Bulgarian case also challenges the simplistic combination of wage-labor and subsistence agriculture implied in the term "peasant-worker." The residents of Zamfirovo did wage-labor and subsistence agriculture, but they were also involved in other income-generating

activities, such as producing non-agricultural products for sale, as well as selling their services. These other possibilities will be explored more fully in the next chapter but it is important to mention them here as they clearly reveal a limitation of the rigidly dualistic "worker-peasant" concept.

Furthermore, the concept also implies a sequence from peasant to peasant-worker. This masks the fact that peasants and agricultural workers have always historically combined agricultural and non-agricultural income sources, as has been amply demonstrated for western Europe by Goody (1982) and Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbohm (1981). Far from mere subsistence production, these activities have at times and places engaged a major amount of labor and resources and have played an important role in subsequent industrial development, whether as the source of industrial investment capital, as Medick (1976) suggests, or as the means of shifting the pattern of investment, as Goody (1982:34) maintains.

Similar to western Europe, proto-industries were widespread in parts of the Bulgarian countryside long before the twentieth century. By the 1830s, for example, the towns in the central Balkan Mountains had developed an important woolen industry making cloth and braid. Women spun yarn and wove cloth, which was picked up by local merchants for further processing in workshop settings. The braid production was mechanized at the beginning of

the century, and there were a few large factories manufacturing woolen cloth as well, but the bulk of cloth production remained proto-industrial. Palairet (1983a) asserts that this industry expanded in output, up to and possibly even after 1870. Only after the liberation from Ottoman control did it enter a decline. Most historians attribute this to the removal of Ottoman demand, since most of the production had been consumed by the urban Turkish population and the Ottoman army. Palairet (1983a:347) insists that the major cause came from the supply side, as labor moved instead into the new possibilities of farming, commerce, education and administration opened up by the withdrawal of the Ottoman population. Those opting for agriculture continued craft production but only parttime.

The area around Zamfirovo was not a center of such textile production (see Laferrère 1989) and in fact, a description of the village in 1939 says there were, at least at that time, no "enterprises" in the village. Palairet suggests that the northwest in general was not a center of such activity, due to greater access to land in western Bulgaria and the possibility of migrating north to the Romanian lowlands. In the south the influence of graziers protecting open pasturage in the context of strong Ottoman control of the land (i.e. the existence of chifliks) meant that town residents on the southern side of the Balkans had to turn increasingly to industrial work

based on longstanding craft occupations. If his analysis is correct--and the historiography on the role of chifliks in Ottoman Bulgaria is by no means conclusive (see Crampton 1981, Inalcik 1983, Jelavich 1983:95, Todorov 1977:319)--the situation would parallel the increase in cottage industry in England, which was similarly connected to the exclusion of cotters from the land by enclosures for sheep (see Dobb 1946, Goody 1982:11, Thirsk 1961).

While Zamfirovo did not have industry, it certainly had craft experience, which may have actually increased in the inter-war period. Lampe (1986:94) suggests that the "artisan" share of national production increased from 5.0 to 9.3 percent between 1926 and 1938. The life histories of several older villagers support the possibility. All of them were children of farmers but several recounted apprenticeships with craftsmen. The most common crafts mentioned were tailoring and woodworking, but since they were practiced on a small scale, there are very few documents to verify or quantify the trend.

Road tax lists enumerated occupations, but not everyone was assessed road taxes, and many of those listed as farmers may have practiced craft occupations as well. In fact, the village schoolmaster states explicitly in his description of the village from 1926, that "craftsmen also do farm work." The road tax list for 1920 included only six individuals not identified as "farmers"--three were blacksmiths and the other three occupations were

illegible. The schoolmaster's description mentions "two tailors with small shops" for which customers much supply their own cloth; two animal skin workers/hat makers who "work at their home"; and one woodworking shop, "although many others do such work at their home." A steam-powered mill near the village had recently burned down. The next such description, 13 years later and much less conscientious, listed seven woodworking shops with one to three workers each, and three ironworking shops with two workers apiece.

From this it would seem that woodworking was clearly on the increase. That tailors and cobblers may have multiplied as well is suggested by the post-war history of the village Labor-Production Cooperative. When it was formed in April of 1947, it included a section of tailors and one of shoemakers. Almost "immediately" all other craftsmen joined, and separate sections were created for woodworkers, blacksmiths, painters, tinkers and barbers. The speed with which these additional sections were formed suggests that several craftsmen were already plying these trades. We may also recall that the lack of supplies for such trades was mentioned in the previous chapter as a factor prompting village out-migration, suggesting that they were crucial activities for several villagers. Records from 1948 also report that there were 80 brickmakers in the village--granted, a less skilled trade, but a potential source of income nonetheless.

The possibility that craft activity was expanding in Zamfirovo is not in conflict with Palairret's model of land abundance in the northwest, since the practice of partible inheritance could have quickly transformed the post-liberation situation of land abundance into one of land scarcity, as described in Chapter Two, prompting an increase in alternate activities. Thus the movement into craft production, as Medick (1976) points out for rural industry, may have been connected to demography. It was an outlet for the larger families of the "transition generation" who limited the number of their own offspring but were themselves from large sibling sets with limited or insufficient land. For these individuals and others with inadequate land, going into craft production, like migration and migratory work, was an option to make ends meet. In this way craft development, fertility restriction and migratory work can be seen as responses to the problems of land shortage and partible inheritance. Furthermore as solutions to the same problems, the increasing use of one strategy may have obviated the necessity of another. In the case of the old Balkan woolen industries, their decline coincided with fertility restriction. This also follows generally Palairret's (1983b) view that relative agricultural performance had a major influence on the development of industrial activity.

The feasibility of these various options was obviously shaped by other economic considerations,

specifically the situation of markets and exchange. Woodworking, for example, was an option for generating income only if there were customers for wood products. While sources do not allow for an accurate recounting of the history of exchange at the local level, we may recall from Chapter Two that the period of the 1920s and 1930s saw an increase of grape production locally and nationally, much of which was sold. Such commercial developments may have sparked demand for increasing craft production.

We should also bear in mind that historically craft, proto-industry and agriculture were not distributed among different individuals; rather, they were intricately connected in single work trajectories or careers. When artisans are involved as well in subsistence production, the relationship between market demand and the number of craftsmen is not clear cut. Furthermore, in such a context, craft specialization may have been driven by developing networks of barter. Whatever the dynamic, the interaction of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in Zamfirovo in the 1980s is best viewed as the continuing evolution of these existing arrangements under shifting political and economic contexts, rather than an altogether new development as suggested by the "peasant-worker" concept.

Juggling Industry and Agriculture

Interaction, however, does not imply complete compatibility. The various activities of villagers came into conflict at numerous levels of society. The conflicts between commuting and agriculture were perhaps most obvious, but rural industrialization generated its own conflicts. Friction developed between individuals, between various levels of administration, and between sectors of the village economy. Furthermore, the establishment of industrial or non-agricultural enterprises in the village brought the problems of socialist industry directly into the local arena.

Holmes (1989:31) sees such interaction as unidirectional, with the factory regime subjecting the peasant to its disciplined order. The Bulgarian case, however, shows that the interaction works both ways so that industrial discipline is affected as well by the rural context, making concessions to rural exigencies and needs. This is not just accommodation to worker "resistance" which Holmes (1989:183) describes in Italy, but a truly interactive process. Thus, in the Bulgarian village there was less of what Holmes sees as the imposition of industrial discipline; rather it worked the other way around, with industry making concessions to rural life and its agricultural base. The primary mechanism of this interaction was the official administrative structure which linked agricultural and

industrial activities. Whereas such structures are often cited as a problem constraining industrial development at the national level under socialism, in the local context they emerged as important to the successful balancing of agriculture and industry for the greater benefit of the village as a whole. These problems and conflicts were important factors in the development and outcome of reform processes and sometimes even led to conflicts between various reform programs. The remainder of this chapter will look at these problems and conflicts and how they interacted with reform processes

Such conflicts were revealed in an attempt to set up another village enterprise while I was in the field. The initiative was thoroughly local. A village leader began discussions with friends in Sofia, whom he knew from his prior involvement in the commerce cooperative system. His idea was to set up a village juice extractor that would process the strawberries and plums grown by the Zamfirovo cooperative farm, as well as apples and other fruits raised by the neighboring villages. The only major requirement for such an enterprise was the extracting machine. A delegation of cooperative farm leaders made a trip to the annual international technology fair in the city of Plovdiv where they determined that the most appropriate machine was one produced by a joint British and French company, which both extracted the natural juice and packaged it into nonperishable containers. They

subsequently made a trip to the city of Varna to examine the operation of a similar enterprise there.

The main obstacle in the way of the workshop was the price of the machine. The makers wanted 300,000 dollars plus one million leva credit toward the purchase of Bulgarian products. Although the dollar amount was less, it was by far the greater obstacle. Discussion with the national agricultural purchasing and exporting agency, Bulgarplod, revealed the possibility of the cooperative farm getting a loan in foreign currency from the National Bank based upon the potential of the enterprise to produce for export, so that the repayment could be made in dollars.

The need for dollars exposed a conflict between two individuals. The initiator of the endeavor was under the impression that the village cooperative farm had several thousand dollars in the bank from the sale and export of strawberries to western European countries, which could be used as a down payment for the juice extractor. As he told it:

I was told that the strawberries brought in several thousand dollars, but now I find out we do not have any of those dollars and that the director of the village commerce cooperative sold the strawberries under contract to the Berkovitza commerce cooperative for leva. He should have gone directly to Bulgarplod and gotten a contract for export. Then we would have gotten a percentage of the hard currency. Instead the director simply made a contract with Berkovitza and Berkovitza made the contract for foreign sale with Bulgarplod and Berkovitza got the foreign currency. The easy and stupid way.

Why did the village commerce manager do this? Basically because of his political ambitions and his connection to the regional commerce cooperative. By selling directly to Bulgarplod the village would have gotten more benefits, but in so doing it might also have antagonized the regional director of commerce cooperatives. This could have damaged the career prospects of the local director. Ambitious individuals did not necessarily see their best interests as identical to those of the populations they served. Objectives were in conflict.

This particular conflict reflects a larger strain between the various levels of administration. Establishing the new enterprise required not only money but also connections with higher level administrators who could finesse bank loans and help overcome bureaucratic obstacles. The individual initiating the enterprise had such connections with people in Sofia, but these connections irritated regional-level administrators who were bypassed in this village-capital dyad.

The conflict between the regional and local level became more explicit as the discussions around the potential enterprise became more serious. The APK in Berkovitza was supportive of the idea and offered a financial contribution with the condition that ultimate control and financial accounting reside in Berkovitza, not in Zamfirovo. Its officials were probably attracted by

the potential profitability of the enterprise, but they were no doubt equally concerned that the amount of fruit to be channeled into it might subtract from the fresh supplies they expected from the village. This concern was particularly threatening given that restructuring programs in 1987-88 promised to remove grapes from the state's purchasing monopoly, freeing them up for local disposition. In fact, the instigator of the project told me in confidence that this prospect had inspired his initiative. Consequently, he would not hear of APK control and continued to work with higher connections beyond the regional level.

His ability to snub the APK also reflected reforms. While the possibilities and supports for small enterprises dates back to reforms in the late 1970s (McIntyre 1988, 1989), the new program of restructuring was interpreted as opening the way for greater local control of such enterprises. Such decentralization was in fact one of the major points stressed in the Party's presentation of restructuring, and it is unlikely that the villager would have insisted on such independence outside of this new context. Furthermore, the local concern to produce something that had export value for hard currency also reflected restructuring in that local leaders interpreted the program as guaranteeing them a greater share of any hard currency earned by local enterprises. Certainly the promoter of the juice machine continually referenced

restructuring programs in addition to earlier reforms as the official grounds for his proposal.

So what we see is that reforms laid the basis for productive developments, but implementation required local initiative and local connections. The divergent agendas of various individuals at the local level then created conflicts which shaped the ultimate outcome of the reforms. These conflicts between individuals reflected an analogous struggle among the various levels of integration, especially between the village and the regional units into which it was incorporated. The APK and the regional commerce cooperative encompassed the village cooperative farm and commerce cooperative, respectively. Both were involved in the non-agricultural enterprises of the village, facilitating production by providing products and marketing systems, yet simultaneously constraining the village by attempting to siphon maximum profits up to the regional level. How village leaders responded to regional officials varied considerably, depending on their stance vis-a-vis financial gain, career ambition, ideological devotion, and commitment to the village.

The divergence of objectives at local, regional and even higher levels was perhaps pervasive throughout the country, but different locales were in different bargaining positions in this struggle due to variation in the economic or demographic importance of villages and in

the density of their social connections with higher level officials. However, these considerations changed over time. For example, particular social relations or connections may have facilitated the placement of industrial enterprises in a particular village. Subsequently these relations could sour or disappear through death. In the meantime, the various benefits extended to the village become important in their own right and thus continue to give the village some clout in resource negotiations with the higher levels.

Zamfirovo offers a particularly interesting example. The ability of some local leaders to sidestep, so to speak, regional levels was a consequence of the village's administrative history. Its administrative position was changed by the reforms of December 26, 1979, from an obshtina, or district capital, to a simple village within the Berkovitza obshtina and newly formed "settlement system" (see Smollett 1985). Until recently, then, Zamfirovo was on an administrative par with Berkovitza, and village leaders whose tenures predate the transition were subsequently loath to submit to direction from this new center. At the same time these individuals had connections with higher level administrators, established as district leaders, which allowed them to circumvent to some extent the new formal hierarchy.

This history explains why Zamfirovo was able to maintain a separate commerce cooperative even after it was

administratively subsumed by Berkovitza. In the course of my interviewing and trips to other villages it became apparent that this institution enjoyed a degree of independence that was unusual for village cooperatives. When I asked local directors about this, they alluded to informal processes, suggesting that I ask one of the directors who was in charge at the time of the administrative reorganization. These directors had the higher connections necessary to protect and advance their claims for continued independence. Equally important, they had the economic leverage in the form of the cookie factory and the bitov kombinat to justify or back up their claims for special treatment and continued autonomy. This also explains the conflicts between past directors and later managers of the commerce cooperative, whose principal connections were with the new district level administration.

Conflicts between individuals and levels of administration were often accompanied by conflicts between the different sectors of the village economy. Economic diversification provoked tension between the new divisions, primarily between the farm and non-farm sectors. Given a situation of limited resources, each found itself in competition with the other. For example, the pharmaceutical packaging enterprise was without any work for over a week because all the trucks of the cooperative farm were busy with agricultural business and

could not be spared for the full day required to deliver and pick up the products in Sofia.

The competition for material resources was common enough, but the competition for labor resources was evident on a daily basis. Establishing industrial and non-agricultural enterprises in the village contributed greatly to keeping would-be migrants in residence. These people, however, worked for the most part in non-agricultural jobs, leaving unresolved the shortage of agricultural labor which was one of the ostensible conditions prompting rural industrialization. Thus, we can see that the agricultural reforms of the 1970s described in Chapter Three, integrating personal plot production more intricately with the cooperative farm structure and establishing the akord system of agricultural production, were intricately tied to the development of non-agricultural activities on the local level. When industrial labor failed to spill over into agriculture as was hoped, it became clear that increasing agricultural output required ways of incorporating the free time of the increasing number of villagers not employed in agriculture. The akord system and greater integration of personal plots with cooperative agriculture were means to this end. These reforms did not compete with industry for labor, but rather attempted to tap the free time of industrial workers.

This approach, however, was not completely benign as far as industry was concerned, since enterprises lost worker productivity when workers arrived at work in the morning already tired from the previous night's work in the fields. Beck (1976:372) mentions that the Romanian workers he studied were known to nap on their jobs to catch up on sleep lost to farm work. I did not hear of people sleeping on the job in Zamfirovo, but managers did complain that workers were often tired as a result of their agricultural work. Zamfirovo villagers, perhaps more brazen than Romanian workers, would simply take time off altogether for major agricultural events such as the harvest of grapes or strawberries. Given the importance of such events to the cooperative farm and the entire village, an enterprise manager could scarcely complain.

In fact, for the same reason, the non-agricultural labor force in the village was often given over completely to agricultural production in the form of temporary work brigades. As previously noted, each of the enterprises described in this chapter provided temporary labor brigades to the village cooperative farm during the summer and fall harvest periods. Enterprise directors evaluated brigade duty as a drain on their enterprise but did not question its necessity. As one director put it, "It is difficult to meet production plans when workers have to

spend time on agricultural brigades, but agriculture is the basic activity of the village."¹

The assistance provided to agriculture by the other sectors of the village economy was essential, but there were negative consequences for agriculture as well. The very presence of non-agricultural employment rendered the agricultural occupation even less desirable or necessary, further eviscerating the permanent work force of the farm. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the economic sectors of the village were in a very delicate balance--a balance maintained by continual reforms, each one adjusting to the consequences of the one before. Thus when rural enterprises failed to bring more agricultural workers in their wake, new reforms integrating industrial and agricultural activities were promoted.

One reason village labor never trickled down to agriculture is that the non-agricultural enterprises soon developed their own labor shortages. As described before, the socialist emphasis on output rather than labor efficiency created a nearly infinite demand for labor, which was difficult to curtail through reform processes because of the ideological commitment to full employment.

¹ His comment includes a play on words lost in the translation. The expression he used for agriculture was "selsko stopanstvo", which is commonly used for agriculture, but which literally means "village economy." Thus literally he said that "The village economy is the activity of the village." This usage reflects the cultural equation between villages and agriculture.

Consequently, the non-agricultural enterprises soon fell victim to the same labor shortages as the agricultural sector. The shortage was evident in an episode at the village motor parts factory where two people were fired on the basis of poor job performance, but had to be rehired because there was no one to replace them. The director of the cookie factory was the most straightforward about the difficulty of securing labor, claiming that the factory was under-staffed by at least 10-15 people. "We do not have enough working people. Several workers retire and there is no one to replace them. We have enough work for more people but there is no one to hire." The reader will recall that the shortage of labor was cited in the annual reports of the spooling workshop. The report went on to recount that a possible solution had been achieved in negotiations with the parent factory which had promised to supply new machines requiring fewer workers.

Interestingly, this reflects a reversal of the original objective of rural enterprises, which was to employ more village residents. Clearly the delicate balance had to be continually adjusted.

There was no guarantee, however, that a balance would be achieved. In the previous chapter we examined the demographic background to the labor shortage. Among the strategies for increasing the birthrate, and by extension the future labor force, was the liberal maternity leave extended to mothers. Discussions with enterprise

directors, however, revealed this to be one of the main sources of their labor shortage. While directors never cited maternity leaves as a problem, it was obvious in that nearly every enterprise had a sizable percentage of its work force out on maternity leave. To give only two examples where I have exact statistics, the bitov kombinat had 18 of its approximately 100 workers out on two-year maternity leaves in the summer of 1988 and the sewing workshop had eight of its 32 seamstresses out during the same period.²

The high demand for labor in at least some of the village enterprises gave villagers a certain power analogous to that described by Sabel and Stark (1982) for socialist industrial workers in general. This power allowed them to negotiate work requirements and generally ameliorate their work environment. It also allowed them to disable or limit the effects of reform processes. Reforms that threatened to make their work more difficult or less lucrative or less compatible with other involvements such as agriculture, could not be implemented by managers for fear of losing workers. Any changes that were instituted could be ignored by workers more or less

²Theoretically, the planning system of socialism made it possible to have a simultaneous shortage of workers and a shortage of materials for them to process, hence the aptness of the "economy of shortage" concept. This possibility was also underwritten by the erratic distribution system that kept many enterprises oscillating between labor and material shortages.

with impunity since they were not easily replaced. The episode of the two factory workers who were rehired is a case in point, for they were originally fired as a direct result of reforms implementing the brigade system of remuneration in the factory.

As we have seen, the brigade idea predated restructuring (see Walliman and Stojanov 1988 and 1989), but it was incorporated into the restructuring agenda and reemphasized as a way of making factories more self-sufficient. The brigade wage system was intended to improve labor productivity, long the Achilles' heel of Bulgarian economic development, by tying wages more closely to worker output. The factory then left it up to the brigade to divide their pay between the individual workers. At one and the same time the new arrangement increased the financial incentives and the peer pressure for higher productivity. It also avoided ideological dilemmas by granting the brigade itself the authority to decide the basis for pay distribution, assuming its members would be more merciless. The poor work of the two factory employees who were fired diminished the income of their fellow brigade members, leading to their dismissal. But they were ultimately rehired because of the factory's needs. So workers' power based on the systemic labor shortage allowed them to circumvent reform. Were the reforms to have been enforceable, it would have ultimately undermined the power of labor by making factories more

dependent on their profitability, diminishing labor demand. I have no evidence that workers had this long-range view of the consequences of the reform, but I do not doubt they did. A survey of several enterprises in a town south of Sofia, for example, revealed that a quarter of the employees interviewed had no desire to participate in self-management (Stavrev 1988:35).

The brigade system also came into conflict with the local social fabric as good relations between individuals constrained the self-discipline of the brigade and bad relations rendered cooperation difficult. Here again the same factory episode is illustrative. The two employees who were fired were in conflict with other brigade members about an unrelated village incident. Thus, contrary to Petkov's (1985:308) belief that the labor collective had a unity of labor interests, brigade members were often divided on the basis of other issues. Alternatively, the opposite obstacle of mutual protection arose. Walliman and Stojanov (1989:365) claim that brigades developed a sort of "defensive type solidarity, evident in the tendency to adhere to the norm of equality, and to close ranks against the disciplining of individuals." This added a further component to Krumov's (1986) suggestion that the outcome of brigade organization would be affected by the particular productive situation in each enterprise.

This premise was verified in Zamfirovo. The same system of labor remuneration was installed in the metal

kiosk workshop a year earlier, with what the director said were very "successful" results. This prompted me to pursue the contrast with the motor parts factory. From conversations with the metal workers it became clear that this "success" was a limited one and the incentives were not operating to the maximum intended result. Granted, the system had improved and stabilized the output of the enterprise, but it was not driving the workers to maximize production. As one worker explained it to me, "We [the brigade] get together and decide how much we need to earn apiece this month, usually it is around 300 leva, then we figure out how many pieces we have to make to earn this amount, and then we make that many." These workers have organized to reap benefits from the reform while limiting its impact. The irony does not stop here. In summarizing their strategy the worker said, "We do it just like the government, with a plan. We make a plan and then fulfill it." The workers had internalized an idea or concept from socialism which was clearly limiting the impact of reforms directed toward removing or softening socialist structures. This is why we must understand the nature of the socialist state at the local level if we hope to understand the "transition."

The "success" of the metal workshop required good relations between all those involved, allowing coordinated planning. As is evident by now, this was one of the defining characteristics of rural enterprises--their utter

subjugation to social relations. As we have pointed out, the ability of individuals to set up rural enterprises was often based on their connections at higher levels of administration. These connections then are essential for the continuation of the enterprises, ensuring a place of value for the contact person regardless of job performance. Other directors were appointed by village leaders, primarily the Party secretary--a relationship that made them immune to performance criticisms.

The political nature of enterprise management often led to a limited investment on the part of managers in particular enterprises. Managers were not interested in investing in updated technology nor in designing new products attractive to contemporary consumers. Instead they were interested in providing the village with jobs and when one source began to fizzle they were content to find another. This process was behind the interest in the new village juice extractor and in the history of other village enterprises, such as the textile sector. In the 1970s the textile building was occupied by a jacquard rug enterprise which made floor runners and small area rugs on East German machines. By the end of the decade the machines were getting old and the technology itself was so antiquated that it became impossible to get spare parts. Simultaneously there was a drop in the demand for the rugs which came to be viewed as old-fashioned and "rural" by consumers. So the directors of the farm began to cut back

the activity of this enterprise and to look for other enterprises to employ the displaced workers. The sewing shop was the first contract they arranged in 1979. It began with only a few sewing machines but gradually more and more workers from the jacquard weaving shop took up sewing. In 1982 arrangements were concluded for the spooling workshop and the jacquard weaving enterprise was shut down. Assured of a position in the next enterprise by political connections, directors had limited investment in a given enterprise as a continuing business entity.

Connections and complicated social relations were not the sole prerogative of the managerial class. In fact everybody in the enterprise knew each other and were connected by a multiplicity of neighborhood, family, and friendship ties. Any conflict or problem at work had repercussions throughout this network of connections. This possibility constrained interactions. Social relations played an important role in the nature of industrial activity in the urban context as well, but there the social ties were not nearly as thick and, consequently, not nearly as constraining.

Conflicts like the ones described above were a preponderant consequence of the diversification of the village economy. At the same time the links connecting the various sectors, both the structural ones and those based on the intricate network of social relations, made it possible to achieve a complementarity. This was no

mean achievement and deserves greater appreciation. Given the conflicting demands at the local level, the links were adaptive rather than an additional constraint. Certainly the links ensured that general village needs were given priority over what might have been best for a single enterprise, individual or sector. A clear example is the provisioning of labor brigades for agricultural work by non-agricultural enterprises. This balance operated for the benefit of the village.

Reform processes were often aimed at these very links, with severe consequences. Such was clearly the case in the early restructuring campaign which, in an attempt to make enterprises more profitable by making them more independent, cut them loose in an economy of shortage from links that supplied them or guaranteed their supplies. The result was a decline rather than an increase in production. The cookie factory in particular felt the pinch early. Right before I left in October of 1988 a somewhat dejected director told me that they were not going to fulfill the plan this year even though they had overfilled a similar plan the year before. The problem, he said, was a shortage of materials. The government had reduced the importation of some important items, notably cocoa, and they were having trouble getting domestically produced materials as well. When I inquired about the cause of these developments, his immediate one-word reply was "restructuring."

Some villagers and Bulgarian scholars alike suggested that the difficulties created for local enterprises by restructuring may actually have been intended. They believed that the problems of rural enterprises, including their fractious internal structures, had led to the abandonment of the idea of rural industrialization. Villagers saw this in the decline of their industries, such as the rug plant and subsequently the cookie factory, where problems derived not only from crises of supply but from an aging waffle machine that kept breaking down. The managers said it was increasingly difficult to repair as the antiquated spare parts were unavailable. Having concluded that it was futile to fix it, their solution was to put it up for sale--a sequence reminiscent of the jacquard enterprise and a tiny village soft-drink firm before that.

Villagers saw this as an ominous trend. Similarly, several scholars who were often barometers of official government attitudes were saying in the 1980s that the idea of rural industrial activity was inefficient, compared to urban enterprises of scale, and would not persist in a more rationalized economic system. Certainly the attempt in 1979 to integrate villages with central towns through "settlement systems" suggested a shift in policy from the provisioning of individual villages. One villager with a conspiratorial mind insisted to me that the government, having imposed the strict migration

restrictions discussed in the previous chapter, was deemphasizing rural enterprises in order to force stranded villagers back into agriculture, which was more lucrative for the state.

Ironically, this scenario may come to pass not as a result of a communist government conspiracy, but by the current development of capitalism. This possibility is even more ominous in that under capitalism the very links that kept the various sectors of the system in balance are clearly not sacrosanct. If the official controlling links between units of the village economy are severed through privatization, then the conflicts and contradictions between sectors and units will go unchecked, wreaking havoc and no doubt destroying many of the enterprises described above.

Such developments have contributed to the difficult situation in Poland and Hungary resulting from privatization and probably led the residents of Zamfirovo and other villages in Bulgaria to vote for the Socialist Party in the first free election. As privatization has carried the day in all political parties in contemporary Bulgaria, their choice was basically annulled, and the current crisis in the country attests to the consequences suggested here. Whether market forces can bring the units back into a stable relationship is yet to be seen and uncertain at best--the more so because some of the linkages among sectors of the village economy, as well as

between the village and other administrative units,
transpired through so-called "informal" routes, to which
we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER SIX

INFORMAL PROLIFERATION

The nearly universal combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in the lives of villagers, and the dispersal of village social relations into towns through migration, provided a fecund context for the proliferation of arrangements integrating these various people and their productive involvements. Such arrangements multiplied until they filled every interstice in the formal political and economic structure, creating a very different social reality from that formally defined by the structures themselves. This difference was explicitly recounted by a villager to whom I complained about a bureaucratic obstacle. Tossing his head back while making a clicking sound to demonstrate his dismissiveness, he commented, "Here [in Bulgaria] you hear only that this cannot be done and that cannot be done, but the truth is in Bulgaria everything is possible, everything can be arranged." These contrasting worlds, where nothing and everything respectively were possible, correspond to what social scientists often call the "formal" and "informal" sectors.¹

¹ Other terms include the informal economy, the second economy, the shadow economy, the gray market, and on and on.

Informal activities have a long history in Bulgarian villages, often predating by many years the establishment of socialism. For example, what we described as traditional craft production in the previous chapter was recast under socialism as informality. Smith (1989:308, 312) has argued generally that activities become defined as "informal" only with expansion of the state's purview. In the Bulgarian case this expansion came with the installation of a rigidly defined socialist state apparatus, creating by default an expansive informal sector. Since that time, however, the activities excluded from the formal structure continued to interact with it in a complex way, generating new informal arrangements. In so doing, informality provided both inspiration for socialist programs and avenues for circumventing and ameliorating the same. This interaction was particularly evident in reform dynamics as informal activities were alternately both models for and targets of reform therapies. Obviously then, these informal activities and relations were significant in the various structural alterations we have discussed heretofore.

In situating informality squarely within these larger processes of change I want to draw attention to several distinctive characteristics. First is the flexibility of the informal sector. One of the strengths of informal arrangements is that they escape many of the strictures confining the formal economy and can therefore respond

very quickly to changing circumstances. Thus the informal sector may change in both structure and process as other circumstances and opportunities arise. In addition, the formal sector itself changes and may incorporate or attempt to co-opt activities previously viewed as informal. This was a common component in the waves of political and economic reform in eastern Europe.

Such processes of change also illustrate a second essential factor--the continuing interaction between formal and informal sectors. These two "worlds" are in fact two dimensions of one single reality. While it is instructive to distinguish them for analysis, in doing so we run the risk of reification. To defend against this we must keep the interaction between sectors as a primary focus. While many researchers acknowledge this interaction and reject the idea of a dual economy, they vary immensely in the degree to which formal and informal interaction figures in their analyses. For only a few, of which Sampson (1983, 1986, 1987) is the best example, is a multidirectional and multifaceted interaction central to their model of informality. Much more common is the unidirectional or unidimensional perspective in which problems in the formal sector are seen as provoking informal responses. These responses may then either ameliorate problems for informal operators (Roberts 1976); underwrite formal processes such as surplus accumulation (Davies 1979, Moser 1978), or exacerbate in a vicious

cycle the formal problems which generated them (Lomnitz 1988). These ideas are important, but they are not necessarily exhaustive, and certainly not mutually exclusive. Recognizing all these possibilities simultaneously is essential to understanding the nature and role of informality.

Finally, it is important not to exclude any social factor from playing a role in informality. Thus, for our purposes we cannot limit ourselves to the concept of an informal "economy" defined on the basis of "income-generation" (Portes and Castells 1989:12). To do so would be somewhat distorting for the countries of eastern Europe where an elaborate official structure connected the economy to political considerations at every level. Particularly in such situations political leverage is an economic resource and economic resources may facilitate political posturing. Moreover, both political and economic objectives intersect with diverse social obligations such as those to kin or friends (see e.g. Sampson 1987:132). In fact, culturally shaped objectives may be the driving force behind a great deal of informal activity.

Keeping these various considerations in the foreground requires a flexible approach to informality. As a base of operations we can define the informal sector as a collection of processes, incompletely regulated by the political and economic apparatus of the state and used

by individuals to pursue social, political and economic ends. At least as important as what these processes are, however, is their role in the larger political, economic and social systems in which they operate. From this perspective the informal sector emerges essentially as a means of integration which brings together many different dimensions and units of society that are otherwise compartmentalized. Thus conceptualized, such a sector is likely to be especially instrumental in socialist societies, where the state attempts to regulate all manner of political and economic activity through highly compartmentalized bureaucratic structures (Hirszowicz 1980).

The following pages give ethnographic examples from Zamfirovo for each of these characteristics of informality. We begin with a discussion of various types of informal activities, followed by a description of weddings and house building as major "happenings," potentially engaging them all. We then examine the social relations involved in informal processes and the benefits of informal activities for the formal system. Finally, we look at the ways in which informal activities may have figured into reform processes.

Informal Activities

There are numerous activities in Zamfirovo that one might examine to get at the nature of informal process.

Perhaps the most commonly discussed for other eastern European cases is villagers' subsistence production on their personal plots. I chose to examine such production in the context of village agriculture in Chapter Three, reflecting what I see as its official articulation with the state agricultural system. Nonetheless, personal plots also provided possibilities for unregulated activities which can be seen as part of the informal sector. One of the most pervasive was the informal exchange and sale of agricultural subsistence products and services which exceeded consumption requirements. Obviously, participation in such activity varied according to productive output. Many agricultural products circulated in this way, among them peppers, tomatoes, grapes and, to a greater extent, animal products such as meat and eggs. Yet the amounts were not substantial. Because climate was the major factor in crop yield, most villagers experienced roughly equivalent fortunes in their personal production. When it was a bad year for peppers, most of the village and region were short on peppers and people did not have any extra to sell. When there was a bumper crop for tomatoes, most people had more than they needed and there was little market for the excess.

This dynamic applied to the major garden crops. It was less valid for the three crops that occupied the majority of land in the village--wheat, corn and grapes--for which there was nearly perpetual demand. Not

necessarily consumed, these products were used to produce more valuable ones: grains fed livestock through the winter, while grapes were made into wine which sustained villagers through out the year. Greater demand for these products fueled activity in the informal arena.

Corn cultivation was more labor intensive than wheat. Plots were usually plowed and planted by machine, although some people still did it by hand, aided only by a horse- or donkey-drawn plow. Regardless, the subsequent hoeing and harvesting had to be done by hand. Labor intensity and high demand led to at least a few cases of "sharecropping," which was officially prohibited. The arrangement operated like this: a village family let someone else grow corn on their personal plot, and in exchange the person doing the work gave half of the crop to the family. Since most villagers wanted more corn than they could produce on their land, such "sharecropping" was not widespread, except among older or disabled people who could not do the strenuous work of hoeing, harvesting, and cutting the corn stalks. If anything, the significance of the arrangement lay in its contribution to the social security of older villagers, who found themselves with progressively diminished possibilities in the rural economy.

Since wheat was cultivated mechanically, it rarely produced such arrangements. It did, however, occasion informal activity in the process of getting machines and

drivers to do the work. Since timing was important and demand concentrated at peak periods, getting a tractor or combine driver to work one's plot often required good social relations and possibly gifts as an enticement. Meadowland was between wheat and corn in this respect: it required some labor in harvesting, but relatively little other input. Like wheat and corn fields, meadows were valued for the animal food they yielded, in this case hay. I was aware of people purchasing the right to harvest other people's alfalfa and grass in exchange for money or meat.

Vineyards were perhaps the most valued and the most labor intensive of the crops grown on personal plots, and also the least integrated with the formal cooperative sector. There was a high demand for grapes by town residents who wanted to make their own wine, but did not want to do the work of viticulture or could not get access to a personal plot. Residents from nearby towns would appear in the village towards the end of the harvest period and inquire if there was anyone with grapes to sell, pursuing leads, as it were, through the grapevine. More often, sales were arranged by villagers on behalf of urban relatives or friends. A villager with no surplus grapes who had an urban friend or relative wanting to buy, might use his village connections to arrange a purchase.

The extent of these exchanges fluctuated with annual output. My first grape harvest in the village was a bad

one, and the only grapes available for sale belonged to a few individuals who could not drink alcohol for health reasons. The second harvest I witnessed was a bumper crop, and there were several commercial transactions as a result. Such transactions took place at the end of the harvest, when villagers were certain of fulfilling their own consumption needs. Officially vineyards were intended for household consumption, but no local administrators attempted to track down grape sales. The informal market in grapes was somewhat limited by factors similar to those limiting the vegetable market. First, even considering successful attempts to augment one's vineyard, the plots were limited in size and therefore the amount of possible product was limited. This combined with a high demand on the part of the producers themselves to insure that few grapes were offered for sale.

Urban demand was also mitigated somewhat by the fact that many townspeople had access to vineyards in the village. The generic pattern was one where the children of a household migrated to town during their young adulthood. After their parents died, they continued to farm their parents' vineyard and used the house as a weekend "villa." If they lived in a town near the village, they might desert the ancestral house altogether, returning only on occasional day trips during the agricultural season to work the vineyard and possibly the garden, but allowing the house to fall into ruins. The

resulting incongruous sight of a dilapidated and deserted house surrounded by an immaculately tended vineyard or garden illustrates the value of these personal plots. Since many Bulgarian townspeople were of village origin, this type of activity was an important source of grapes for urban households. In addition, the People's Councils in most towns granted residents small plots of land on the outskirts of town in what was referred to as the "villa zone." These plots, however, were never sufficient in number for all those desiring them.

The value of personal plot production led to all manner of strategies for extending access to land beyond the legally prescribed half hectare. If a family moving from the village were to abandon its personal plot, relatives remaining in the village would take it over for their own use. A more common extension was the use of the personal plots of relatives who had died, or of older relatives who were no longer capable or desirous of agricultural work. The former case would be restricted primarily to the garden plots around the house and possibly the vineyard as well. In the latter case, when the parent or grandparent was still alive, the descendants in the village might all jointly work his/her plots and divide the produce, or they might simply divide the plots among themselves.

Clearly these possibilities were based on kinship, but political connections and perhaps even petty bribery

helped officials to overlook the continued utilization of land by individuals who no longer had official rights of access. Rights to the grapes of a vineyard planted and tended by a close relative were informally recognized. Also the personal vineyard was often on land not easily utilized for mechanized agriculture so it did not behoove the farm to reclaim it when the "owner" died. Nor was the demand for vineyards completely unlimited. They required a lot of work to insure optimum output, so much so that villagers said they had to be "cared for like children." Given the other labor requirements of villagers, they simply could not work unlimited amounts of vineyard.

It might be argued that the attempt to extend access to personal plots and the consequent "over-production" of crops reflected an entrepreneurial strategy for producing a marketable surplus. My experience suggests that this was not the case for most Zamfirovo residents. The two growing seasons I witnessed were quite different, resulting in shortages the first year and a small surplus the next. Thus, as suggested long ago for Melanesian societies (Vayda et al. 1962), over-production was more likely a hedge against bad years. The surplus of good years could then be invested into various informal connections.

There were only a few cases of private entrepreneurial agricultural production in the village. One was a family with a large yard given over to a fruit orchard, the fruit

from which they sold. Another household had done the same in the past, but the elderly couple were no longer able to tend the orchard adequately. What fruit the trees produced was taken by their son, who lived in Sofia, to underwrite his participation in the ubiquitous urban economy of favors--itself a major aspect of the informal sector which we will discuss later. The other case of private entrepreneurial agriculture was that of a former village family who had migrated to a nearby town and used their rather large yard in the village to grow tulips, which they sold in the town on holidays.

Not only did villagers generally eschew surplus production; they were often to be found on the other side of the production equation as consumers of privately grown products brought to the markets of Berkovitza or Mihailovgrad. The village itself did not have a market, but entrepreneurs from other regions sometimes trucked their produce in, setting up a stand near the central square. Such vendors, although not uncommon, usually came one or two at a time and only on weekends during the summer and fall.

I constantly asked villagers why they did not grow food for the market and was uniformly told it was because the village was "poor." Further elaboration revealed the meaning of this expression to be "agriculturally poor," as the hilly terrain of the foothills, the rocky content of the soil and unreliable water resources in the region were

cited as proof of the village's "poverty." According to sociological estimates (Kyuranov 1987:413), however, Zamfirovo was not unusual in its limited degree of market gardening: of the nearly 40 percent of Bulgarian families who farmed personal plots, only 4.8 percent sold any produce on the market.

This statistic may mask significant regional variation resulting from the agricultural conditions cited by Zamfirovo residents. This possibility is supported by the fact that many more families (16 percent) sent animal products to the market (Kyuranov 1987:413), as animal raising was viable in more marginal areas. Regional variation in market gardening was also suggested by personal experience. I visited villages in the south-central plain, for example, where nearly every yard was given over to plastic covered greenhouses. Indeed, cars bearing license plates from these regions were common at the markets in Mihailovgrad and Berkovitza.

There were also vendors from other regions, less well endowed agriculturally, some in fact from regions with ostensibly worse agrarian conditions than Zamfirovo. When I pressed Zamfirovo residents with these examples and again asked why they did not try such activities, their common retort was either that there was "no tradition" of it, or that villagers were "too lazy." In actual fact the reasons underlying their entrepreneurial ambivalence were neither the village's deficiencies nor indolence. Quite

the contrary, the village was advantaged in the number of lucrative non-agricultural possibilities discussed in the preceding chapter, and far from being lazy, villagers spent extra time earning cash on the akord system growing strawberries for the cooperative farm as discussed in Chapter Three.

What we might call non-agricultural entrepreneurship was more common in the village, and most villagers supplemented their official income with some type of informal activity. As my next door neighbor explained it to me, "you must have a skill in order to live well. Without the extra [income] you cannot do anything." She was trying to convince her daughter to apprentice herself informally to a friend of the family who was a part-time seamstress. Her husband, having been trained as a veterinary assistant, got extra income from castrating pigs throughout the village.

While most villagers plied such trades on the side, there were a few cases of more extensive involvement in entrepreneurial endeavors. One was a family with two home knitting machines and a sewing machine with which they produced knit shirts and skirts on a made to order basis. The couple were both retired, and the living room of their house was given over to a small-scale workshop. The two knitting machines had different capabilities in terms of the tightness of the knit produced, the weight of thread accommodated and the width of the piece of cloth. The

machines were acquired second-hand at different periods, the larger of the two only about five years before my stay. The couple was considering selling the older machine although they still used it occasionally. The newer and larger model was electric, but they usually operated it manually, partly because textured patterns required constant interruptions, and partly because the poor quality thread often broke under automatic operation. The machines, manufactured in Bulgaria, cost around a thousand leva. Despite the fact that they provided a lucrative income, they were not in great demand, probably because they required some degree of skill and training to operate.

The knitter described here benefited from this fact in that she had acted as master to several village women wishing to learn the trade. These informal apprentices provided help and labor while learning. Only one of the apprentices, however, persisted to the point of mastering the skills. She subsequently purchased her own machine and began producing sweaters and shirts to supplement her official job at the local school. She and the woman who taught her were the village's only machine knitters, and there was ample demand for both of them. They received 30 leva for a single knit shirt, and the clients supplied the material. Their products were highly valued for several reasons: they were of good quality; the close machine knit resembled commercially produced material rather than the

sweaters hand knitted by everybody's grandmother; and people could request particular styles to suit their own tastes.

Except for the older generation, more and more villagers were placing a high value on appearing fashionable. In addition to favoring the business of the knitters, this contributed to a high demand for seamstresses as well, especially around ritual occasions such as weddings and graduation balls. The latter was particularly important, as every female graduate had to have a new dress in which she paraded through the streets of town from the school to the restaurant where the ball was held. In the spring the three village seamstresses were kept busy making these dresses. Other periods were less difficult, although there was still enough demand to occupy their spare time.

Some older women wove kitenitzi--the tufted wool rugs/spreads described in the previous chapter--for sale or to give as gifts. The large wooden loom was still a dominant presence in several kitchens and was likely to have a spread on it in some state of completion, with the pattern drawn on paper and hanging overhead. The spreads were produced strictly on a made-to-order basis and the price depended on their size and the complexity of the pattern, though none were cheap. A plain white spread the size of a single bed cost upward of 100 leva. Obviously, larger and more elaborate versions could be very expensive

and, as with the other trades, the price did not include the raw materials which the client supplied.

The profits might seem significant, but the work was time consuming and monotonous, making it less attractive as an entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, most women had other responsibilities and could not devote themselves to it exclusively even if they were so inclined.

Primarily an activity of older women, rug weaving may in fact be dying out; certainly there was little evidence of younger women learning the craft. Many women's crafts, however, were only taken up in old age, making it hard to predict.

Perhaps the male counterpart to women's quasi-entrepreneurial textile activities was woodworking. At the time of my stay there were two woodworking shops in the village. One ran all day since the operator was officially retired; the other functioned as an auxiliary job for a middle-aged man employed in the state sector. The retiree inherited his trade and much of his equipment, which included an electrical band saw and circular saw, from his father, who had learned the craft from his father before him. He supplied villagers with wooden implements, but most of his work involved cart construction and wheelwrighting. The part-time woodworker specialized in construction materials--processing tree trunks into building lumber and a limited amount of the decorative lumber which was popular in new house construction. A few

of the newer houses in the neighborhood of the workshop had this carved wood panelling covering part of the standard plaster facade, usually the upper floor or attic. He was also occasionally commissioned to produce simple wooden furniture such as tables.

As with textiles, woodworking was a producer's market made unbalanced by raw material shortages and limited spare time. One had to negotiate with the artisan to get a commitment to do the work, and even this often depended upon a personal connection and the ability to provide the necessary materials. One could get wood for small projects simply by going to secluded forests and cutting it. For example, on a camping trip to the mountains I was struck by the precision with which two of the men set about cutting a tree into makeshift stools. They were extremely particular about the size of the tree, and once it was selected they were meticulous about the size of the pieces to be cut. It seemed like an excessive concern over something to sit on for a two-day stay. When we were packing up to leave, the basis of their concern became clear--the pieces of logs were loaded into the car and taken back to the village where they were to be made into small stools for the house of one of the campers. Obviously it was much more difficult to manage similar feats with larger quantities of wood which would likely have attracted official attention.

The final example of informal entrepreneurship comes not from the village but from a nearby town. I include it here because the man involved was a migrant from Zamfirovo and we have already established the importance of continued relations between migrants and the village. True to this model, he maintained extensive socio-economic connections in the village, residents of which made up a significant percentage of his clientele. Given the aging of rural populations discussed in Chapter Four, villages were probably the most promising market for his product--marble tombstones. At his home in town he had an electric sander for polishing marble and an electric chisel for cutting, engraving and making a place for the picture of the deceased. He was in his mid-thirties and worked on tombstones after hours and on weekends. Bulgarian tombstones are approximately three feet high and vary in width from about two feet to about two yards. However, they are very thin, usually two to three inches, so they did not present a major problem for handling and transporting.

The tombstone maker also supplied the materials, which he acquired from a nearby marble quarry, the region being a major source of marble for both the domestic and international markets. Because of this abundance the town itself, although relatively small and not wealthy, had a large public square completely covered in pink and white marble. The tombstone maker also used scrap pieces to

make a mosaic marble staircase in his house. He was emotionally transported when I told him that such a feature would be extremely expensive in the United States and certainly a sign of wealth. He assured me that such was not the case in Bulgaria, where granite was the more valuable stone, but he was nonetheless very pleased to discover that something he owned would be highly valued in the United States. He was at that time building a new room onto the house in which he constructed a fireplace inlaid with green marble imported from Cuba. He had acquired it from the marble quarry, but he was uncertain for what purpose it had been imported.

The above descriptions of entrepreneurial activity may seem trivial compared, for example, to the "socialist entrepreneurs" of Hungary (Szelenyi 1988), but the full significance of the Bulgarian case only comes out through a long-term life cycle perspective. Since the Bulgarian state has neither advocated nor facilitated private enterprise to the degree we see in Hungary and elsewhere, villagers continued to work as state workers, with their involvement in entrepreneurial production limited to after hours. However, over the life cycle this changed. Many people who devoted their free time to entrepreneurial endeavors turned to it full-time once they retired to supplement their state pension. Since the official retirement age was only 55 years for women and 60 for men, they were able to devote at least a few years to nearly

full-time private production, tapering off again as they became infirm. This process is exemplified by the knitting and woodworking cases described above: the retired people worked full-time at their crafts while the younger people did the same jobs on the side. The tombstone maker also commented that his skill would give him something to do when he retired. Many insisted that such work was essential as pensions were inadequate. Because such activity varied over the life cycle, its overall importance is easily underestimated, only a small portion of village residents being fully engaged at any one time. This is an important consideration not only for Bulgaria, but in all attempts to analyze informal sector activities. Since most studies of informality delineate the sector and analyze it structurally, this factor is generally missed.²

The importance of entrepreneurship may also be further diminished by ethnocentrism. Because many products and services never make it to a "market," they may escape detection. In fact, many of the products and services discussed above were exchanged between already connected people, in many cases along the same paths as excess agricultural production. This was true for full-time as well as part-time producers. The more or less

²Roberts' (1989) study of informality among the urban poor of Guadalajara is somewhat of an exception, though in this case the major variable over the life cycle is the labor contribution of children.

full-time knitter had many more clients than the young knitter who knitted only part-time, and the social distance between her and some of her clients was greater. Still, almost every client had some connection to her, even if through a third or fourth party. Completely anonymous purchasers were rare.

The personal nature of such exchanges facilitated agreements between the parties involved, but it could also allow for a degree of manipulation that approached bribery. For example, the knitter often made sweaters for her doctor at no charge, expecting better treatment instead. We have already alluded to the similar necessity of bribing tractor drivers to get them to service personal plots. The term bribery, however, suggests a thoroughly negative valence on an activity that was much more ethically ambiguous for Bulgarian villagers. In their terms such arrangements were not ideal or "good," but they did not judge themselves or others too harshly for doing them. While they might complain about the fact that such "gifts" were necessary, they also acknowledged that it was foolhardy not to make them. As Verdery (1983:62) points out, bribery may actually be a rational form of investment in an economy with few profitable uses of surplus earnings.

In Bulgaria, baked lamb is the cliché currency of such investments and when villagers wanted to suggest bribery at work they would say that someone showed up with

half a baked lamb. While this was more a metaphor for bribery than a description, it was sometimes literally true. Several years ago a conflict arose between two groups in Zamfirovo regarding the placement of the metal workshop described in the previous chapter. The residents nearest the proposed site contended it was too close to their house. The outside specialist who was to settle the dispute was met upon arrival in the village with a feast of baked lamb provided by the plaintiffs. He decided in their favor, although for what reason is impossible to say. This is an unusual example, but numerous smaller transactions were nearly institutionalized, like the gifts to tractor drivers and the gratuity given to the attendant at the village still to get an appointment for distilling brandy. The brandy itself then became a commodity in the traffic in influence, a somewhat reduced version of the role of vodka in Poland (Hann 1985:88-89).

We should point out here that it was the ubiquitous rural-urban separation in Bulgaria that gave the local currencies of bribery much of their value. Products like brandy and lamb worked in informal transactions because they were less available in cities, while the number of urbanites with village relatives provided informal avenues for the flow of such goods. These interactions then contributed to the tension between urban and rural sectors with villagers feeling used by city folk.

On the other side of the coin, there were many "urban items" which made their way into the village, softening the distinction between givers and takers. The city, for example, had a decided advantage in access to black market goods and activities, which could be a valuable currency of influence in all areas of the informal sector. This advantage was especially characteristic of the largest cities like Sofia, where a pervasive black market was provisioned by a large number of foreigners. Notable among these were thousands of Vietnamese workers, sent to Bulgaria on temporary work contracts in exchange for Bulgarian products. Driven by low wages, these workers became famous for their traffic in black market goods, especially counterfeit "western" clothing, some of which trickled down to the village through migrant connections in Sofia. Clothes were the most common black market item seen in Zamfirovo, but there were also western video tapes, including pornographic ones. In general, however, the black market activity in the village was limited. Video tapes, for example, were only useful to villagers with video cassette players, of which there were few, primarily restricted to those who had worked abroad and earned hard currencies. The limited access to hard currencies by most villagers meant that they had little access to the black market in general.

Western cigarettes were often seen in the village, but as they were available in hard currency stores in

towns and sometimes even official state stores, they were not necessarily evidence of black market activity. The villagers, though, sometimes transformed them into such by smuggling them on "excursions" to Romania and selling them for exorbitant prices. As the village was located in northern Bulgaria, such excursions were not difficult to arrange, and while ostensibly organized as recreational tours for workers, they bore a closer resemblance to business trips. People would load up on cigarettes, preferably Kents, but Bulgarian brands would do. If they got them across the border without being caught by customs agents, they sold them for Romanian money which they used to buy whatever they could find. The pay-off of such smuggling had apparently declined with the deteriorating Romanian economy; while I was in the field veterans of previous trips returned from excursions complaining that there was nothing to buy in Romania and that they were not going back again. Such reports also assuaged local discontent with the Bulgarian economy.

Having crossed the line of legality in our discussion of informal activity we can proceed to what is ironically one of the most talked about activities of the informal sector--theft. People repeatedly cited theft as a problem for the village and especially for the cooperative farm. Of course they did not cite their own exploits in this regard but they did finger others. The cases of theft which I observed directly were from cooperative property.

Theft of private property was less common, though certainly not unknown. Villagers made an interesting distinction between these possibilities, expressing little alarm or concern about theft of cooperative or state property, while treating private theft as major news. For example, the word spread throughout the village when thieves picked clean two peach trees in a villager's personal garden one night, but the denuded plum trees along the edge of the cooperative plum orchard provoked little comment. While violated fruit trees attested to the presence of thieves in the village, in other regions of the country where busy roads traversed large orchards, signs along the highway forbidding drivers to stop made the same point.

Zamfirovo officials posted watchmen on fruit and vegetable plots around the clock as the crops approached maturity, but guards were not entirely effective. During the grape harvest of 1988 the police stopped a car leaving Zamfirovo by night and found it loaded with grapes stolen from the protected cooperative farm. The thieves were from a neighboring town. In conformity with Bulgarian law, the car used in the theft was taken by the state. Most guards also had relatives and friends and it is questionable how vigilant they were against theft by one of their own. There was also a potential for theft by the guards themselves, cases of which had been reported. Finally there was the possibility of village political

leaders arranging for people to purchase cooperative products, a transaction that was officially circumscribed. One morning before dawn, while waiting for the bus to town I saw a station wagon come from the direction of the strawberry fields loaded down with strawberries. The cache was covered with blankets except for an exposed corner which passed right by my eyes. Such a large haul had not been acquired without some official collusion.

Since the products used for animal feed were highly valued in personal plot production, it was inevitable that they would be among the products stolen from the cooperative farm. This was evidenced by the speech of the cooperative farm director at the annual meeting of cooperative farm workers in 1988. He cited the theft of these resources as one of the major drains on productivity and claimed it was unnecessary, since the farm would provide workers with animal feed. Apparently, he had forgotten the Bulgarian proverb that "theft is clean profit." Whereas the farm might supply animal feed, it also charged for it or required the return sale of animals to the farm. The continuing relative advantage of theft no doubt led to the preventative measure taken while I was in the field, of prohibiting anyone from driving their horse cart or donkey cart into the cooperative farm yard, where grain and straw were stored. A personal experience verified that such carts were worthy of concern. Once I was given a ride home from the cooperative farmyard in a

horse cart whose driver passed by the cattle shed just as a worker was feeding the calves. The timing was too auspicious to pass up and since he knew the woman, he asked her to throw a few bucketfuls of feed into his cart for his lambs. The amounts taken in such acts were small, but if repeated on a regular basis or reenacted by many parties, they could account for a significant loss.

Keeping carts out of the farmyard might have cut down on the theft of the most valuable fodder, but it did not stop people from stealing hay and straw directly from the fields. While observing the gathering of straw one day I wandered off and came across several bales of it hidden behind a stand of bushes. Clearly someone in the group of workers had stowed the bales, intending to pick them up later. A more comic example transpired while I was on a nearly full bus returning to the village from the nearby town. We passed a cooperative meadow that had recently been mowed and the grass left to dry prior to being gathered and baled. The bus driver, after making sure the coast was clear, pulled over to the side of the road, pulled out two large plastic sacks, jumped out of the bus and ran into the field where he hurriedly stuffed hay into the bags. When the bags were full he hauled them back to the bus, loaded them inside and continued on his route. My fellow passengers, who patiently waited on the bus watching the whole episode, had various reactions to it, ranging from ambivalence to amusement, but certainly no

one was horrified or indignant. As he told an inquiring passenger, the hay was for his two lambs.

In sum, theft was clearly a problem, though I am not convinced that the magnitude of the problem was as great as discussion and comment suggested. The focus on theft in colloquial conversations and official pronouncements had other bases related to psychology and identity. It allowed people to rationalize their own informal machinations and provided an example of how one could, if not beat, at least manipulate and use the system. In many ways a similar tension and dynamic is found in Bulgarian folklore in the Hitur Petur [Sly Peter] stories, where the distinction between cleverness and criminality in Peter's interactions with the Ottoman Turks is not always clear. The same uncertainty was evident in the colloquial use of the word "sly," which was attributed to people both for cheating ability and for cleverness. Such "slyness" was often presented as a particularly Bulgarian trait. At the official level, the focus on theft provided an easy excuse for poor performance of the system that obviated the necessity of looking for more serious, systemic, or solvable problems.

Theft was often connected to other informal activities, as goods that were stolen sometimes ended up in other exchanges. In fact many of the activities described above interacted with each other extensively in

particular contexts. In the next section we take up two such contexts--house building and weddings.

Informal Happenings

A particular endeavor that set the whole system of informal activities spinning was house building or remodelling. It is not surprising, then, that this has been a focus of previous studies of the informal sector in eastern Europe, of which Kenedi's (1982) is the most popular. I would not say that the Bulgarian cases I witnessed approached Kenedi's tragically comic experience of house building in Hungary, but his work is unique as a detailed insider's description of the Hungarian "hidden economy" and thus merits extensive attention for both its empirical value and comparative potential. It provides a vivid descriptive overview of the breadth of informal activities that no analytical discussion of the topic has achieved. This said, Kenedi's experience with house building must be contextualized. He is an urban intellectual of sorts and this clearly affected his experience in the informal economy. While he entitled his description "Do it Yourself," he repeatedly reveals that he actually did little of the work on his own. "As we progressed from the roof to the groundwork, I began to realize that using grey matter might be more fruitful than learning manual skills or even higher crafts" (1982:45). Leaving aside the fact that learning a "higher craft" also

requires using one's mind, we get the gist of his meaning from his account of roofing the house.

I was standing on the rooftop hammering away--no small feat considering that in my childhood I'd suffered from vertigo, when the carpenter's mate suddenly said he would be willing to do the entire job for 3,000 forints. I almost fell off the roof and had to grab his hand, thereby closing the deal...He was a country boy, not used to the high prices prevailing in our area.

Kenedi did do some of the work himself but nothing to compare with the amount that a Bulgarian villager or even a transplanted Bulgarian villager in the city would do. This reflects the fact that villagers acquired at least rudimentary skills in a number of trades in the course of growing up and were capable of doing many jobs themselves. Even when they lacked the skill, they attempted to minimize the hiring of skilled labor. One informant, a villager who migrated to the city in the 1950s but maintained his village house and garden, was engaged in building a house in the city during the time of my stay. We became good friends during his periodic trips to the village to help his parents and in-laws and to work on his own house and garden there. I also visited his family on trips to the city, marking the progress of the new house. He and the rest of his family worked every evening and all day Saturdays and Sundays on this house, to the point that it became a bone of contention, taking precedence over visits to the village and the fulfillment of village social obligations and work requirements. This conflict

was sharpened by the fact that my friend depended heavily, and quite literally, upon the fruits of village agriculture to support the house construction. Each year he imported fifty gallons or more of wine in addition to other foods from his village relatives. These village resources were important to his strategy of minimizing hired labor as many urban friends and acquaintances were willing to help in exchange for this rural bounty.

When it was absolutely necessary to hire a skilled worker for any specialized task, he would work closely with the craftsman, watching everything he did and learning as much as possible. After a day or two of working with the specialist he would inform the worker that he had run out of money and could not afford to complete the job. The skilled worker might be slightly irritated but for most craftsmen there was more than enough work, so he departed telling the owner to give him a call when he could afford to continue construction. The owner then used what he had learned by watching and assisting the specialist to finish the job himself. This strategy was problematic only when large or specialized machinery was required. In such cases it was necessary to pay the worker for the whole job. When the machinery was less specialized and less expensive it could often be acquired on temporary loan without an operator from either individuals or enterprises. In the latter case it was obviously state property. The mobilization of state

property for private use was another common element of the informal sector. Here again, gifts of village produce to employers or friends facilitated such favors.

In contrast to my friend, Kenedi's urban background forced him to go to much greater extremes to find skilled laborers and materials. While a Bulgarian villager would also acquire these necessities through informal channels, he or she would have less difficulty in locating them. I do not want to give the impression that the process was easy in the village--it was very difficult and could take a long period of time. One had to negotiate social relations with anyone in a position to provide necessary materials, either formally or informally. When goods were very scarce, this could be an uphill struggle as those with access were less willing to provide them. I followed one case where a man was able to get cement through his work connections but told a neighbor who asked for some that he could not get any more. Some items might not be available in the country at all so that acquiring them depended upon connections with someone who travelled abroad. Skilled workmen were busy and one had to conform to their schedules. I knew one family who bought a new hot water heater and waited a year for the only village plumber to get around to some rather complex piping and installation.

These difficulties were manifested in a large number of unfinished houses, some of them complete enough to be

occupied even though no further work was attempted, others never having reached that point stood abandoned. These contrasted with numerous houses on which construction was proceeding, if slowly, and a large number of remodeled or completed dwellings that were quite elaborate. The ambiguity evinced in these differences was reflected in two commentaries on house building frequently offered by villagers. One was a joke about a widower who comes to a village hunting for a widow to marry. He asks a man on the village square who are the widows in the village. The man points in various directions, and says, "see those new houses, there are the widows," implying that the demands of house building killed their husbands. A contrary suggestion is found in the common village claim that the state with all its resources takes much longer to build a construction than a private individual utilizing informal relations. Together these comments point to the hardship required to build a house, yet the success of informal arrangements in making house construction possible.

Another event in the village that shifted informal mechanisms into overdrive was a major ritual celebration such as a christening or a wedding. The amount of resources required for such events, especially weddings, caused families to engage all sorts of informal processes. The extent of the requirements will be most evident in an

abridged description of one wedding.³ The groom's family and friends gathered at his home with a band early in the morning on the day of the wedding. This group of over 30 people made its way boisterously to the bride's house where her family and close friends had gathered for a morning feast. Despite the early hour this was not brunch; it was a full meal replete with the requisite brandy and wine. Eating, drinking, dancing and some ritual enactments such as a simulated bride capture consumed most of the morning. Then the procession reassembled, now including the bride and her relatives and friends, and made its way to the "town hall" where an elaborate civil ritual was preformed.

From this event the procession returned less ceremoniously to the groom's home where the couple was presented with a seemingly endless array of gifts. The couple positioned themselves in front of the door on the second floor, their arms joined around each other's neck to form a sort of bar. The entire wedding party gathered around to watch as the groom's mother started the presentation. She began laying gifts across the couples' linked arms. As the gifts piled up they would be removed into the house by someone standing in the doorway behind the couple. First she loaded on heavy gifts like rugs,

³For a more complete description of a comparative case see Kligman's (1988) eloquent analysis of Transylvanian weddings. While there are many differences in details, a similar structure is clearly detectable.

blankets and comforters. Then came tablecloths, towels, and every conceivable household textile. Finally she bestowed clothes for both the bride and groom. There were so many gifts that it took twenty minutes of rapid piling to get them all presented. After she finished, other female relatives of the groom followed suit with fewer but still extensive gifts. One person gave over twenty-five pieces of bed linen, and this was only a fraction of that given by the groom's mother.

After the groom's relatives had finished, there was a break and I thought the exhibition was finished, but they were only gearing up for the presentation of gifts from the bride's mother. The number of gifts was phenomenal. While I was well acquainted with discussions of dowry in southern and eastern Europe (Fél and Hofer 1969, Friedl 1963, Grossiaux 1987, Schneider 1980), I found myself drawn instead to comparisons with descriptions of Kwakiutl potlatching. There were several room size rugs, several heavy blankets and bedspreads, and then more than a lifetime supply of bed linens and clothes. Not surprisingly given the amount of goods amassed, almost all the items had been commercially purchased and still had their price tags to prove it. Older villagers verified that such largesse, which was typical for village weddings, was not characteristic of dowry twenty or thirty years prior, when most items were made by hand (see Ivanova 1984).

After the couple had received all their gifts, the mother and father of the groom took their place and received about three armloads of linens and clothes from the bride's mother. The bride then joined her mother and other relatives to present similar gifts in a similar manner to the sister of the groom and her husband and then the groom's grandmother. The wedding party then went to the village restaurant for the wedding banquet--the crowning event of the wedding ceremony. Complete with an orchestra, the banquet was attended by over 200 guests, who were plied with as much food and drink as they could consume. Guests reciprocated with a cash gift as the couple passed through the restaurant toasting each guest in turn.

Clearly, large amounts of money had to be accumulated by both sets of parents to stage a wedding. One woman told me that her daughter's marriage cost 4,000 leva. This expense obviously required advance saving but it also meant escalating involvement in supplementary income generating activities. The importance of informal processes in providing for such events was made clear to me in a conversation about the man who castrates pigs before and after work. The villager said, "Why do you think he gets up before dawn every morning to go operate on pigs? He's got two daughters over there who will marry soon." Such events might also require increasing production of agricultural and animal products needed for

the feasts, which may in turn involve theft of animal feed from cooperative sources, or informal purchases of products from other villagers. Getting adequate supplies of soft drinks which were mixed with wine, and of food purchased through the restaurant, often required connections with someone in the commerce cooperative and maybe even gifts for their help. These are just some of the possible informal involvements. This example also shows clearly that cultural requirements could drive informal involvement as much as economic or political motives. Informal activity, in fact, reflects the interaction of these various concerns.

Social Relations and Informality

What is immediately apparent in the preceding descriptions is the near total reliance of informal activity on interpersonal connections. Through the expansive network of social relations created and/or maintained by such activities, various groups of people, sectors of the economy and even regions of the country interacted. To appreciate this integrative role, however, we must start with the social relations through which it was achieved.

As the above examples reveal, most products and services moving through the informal sector, whether agricultural surplus or bribes, travelled along lines of personal connections. This fact increased the value of

the products and services. Producing goods and providing services were not simply money making activities; they were intricately connected to, and given value by, the system of mutual exchange and personal connections that integrated society. A product or service of limited availability not only brought a price, it also generated obligations and long term connections between the parties involved in its exchange. For example, the high demand for knitted shirts meant that the maker acquired other valuable goods and services to which her clients had access.

The knitter could select her clients or decide on production priorities on the basis of the potential differential return from different people. On one occasion, the knitter's husband was taken ill and could not hoe part of his garden plot. The wife agreed to knit a neighbor a sweater in exchange for the neighbor helping to hoe their garden. The neighbor agreed but then vacillated and eventually told the knitter that she simply did not have time to do the hoeing and that instead she would pay whatever was necessary for the sweater. The women told her she did not need the money, what she needed was someone to hoe. Subsequently the knitter recounted the story, telling me that she was not going to knit the sweater.

This example illustrates the greater value of different goods and services over and above cash in

informal exchanges. I do not, however, interpret this as the decommunitization of the economy or a complete undermining of the cash nexus as suggested by Sampson (1983:52). It was certainly true that commodities become personalized in informal transactions, but that does not necessarily mean they were removed from their cash basis. Many informal exchanges or barter between individuals were expressed in explicit cash values, each side estimating the cost of the items or services exchanged. Furthermore, in many informal transactions cash payment and non-cash exchanges coexisted peacefully, the latter neither vanquished by the cash nexus nor substituting for it.

The view that "rational" market exchanges are necessarily devoid of informal obligations or, conversely, that informal relations are thoroughly decommunitized, is somewhat ethnocentric, reflecting the persistent acceptance of an innate opposition between informal and formal sectors. In an economy of shortage, however, even the purchase of a product or service for cash may be seen as a favor. In other words, when something is in short supply, someone is doing you a favor by selling it to you--even at a high price--rather than to someone else. Thus, a skill or product in demand could generate non-monetary as well as fiscal resources. To produce and sell products on the market was to squander this alternate source of value, perhaps accounting for the limited market

participation of Bulgarian villagers cited above. In any case, value derived from personal connections was not necessarily antithetical to cash interactions and in many cases Bulgarian villagers were able to have both. Certainly skills provided both monetary income and non-monetary obligations from clients.

The connections between informal activities and social relations worked in numerous other ways as well. Bulgarian villagers sometimes mobilized existing social relations to facilitate informal activities. At other times they engaged in informal exchanges expressly to establish relationships with individuals perceived as potentially useful in other endeavors. At any one time the existing profile of good relations circumscribed what was possible informally and may have even stimulated these activities. Also, bad relations could restrict what was possible in the informal sector or, alternatively, block formal avenues necessitating the use of informal ones. Furthermore, certain activities could transform good relations into bad ones. At the societal level the informal sector as a whole was shaped as much by this vast network of social relationships as it was by the structural delineation and regulation of formality. As Sampson (1983) suggests, the second economy is a "social economy" based on social and personal relations.

While some social relationships seemed to be based primarily on informal interactions, most informal

relations were grounded as well in other attachments, such as friendship, neighborhood, or collegiality. The most common bedrock for informal relations was kinship--a connection Smollett (1987) has characterized as an "economy of jars" in reference to the large number of home-canning jars that moved informally between kindred. Kin relations were important to all the informal activities and exchanges previously described. They provided pre-existing connections that were always there and did not have to be sought after or maintained with the perpetual exchanges required for non-kin based relations.

In many ways the domain of kinship shrank in Bulgaria during the socialist era for the same reasons it contracted in cases of capitalist development. As a result there was a restriction in the group of kin that one could freely call upon for assistance. This did not, however, result in a general decline in the importance of kinship in the informal political-economy. For example, while one might have lost touch with a second cousin who worked in a Government ministry, one could still rely on one's grandmother to tell her sister about any need, who would in turn make the matter known to her son, who would relay the concern to his son working in the Ministry. In this way kinship remained more important in the informal political-economy than it often appeared in the society at large. Conversely, the role of kinship in informal activity and the general importance of informal activities

in the society, combined to sustain or reinforce kinship relations in the face of other forces undermining them. Such conflicting pressures on kinship relations may have contributed to the intermittent tension previously recounted between rural and urban family members.

Fictive kin relations of godparenthood and marriage sponsorship provided another base for informal relations. For example, the godparents played important roles in the wedding described above and gave lavish gifts to the couple. Such relations, however, had themselves been affected by the informal processes in which they participated. The most evident effect was a decline in the perpetuity of fictive kin relations. Hammel (1968) describes such relations in Serbia as being passed from generation to generation, and Bulgarians told me the same had been true "traditionally" in Bulgaria, but that currently there was much more flexibility. People chose new godparents for their children, and those children often selected their own marriage sponsors. Freed of predetermined linkages, fictive kin provided a wonderful resource in establishing social relationships of value in the informal sector. As the latter became more essential, the manipulation of fictive kinship increased.

In one case I knew a family who chose a Sofia couple to be their child's godparent rather than anyone from the family of their own godparents because they felt it was more useful to have the godparent in Sofia. As the father

said, "if she goes to university when she grows up she will have a place to stay." Another example shows how various social relationships interacted. A young man chose as his wedding sponsor a middle-aged man who had migrated to town, pointing out that this man was the son of a past village leader. He was clearly considering the close kin connection between son and father in asking the son to be his sponsor. He was not disappointed. One of the largest gifts presented at his wedding was from the sponsor--a large electric stove that had been acquired gratis from the sponsor's father, who in turn had received it as a retirement gift from an important business connection.

These examples reveal the fallacy of the modernization arguments common in explanations of socialist reform programs. Such arguments see the extensive informal sector as one of the drains on economic development necessitating reform therapies. More often than not, they lay the blame for the expansive informal sector at the feet of such "cultural traditions" as kinship obligations. The data presented here show that such arguments are wrong on two counts. First, rather than being simply the cause of informal activities, kinship, both fictive and real, was maintained and perpetuated by its important role in informal activities. Secondly, these so called "traditions" were actually transformed by changing political and economic forces and

were very different than they were in the past. The informal sector in the Bulgarian village was thus an excellent example of how culture and economy connect with each other through continuous reciprocal relations rather than one determining the other. This same point is verified by the wedding example recounted previously. It was culturally defined ritual requirements that drove much informal activity, but these cultural requirements had escalated in response to new economic possibilities for buying dowry products and the decline in the number of children for which such outlays had to be made.

Kin and non-kin relationships that were important in informal processes were often lumped linguistically by the use of the possessive pronoun "our." Whenever I asked for clarification about the identity of a person being discussed, the speaker would reply in one of two ways. If there was no connection between speaker and subject the latter would be described by factors such as where he/she lived or his/her occupation. If there was a connection, then the response was always, "our," as in "our Ivan," or "our Maria." The same symbol was invoked when introductions were made, as in "Get acquainted with our Ivan." This was especially evident in those introductions intended to provide some connection to one of the people concerned. The full valence of "our" became clear to me in a young man's description of why he was skeptical about getting into the university. "I will study for the exam

but the exam may not be enough... People with connections to those who make the decision will go to them and say 'this is our boy,' and they will admit him."

People who were considered "our" were not always relatives, nor were all relatives referred to in that manner. Close relatives, barring some family conflict, would always be included, but very distant relatives would be called "our" only when there was an ongoing relationship between them. Such relationships were often maintained by informal activities, such as exchanging goods, services and influence. The situation brings to mind Lindenbaum's (1979:7) description of the New Guinea Fore, who "establish ties by demonstrating commitment to a relationship." There are parallels as well with segmentary lineage operation in that delineation of "our" depended upon context; someone might be identified as "our" by a speaker in an inter-village context, but the same speaker would not refer to him as such in a household discussion.

Looking at these relations helps make sense of villagers' ambivalence about theft. As mentioned before, people talk extensively about the problem of theft while simultaneously participating in it. I previously suggested that the former provided a rationalization for the latter, and while this was certainly true, it is not the whole story, for the criticism of theft came in many different intensities. People sometimes criticized others

severely for stealing, though at other times the condemnation was almost jocular, accompanied by an elbow in the side and a wink. This variation reflected the social relations involved. Without exception those who were condemned for theft were individuals unconnected to the speaker. The closer the connection the more benign the evaluation of theft--thievery perpetrated by a closely related individual was described as "sly" in the hitur Petur mode, while that of unconnected villagers was just called "bad." When relations changed so did the evaluations of theft. This process was most obvious when good relations soured between individuals, as accusations of theft often followed. Thus, in a political and economic situation where theft was something of a necessary evil, its necessary and evil attributes were assigned differentially to presumed thieves on the basis of social relationships.

Social relations operated as well within what might be seen as strictly formal parameters, as we saw in the previous chapter, where social relations were important in ensuring the supply of short materials between enterprises. Here we see a clear parallel with the role of social relations in capitalist economies, whether called the "personalist ethic" in South Korea (Yun-Shik 1991), patronage in Mexico (Lomnitz 1988) or simply the "old boys' network" in the United States. From this perspective the differences between informal activity in

capitalist and socialist systems may be less the nature of informal activity itself and more the way the different systems define and delineate what is formal.

Formal Benefits of Informality

While at one level such informal social relations can be seen as contributing to the incapacitation of official structures, at another level they clearly facilitate the operation of the formal sector. Such was the case for village enterprises, where directors used informal social relations to secure supplies. There were numerous other ways that informality actually benefited formal operation. These contributions emerge exactly where formal and informal sectors interacted. For example, the cases of village entrepreneurship described above provided goods and services to the village that were not available in state stores. Yet, in each case the endeavor was wedded to the formal sector. The man who made tombstones in his free time worked by day at the marble quarry, accounting for his access to the necessary raw materials. Similarly, the man running the lumber mill had a day job in the regional forestry service. The older village knitter and her tailor husband acquired their skills in their formal job before retirement. While the young knitter acquired her skill through informal relations with the older knitter, the demand for the product motivating her apprenticeship reflected aspects of the formal structure.

At the macro-level it followed from a limited variety of desirable clothing in the shops. At the micro-level it connects to the presence in the village of the spooling workshop and its parent thread factory in the nearby town. A number of important social relations between villagers and townsfolk facilitated the informal movement of both customers and thread from the town factory to the village knitters. More directly, some of the thread delivered to the village workshop for transfer never left the village, at least not on spools. Thus, it was no surprise to me or anyone else when the young knitter left her relatively easy job in the village school to take up work in the thread workshop.

Such possibilities clearly benefited the workers, but they also benefited the enterprise and the wider economy. Perquisites of this sort helped secure a work force by attracting workers to otherwise undesirable occupations and keeping them there in a system that was perpetually labor hungry. This role fits well with Gabor's (1979) classic explanation of the informal economy arising from a shortage of labor rather than a shortage of goods. I pointed out in the last chapter that the thread workshop was considered an undesirable place to work and had some difficulty keeping workers. Now we can see how its connection to informal activities made it more attractive for some and mitigated this difficulty to a degree.

Another case makes the same point more decisively. One of the cooperative farm workers I knew had used his connections with the farm administration to get a particularly desirable piece of land as his personal plot. The plot was near a large block of irrigated cooperative land and whenever the weather was dry the informant tapped into the nearest irrigation outlet and piped the water over to his personal plot. As he tells it, he was confronted by the director of the farm and told to stop irrigating his plot. Having just read The Milagro Beanfield War (Nicoles 1974) before hearing this story, I was primed for a combative response, but socialist reality proved to be much more banal and efficient than capitalist fiction. He simply told the director that if he could not water his plot then he was quitting his job on the cooperative farm. He was still doing both when I left the village. Similarly, people participating in fruit picking brigades often took home a bucket or two for their own consumption, usually paying for it, but sometimes not, which was an incentive for them to devote a day to brigade activities. The interactions were complex as formal occupations and political considerations also led to informal activity. In one example the villager who bought up eggs and animal skins for the commerce cooperative, sometimes helped people butcher sheep and kids with the agreement that they sell him the skin so that he could fulfill the plan for his job and thus increase his formal

income. This informal maneuver brought in products for the formal sector.

Several of the above examples include the possibility of theft and thus challenge the idea that theft is completely antithetical to the formal sector or simply a unidirectional drain on state resources. As the above cases suggest, the possibility of theft may have attracted and kept workers in enterprises vulnerable to labor shortages. But the formal benefits of theft were not limited to the labor dimension. If we look at what was stolen and what happened to it in the wider economy, we can see further symbiosis. The most common resources stolen from the cooperative farm were animal foods. In many cases people who stole such supplies did so in order to feed a larger than average number of animals, some of which were likely to be sold to the state as described in Chapter Two. This was the case with the man who gave me a ride home in his cart, picking up a little of the cooperative's feed en route. He was raising several sheep for eventual sale to the state. Obviously, theft increased the cost of animal production for the state, but in a context where there was much greater demand for meat than supply, the higher cost may have been a small price to pay for the added production it facilitated.

In some cases theft appears to have provided benefits at no cost to the formal sector. As previously mentioned, a major problem for the cooperative farm was adequate

storage facilities for grain. When there was a bumper crop of wheat, as in the summer of 1988, there was no place to store it all and it was often left exposed in large piles. In the summer of 1988 the whole village square was given over to a pile of wheat for several weeks until it could be taken away by the state. This pile was the first to be picked up; others, however, were left for longer periods of time and consequently several tons of grain actually rotted. Such improvised storage depots were obviously the most vulnerable to theft, and no doubt grain theft increased in proportion to their presence. Since some of the stolen wheat was certainly fed to animals destined for sale to the state, and since the wheat that was taken was especially vulnerable to rot, theft may have actually salvaged resources for the state.

The same was true of cooperative fruit and vegetable crops. Because there were often not enough workers in the cooperative farm at harvest time a percentage of produce might be left unharvested until too late. There were, in fact, reports on Bulgarian radio of other villages where large amounts of crops were lost due to shortages of workers to pick them. Under such circumstances theft cannot be viewed solely as cooperative loss. Once we are disabused of the idea that theft is solely a one way affair, then the extent of the activity is more understandable, as is the ambivalence that villagers exhibit when discussing it.

Informal activity also benefited the formal system by integrating regions of the country directly, expediting economic functions by circumventing the centralized bureaucracy. We mentioned in the previous section that the nature and degree of informal activity, such as market gardening, varied from village to village. Such regional variation reflected the variety of constraints and possibilities in different regions, leading to distinct economic activities. The different products of these endeavors were exchanged informally through social networks crisscrossing the country, thereby providing a means of lateral integration in a system formally structured around vertical linkages.

Regional variation, however, suggests a more general role for the informal sector as an arbiter between local and national levels of political and economic administration. The socialist system was often criticized for its centrally determined plans that did not adequately consider or allow for local and regional variation. Informal activities may represent local adjustments to national policy that were both more rapid and less constrained than official mechanisms, such as counter-plans. In this view, informal activities were not simply a response to the systemic problems of the formal sector, but to the homogeneity of the state sector as well. Such local adjustments were essential to the functioning and reproduction of the formal system.

The contribution of these potentially negative factors to the system's operation makes informal arrangements the ultimate expression of socialism as a system of conflicting complementarity. Informal activities were particularly well suited for this role: conceptually outside the socialist structure they did not generate ideological contradictions within the system.

The Informal Process in Process

Integral to the idea of conflicting complementarity is that conflictual arrangements were unstable, prompting perpetual readjustment. As informal activities were elemental to the process, they too varied. This change had two dimensions: change resulting from a redefining of the formal sector, and change resulting from fluctuations within the formal sector as defined. The latter might include a fluctuation in the supply of particular materials from the formal sector, provoking informal production or black market activity. Such changes were fairly frequent, contributing to the amorphous nature of the informal sector. The bane of an analyst, such flexibility was one of the strengths of this sector in general, all the more so in an economic system not noted for its quick-response capabilities.

Long-term and extensive activities of the above type might provoke economic planners to make formal adjustments, with indirect consequences for the informal

sector. This possibility is of utmost importance as it represents an avenue of feedback in state economic planning which is denied in top-down or bureaucratic models of socialism. Just because the informal sector was unofficial does not mean it escaped official detection or recognition. Economic planners were aware of aspects of the informal sector and they made policies in response. This general point is illustrated well by the Peruvian case, where Annis and Franks (1989) suggest one of the major distinctions between the political left and right was their attitude toward informal activity. While the informal sector in Bulgaria did not shape official policy to this degree, it was clearly a consideration. In this regard it was uncanny how closely the official prices of some products conformed to black market exchange rates (see Sofia News 6/28/90). American cigarettes were occasionally available for four leva per pack, and Bulgarian wine intended for export was sometimes sold domestically for nine leva. Both were about four times their dollar value in the U.S. at the time, conforming to the then current black market exchange rate of four leva to the dollar.

In many cases the government response to informal processes took the form of policies curtailing such activities. Alternate responses, however, included changing the conditions of the formal sector thought to be generating informal activity, or even attempting to

incorporate informal resources into the official system. If we combine these possibilities with the previous suggestion that informal activities represented local adjustments to state planning, then we have an indirect means by which local populations influenced national policy.

A primary player in this interaction was the reform process. Reforms were the quintessential alteration of the formal political and economic system and were thus likely to provoke some realignment in the informal process. Despite this obvious connection the interaction between informal and reform processes has not been a major theme in the literature of either--yet another oversight that must be laid at the feet of limited ethnographic attention to reform programs.

Contributing to this oversight is the fact that informal and reform processes are presented in the literature as resulting from the same formal stimuli. The standard economic explanations for reform programs are replicated almost identically in accounting for the expansive role of the informal sector in socialist societies. Like reform, informality is explained as a response to the endemic problems of the socialist economic system. Recurrent shortages, universal price controls, ineffectiveness and slowness of the formal production and distribution mechanism, the support of these inefficiencies by corrupt authorities at various levels--

all of these are cited by Grossman (1989:152-153), in accounting for the informal sector of the Soviet Union. Any one of these is just as likely to be touted as an explanation for reform programs or their failure. Such parallel conceptual maps make an analytical intersection unlikely.

Maria Los (1990:213-219) achieves a temporary intersection in attempting to characterize the informal activities of Marxist states during four different stages of economic development, one of which is the reform stage. However, she is constrained from achieving an interactive perspective by the concept of stages. Drawing on Grossman (1982:262) and Cassel and Cichy (1987:142), she actually suggests that the informal sector is "a surrogate for reform" during what she refers to as the "monopolization" period of socialism when problems of the formal economy were still considered temporary (1990:207). Is it not just as likely that expanding informal activities served as a catalyst for reform (see Alexeev 1989 on the Soviet Union)?

Los does point out one of the important connections in the interaction between reform and informality, the fact that via reforms, informal activities were coopted and integrated into the formal sector. A paramount example in Bulgaria was the change in the rules governing personal plot activity. The state moved to gain output from the personal plot--actually to stimulate personal

plot production so it could buy the surplus--by formalizing existing informal arrangements. Through a series of reforms it authorized cooperative farms to provide mechanical assistance to personal plot production and to return concentrated feed in exchange for animals sold to the state. Existing informal activities, such as the theft of animal feed, were probably additional motivations for such policies. The reforms increased sales of livestock to the state, but did not eliminate theft since it was "clean profit." In short, the informal sector motivated reforms which led to greater state-private interaction, even if the full objectives of the reform could not be realized.

The interaction between informal and reform processes is even more obvious in the development of the famous akord system of labor remuneration. This system was at one level a way to get more informal household production into the formal state sector. As we saw in Chapter Three, it was very successful in Zamfirovo for strawberries but floundered when introduced for other crops because it did not fit well with other formal and informal involvements. In this case, informal processes were an inspiration for reform programs which then had differential results as they interacted with both formal and other informal involvements. The difficulty in expanding akord arrangements beyond strawberry cultivation no doubt

contributed to the subsequent linking of these contracts with access to personal plot acreage.

Similar interactions were evident in the industrial sector as well. The attempt to make local enterprises more autonomous and self-sustaining actually led to an increase in informal activity. Enterprise managers, forced to secure their own materials of production, resorted to networks of social relations and informal arrangements to do so. These networks were not necessarily created by the reforms, for as Sampson (1987:128) points out, such networks were a response to the requirements of plan fulfillment generally. In the Soviet Union informal networks of managers who helped each other were so much a part of the system that they had a special term--"family circles" (Sampson 1987:128). While similar networks were no doubt in place in Bulgaria, their importance and role was extended by decentralizing reforms which transferred more responsibility from the state to enterprise managers.

Similarly, at the village factory the concept of worker self-management, implemented in an attempt to improve worker productivity, sometimes had the opposite effect. Workers used their increased control to enhance informal rather than formal production. Bicanic (1990:89-91) suggests the same for self-management in Yugoslavia, citing petty theft as a consequence. In Bulgaria theft preceded self-management and from my observations was not

exacerbated by it. Instead, Bulgarian workers used their increased role in decision making to facilitate more work time for their informal activities at the expense of their formal ones. For example, the self-management of factory brigades allowed brigade members to cover for each other when they took time off for informal activities.

Similarly, we saw in the preceding chapter that metal workers used the brigade system to set their own production targets, and while these plans did not exceed their previous production levels, they accomplished the same in less time, the difference being deployed in informal activities. Such results were acceptable to managers because of the importance of informal processes to the village and country as a whole. Nor were they new: village enterprises had always allowed workers time off for work requirements on their personal plots, especially for akord production, or for the required days of communal shepherding.

This factor takes us back to the previous chapter and provides another reason why what Holmes (1989) sees as the rigors of industrialization did not have the same effect on Bulgarian villagers as he suggests for Italian peasant-workers. The intricate connection between formal and informal sectors in Bulgaria meant that factory workers were excused for agricultural work and social requirements. They were not held to the discipline of the capitalist factory because, as we have tried to

demonstrate, their alternate informal activities were important for both formal and informal sectors. Given the intense integration of informal and formal processes, official reforms had to strike a balance with the informal sector. Brigade reforms among the metal workers show such a balance. The workshop maintained its production, while the workers and the larger village economy benefited from their increased informal activity.

Such adjustments were permanently thrown off balance by restructuring, which granted more weight to formal rationalization than to informal concerns. This helps account for the range of local perspectives on perestroika. Much of the restructuring program was directed toward separating the economy from state control, making it more self-sustaining and self-regulating. In the socialist case where the state and economy were indistinguishable, the costs of an expansive informal sector were not so detrimental since informal activities still contributed to the economic provisioning of society, which was ultimately the state's responsibility and the basis of its legitimacy. Even if labor or material resources were lost by the state sector to the informal sector, they were likely to be directed eventually to this provisioning. In Zamfirovo this connection was recognized in the general cooperation between sectors: people were let off work to harvest their strawberries and additional absenteeism was tolerated, as was petty theft. These

concessions exemplify again the conflicting complementarity central to the system. When the state and economy are separated, however, resources lost by the state sector do not necessarily resurface in an area or sector where the state is responsible, making informal activity less integrated with the state sector and thus more suspect in the view of administrators.

Under capitalism, the state is also often in collusion with informal activity, but what I am suggesting here is a conflict that is particular to a period of socialist reform--the period of dissociation between government and economy which began with perestroika but is still underway in the current transition. In this period, many economic inputs are still coming from the state sector, but since the state has begun to transfer custody of the economy to an emerging private sector, the outputs are no longer contributing solely to an area of state responsibility. Not surprisingly then, when you have such an attempt to rationalize the economy by removing state controls and state monopolies, there is a simultaneous attack on the informal sector. Thus, in a magazine interview conducted in 1985, Soviet Ambassador Grekov, criticizing the Bulgarian economy, zeroed in on Bulgarian workers for concentrating their energies on their second jobs (cited in Pitassio 1989:204). Subsequently that year, an article in the Bulgarian Communist Party newspaper claimed that the equivalent of 30,000 jobs were

being wasted by absenteeism while the black market and illegal operations of a semi-private nature involved as many as 10,000 people in Sofia alone (cited in Crampton 1988:348). By the time of my fieldwork this theme was evident in the village as well. At a meeting of the cooperative farm workers in 1988, the director complained that the average work day of farm employees had dwindled to four hours, the rest being spent on personal and informal work. Such comments were perceived as an ill-wind regarding the government's attitude toward the relationship between formal and informal sectors. Given the importance of informal processes for Bulgarian villagers, their uncertainty and anxiety about restructuring was understandable.

Ironically, as it turned out, the greater threat in this regard was not the attack on informal processes but the collapse of formal structures. The dismantling of formal structures in 1990 induced informal processes to hyper-activate, creating severe shortages in the formal sector. The increased strain on informal connections may have led to a retrenchment of informal connections, but those that remained certainly became more important.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the prior expansion of informal processes contributed to the vulnerability of the formal system. So, while the integrations and adjustments achieved by informal routes were adaptive locally in the context of particular reforms

and changes, in the long run they were detrimental to the system as a whole. Portes and Castells (1989:11) suggest that one of the major consequences of increasing informal activities is the "disenfranchisement of the institutionalized power conquered by labor, with much suffering, in a two-century old struggle." In the socialist case, I have suggested that informality was empowering for villagers in several ways. However, as institutionalized labor was rendered less significant vis-à-vis informal activity, the ideological foundation of the "proletarian state" was further weakened, and the ensuing attack on these informal activities represented the same disenfranchisement as Portes and Castells see in capitalist informality.

Barring an economic miracle, however, the informal processes we have described here will not simply wither away. As long as there are severe inadequacies or difficulties of any type in the formal economy (whether called socialist or capitalist), people will pursue alternate avenues to satisfy their wants and needs. Certainly the "transitional" Bulgarian economy could be said to have such problems. Letters from the country in 1990 described grocery stores with nothing in them whatsoever. In 1991, when prices were de-controlled, letters told of ample goods which no one could afford to buy. Through it all, villagers have continued to rely on their personal plots and the animals they raise. As one

informant wrote in a letter to me in the fall of 1990, "There is nothing to buy in the stores, but like other villagers we will kill a pig at New Years and we will have meat this winter." I am sure his daughter and her family in Sofia who do not raise pigs will also have meat.

This excerpt brings us back to real people. For while informal activities operate between various levels and units of society, it is the household where their effects are most keenly felt. The household brings the various factors we have discussed into proximity where they can interact to shape informal activity. The informal activities of households, then, are part of the broader household economic strategies shaping the economic fortunes of villagers and the profile of economic development in general. The next and final chapter brings together these considerations through a focus on village households.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOUSEHOLD ARTICULATIONS

In recent years the household has become an increasingly visible unit in anthropological analyses. While Barlett (1989:10) attributes this attention to "the greater maturity" of anthropology, it also follows directly from ideas evident in the discipline's adolescence, such as the assumption that households represent a primary unit of production and consumption, and are thus the loci of economic decision making. For Bulgarian villages in the late 1980s, the former was certainly not the case and the latter was debatable, yet the household was still the single most important unit to examine when considering rural change. The reason for this is that the household was the nexus of all the forces discussed heretofore. It was the social space where these forces came together and influenced each other. This interaction, mediated through the lives of household members, shaped societal outcomes.

In this perspective the household is not so much a unit of analysis as a focus of analysis--a way to make sense of the various changes we have been discussing. It is at the household level that we gain insight into why people joined the cooperative farm, moved to town, restricted births, changed jobs and trafficked in

informality. Sometimes these actions reflected a choice among various options; at other times actions were so constrained that few if any alternatives existed. In either case, households were the contexts where the possibilities and constraints came together and interacted, establishing options or revealing the lack thereof. Analyzing the household as a "focus" is different from the usual exhaustive analysis of the structure and activities of village households, complete with descriptions of the division of labor and nature of relationships within them--itself a book-length project. The objective, rather, is to illustrate how the household provides social space for the mutual interaction of various social forces, which in turn can help explain why developments unfold as they do.

A look at Zamfirovo households will not explain everything in the last 60 years or the last 350 pages, but it is a necessary first step. This concluding chapter thus looks back at the factors already covered, but from a household vantage point. I will start with an overview of how some of these factors, specifically agricultural change, population movement and informal expansion, played out in the domestic arena. I will then draw upon the concept of strategies to characterize the interactive nature of these factors. While such strategies may be seen as attempts by individuals to maximize their household's interests, they operated within a wider

cultural context that restrained emergent inequalities. We will see how this wider context shaped household strategies and their outcome, especially in relation to the challenge of differentiation brought on by the current transition.

Crucial to this discussion is the fact that the forms and nature of village households changed in tandem with the changes we have previously discussed. Thus while Goody (1972) maintains that household units have historically varied within fairly narrow limits regardless of the economy, the Zamfirovo case, like many others (e.g. Arcury 1984; Befu 1968; Cohen 1976; Heald 1991; Kertzer 1984; Kuznesof 1980; Pasternak 1972), shows that regardless of how "limited," these variations are intricately connected to economic organization. The Zamfirovo trajectory can be summarized as a sociological pendulum swing, from extended/communal households to simple/autonomous households and then back to something in between, with limited extension in a constricted communal context. This shift is represented in the increase in the number of village households consisting of only a married couple in the 1960s, and the subsequent predominance of three-generation stem families. In what follows I will show how this change interacted with other political, economic and cultural changes.

Household Interactions

The best place to start in this interaction is where we began originally, with agriculture. The structure and activities of households changed along with the agricultural changes described in Chapters Two and Three. The declining presence of the zadruga is perhaps the best known aspect of this progression. I do not wish to engage the extensive literature and numerous debates concerning the zadruga, well covered in Todorova's (1990) recent review. So, while acknowledging that all definitions are contested, I will follow Mosely's (1940:95): "a household composed of two or more biological or small families, closely related by blood or adoption, owning its means of production communally, producing and consuming the means of its livelihood jointly, and regulating the control of its property, labor, and livelihood communally."

The village of Zamfirovo falls within what Mosely (1953) delineates as the third principal belt of zadruga presence, encompassing western and central Bulgaria. The historical presence of such arrangements in the village is supported by older villagers who remember hearing about them from their parents, and by the description of the village prepared by the village schoolmaster in 1926. According to the latter, the zadruga was common "in earlier times when the population was smaller and the region wider." According to him, zadrugas usually

consisted of 10 to 50 people organized as an agro-pastoral production unit.

The focus of the zadruga economy was livestock raising, especially sheep, goats, cows and buffalo cows. Of the typically three to four adult males in a zadruga, one was a shepherd and one a cowherd. One of the men together with all the women took care of the fields. This revelation is particularly interesting given the contentions about the feminization of socialist agriculture discussed in Chapter Three. According to this description, agriculture may have been feminized previously in agro-pastoral regions and de-feminized as a consequence of the decline of the pastoral economy described in Chapter Two. Subsequently, collectivization and industrialization facilitated a re-feminization under socialism.

The same point emerges in terms of wage labor. While the existence of wage labor might be thought to undermine the zadruga as a communal agro-pastoral production unit, it actually meshed well with the zadruga context. According to the schoolmaster's report, poorer zadrugas sent one of their men to work as a hired hand in the plains to provide cash for taxes and material needs. The worker would often trade places with other men in the zadruga so that no one male had to work for others away from home permanently. The zadruga thus facilitated early

"worker-peasant" arrangements which were challenged by the decline of the agro-pastoral system.

The characteristics of contemporary Zamfirovo as described in the preceding pages, then, look surprisingly similar in many respects to the earlier zadruga regime, albeit with much smaller households. This reduction in household size was strongly evident in the inter-war period as the number of households nearly doubled from 403 to 800 between 1920 and 1951, while the population increased only about 40 percent over the same period. This reflects the attack on the agro-pastoral economy with its restriction of common land and land fragmentation. The delayed consequences of previously high birth rates with attendant population pressure also played a role. The developments of the 1940s and 1950s probably accelerated the process of simplification, particularly the system of forced requisitions. While some allowances were made for household size, in general the larger the holding, the higher the rate of requisitions. Thus, household fissioning and concomitant property division could reduce the total requisition burden of the people involved. At the same time, it did not necessarily require that divided households cease to cooperate economically.

Following collectivization in 1956, there was another motivation to divide--the expansion of personal plots. Since each separate household had the right to a personal

plot, division could double the amount of land available for personal use. Not surprisingly, the division of households then became a concern of the state, which attempted to guard against "artificial" separations. Any household wanting to be recognized as two distinct units had to make a request to the village council, which then decided on its legitimacy. Between 1956 and 1959 there were 80 such requests recorded in the council minutes, of which 34 were granted and 33 denied on the basis that the individuals concerned were not "living separately." One of the affirmative decisions was later reversed when the households were discovered to be "living together." The remaining 13 requests were postponed for the council to investigate their legitimacy.

While this procedure insured against bogus household divisions, it was still possible that some of the households which actually divided were motivated by the objective of getting more personal use rights. In fact, the village council banned all requests for division in March 1957 because there was no more land to allocate for personal use. The moratorium was supposed to last through October, but no new request was recorded until April of the following year.

Prior to the completion of collectivization, disagreement among household members over joining the cooperative led to several divisions. If brothers or a father and son were at odds about signing up, household

division was the only solution. In one household, two brothers wanted to join the cooperative while a third and their father did not. They eventually divided the property into three parts. This accounts for why the youngest son of the cohort, who wanted to join the cooperative, did not receive the house as would have been customary. Such disagreements between fathers and sons were commonly recounted in stories about early collectivization, and household division was often the ultimate resolution.

We have already suggested that in-marrying sons-in-law were particularly receptive to the idea of collectivization, precisely because of the prospect for household division. By looking closer at the household level we can also see that the situation prior to collectivization may have increased the number of in-marrying sons-in-law, thereby increasing the degree of support for cooperative agriculture. By the 1940s the generation born during the early fertility decline of the 1920s (see Chapter Four) was entering marriageable age. This likely resulted in a greater number of families with only daughters to marry. At the same time, economic privation and land shortage created a situation in which many men were willing to join the families of these women. Collectivization subsequently allowed them to escape.

The dissolution of larger households was accompanied by a change in the cultural meaning and value associated

with particular household forms. Whereas in the past the large household was a symbol of economic stability, this was no longer the case in the 1980s. The three-generation stem family household was considered desirable, but anything larger became synonymous with economic difficulty, even poverty, and was nefariously associated with gypsies and Turks, ethnic minorities stigmatized for their large households.

Similarly there emerged a cultural bias toward ultimogeniture in the formation of three-generation living arrangements. In the past, ultimogeniture existed primarily as a way of resolving conflicts concerning inheritance of the homestead upon the fissioning of a zadruga. With the shifting economy, however, this practice became an ideal itself, and the resulting three-generation stem family replaced the zadruga in its role as what Halpern and Wagner (1984) call the ideal prototype household.

These changes all revolved around the demographic transition, illustrating how fertility decline itself was mediated by the household context. The restriction of fertility occurred expressly around the close cultural correspondence between family and household, and the challenge to this idea generated by the economic shifts just reviewed. The falling birth rate, then, was partially a response to economic threats to cultural ideas about households and the provisioning of offspring. In a

context of very low fertility, the difference between the stem family household and the zadruga is just a difference of number--if a couple has only one son, the stem family arrangement incorporates all the male offspring and perpetuates the household just as the zadruga did for many sons. Cultural ideas about households, then, stimulated fertility restriction. In turn, the resulting predominance of stem family households altered cultural ideas as described in the preceding paragraph.

In the household context, migration too can be seen to achieve retroactively results analogous to fertility restriction. The economic conditions of the 1950s and early 1960s, as previously described, made any type of extended family household, including stem families, difficult to maintain, and establishing additional separate households was no less difficult. Meanwhile, urban industrialization made migration attractive. In very few cases, however, did entire families or households leave the village; rather, members of the younger generation left while older people remained. Villagers attributed this pattern to the adaptability and energy of youth, but the success of young people in the city depended upon family connections back home. In this way the ability of young people to leave the village was predicated upon their parents staying behind. The overall result for the village was the further simplification of households, leading to numerous units consisting of only

an older couple, but a continuing, perhaps expanding, domestic cooperation between these households and their urban satellites. This ironic development illustrates well the multi-dimensional complexity of "householding" described by anthropologists (see Sanjek 1982), and underscores why we should approach the household as a focus of analysis rather than a unit.

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s the context of domestic arrangements has been altered yet again by the stabilization of the agricultural system, the restriction of migration, and the availability of non-agricultural work in the village. As possibilities for non-agricultural employment increased, there was less need to migrate and migration restrictions made it more difficult. The importance of coordinating agricultural and non-agricultural resources, however, continued due to the economy of shortage and the increasing role of informal activities. In the context of continued village residence and continued low fertility, this led, almost by default, to the predominance of three-generation stem families sharing a single household economy. As we will see shortly, this arrangement was also extremely strategic.

While there was a clear change in the predominant household form in the village under different political and economic conditions, not all village households could easily adjust from one form to another--different trajectories were overlapping and coexistent. In

particular, households which were reduced by migration in the 1960s had difficulty reconstituting themselves as three-generation stem families in the 1970s. Thus, the village social structure was defined by the ongoing functioning of households working with their own pasts to actualize current and future possibilities. The difference between the two typical household forms of the village--a lone couple and the three-generation stem family (see Table VII.1)--comes down to the articulation of the domestic cycle with the political and economic cycles previously described. Households with young adult offspring during the late 1950s and early 1960s suffered depletion as their young people, taking advantage of the parents' village residence, left for industrial work in towns. In contrast, households with adolescents and young teenagers in the 1960s were in many cases encumbered by elderly parents less able to continue the rural economy. For these people, the urban move was more of a gamble. Many in fact stayed behind and by the time their own children were old enough to leave home in the 1970s the situation was very different. Taking the new jobs in the village, they account for the large proportion of three-generation stem families.

The three-generation arrangement existed side by side with the continuing unfolding of the household relations of those who migrated. Whereas the typical pattern was for the older generation to continue in agricultural work

Table VII.1: Sample of Zamfirovo households by type, 1988

<u>Type of Household</u>	<u>Incidence</u>
Retired couple or widow/widower	18
Nuclear family or young couple	4
Three generations	22
Four generations	4
Lateral extension	1
Four generations with lateral extension	1
Note: Based on a sample of 50 village households	

in the village while the younger generation pursued urban careers, when the elder villager became infirm the younger generation often became more actively engaged in agricultural production. One informant in Sofia said that her parents, who were doctors in the city, farmed the five decares of her father's mother in a distant village. The grandmother could not do much besides water the plots around the house. As the children depended upon the village production, they had little choice but to take up the work themselves. Their ability to manage such a distant agricultural enterprise was facilitated by informal relations. Since they were doctors they were

able to engage village neighbors to assist them in exchange for taking care of their health needs.

In many cases the migrants of the 1950s and 1960s actually returned to the village after their official retirement to participate more fully in the agricultural sector. For this reason one villager assured me that villages were not in danger of disappearing, as urban intellectuals and politicians predicted on the basis of demographic studies showing disproportionate numbers of elderly in rural populations. In his view the social reproduction of the village was assured not by young adults but by the return of retirees from the towns, many with the energy to work productively on their personal agricultural plot for some years.

By the time urban migrants became saddled with the village agricultural enterprise of their parents, they often had adult offspring of their own who also depended upon the agricultural production of the village plots. Here the generational conflicts became acute as parents expected agricultural help from a generation raised completely in the city with little or no agricultural experience and no rural identification. Although kinship bonds implied a sense of responsibility, it was not guaranteed and certainly did not extend to in-laws. This situation is epitomized by the case of an informant in the town of Mihailovgrad who farmed her mother's plots in a

nearby village. Her son did not help her much and she did not hide her irritation:

He is highly educated, an engineer with a big salary, but he does not want to do anything outside his job except go to the bar and to the movies. He always finds excuses not to help in my mother's garden in the village. If he does come to village to help he hardly has time to do anything before he has to rush off to pick up his wife or do something with her. She also refuses to help. She says she would rather buy everything she needs than work in the village garden. This would be fine except everything is not always available in the shops and one has to have the garden produce.

The dispersal of household members involved in overlapping economic projects following from the migration of the 1960s may not be as innovative as it seems. In zadruga-type arrangements and even in households during the inter-war period, it was common for the older male or even the older couple to reside not in the village house but at the large animal pen built near the family's main pasture land. The animals and their keepers stayed there all year. The food for the animals was gathered and kept there and processing of animal products was done there as well. A separate living quarter housed the keepers, which by one informant's description was "very comfortable--it had a stove and was warm in the winter and cool in the summer." Given the distance from the village and that travel was mainly on foot, the amount of time required for individuals to go back and forth was probably more than for contemporary villagers to travel by car or bus to visit family members in nearby towns.

Still there is a difference between dispersed rural living arrangements and the rural-urban separation, and this difference is at the heart of the proliferation of the informal sector. The dispersal of household members involved in overlapping projects with their different economic profiles facilitates the transfer of rural and urban goods and services through informal means. It is the possibility of selling or exchanging village products for the goods and services of cities and other villages that makes the expansion of personal plot access and the theft of resources to increase personal production major concerns. If the products of personal plots stayed in the village, everyone would have them and there would be little need to produce more than the household could consume.

At the same time, household composition and family relations determine the extent and nature of informal activities in several ways. As Lees (1986) points out in regard to informal adjustments to the bureaucratic control of irrigation in Israel, Sudan and Kenya, such modifications vary primarily in relation to the availability of labor, which is determined significantly by the structure of households. What a Zamfirovo resident was able to do in the informal arena was shaped importantly by the amount of labor in the household, the contribution of family members outside the household, the nature of these individuals' official jobs and their

potential to divert time and resources from formal to informal activities. Connections with individuals both outside the household and beyond the family were important as well, and while they were not part of either household structure or domestic functions, it was in the context of the households' activities and objectives that these connections were tapped and maintained. Thus it was the household context that both determined need for informal involvements and structured the possibilities that existed. This nexus of household considerations underlies Sampson's (1983:72) conclusion that "the origins of the first versus second economy paradox must be sought in the nature of the peasant household."

To return to the examples of informality described in the previous chapter, we can see clearly how the household as a nexus of resources and need shaped both house building and ritual participation. Whether or not one invested in building a new house was determined by the presence of a son who had brought his wife to live in the house or whose parents anticipated he would do so in the future. This anticipation might be based on the son's stated intentions or his educational specialization in an area with village employment possibilities. As a villager observed to me, wherever there was a new house being built you could be certain there was a son in the family. Similarly, a neighbor and good friend with whom I often visited periodically apologized for their old house,

claiming that since they had only daughters there was no reason to go through the ordeal of house construction. Moreover, parents felt their construction of a new house would itself influence the son to stay at home. When I inquired about who was building an unusually large three-story house under construction in the village, I was told, "a man with two sons. They will each have their own floor when they get married." Knowing about the desire of many young people to leave the village, I asked how the man could be sure his sons would stay. The answer: "that is why he is building it now, to make sure."

Having an adult son in the family also meant an additional construction worker who might also have access to additional informal resources and connections useful in the project. The degree of these possibilities may not have determined the decision to build or remodel a house but they certainly influenced the speed with which it was accomplished. Who the household members could mobilize to help them, the skills of these people, the access of the household to building materials through informal networks, the availability of labor in the household and the financial security necessary to devote these resources to house building rather than income generating labor, all determined the pace of construction. They, in turn, were determined by the number of household members, their jobs and their connections. Since these were different for

different households, there were numerous houses in various stages of completion in the village.

Ritual occasions were also structured by household concerns. The presence of daughters in the family meant weddings with elaborate feasting and extensive dowry presentations. Such requirements could affect household activities for several years, as production was increased to accumulate the necessary resources and money. The daily commitment of one village man to working in the informal sector both before and after his official job was attributed by others to the fact that he had two daughters approaching marriage. Significantly, the marriage ceremony itself was scheduled according to the accumulation of resources. Bulgarians from this region have a tradition of "trial" marriage, where the bride goes to live with her husband before the wedding. Pending mutual satisfaction, the wedding is held at a later date. While villagers acknowledged that in the past the practice may have provided a test for both virginity and fertility, no one could recall any case where the marriage was not held. More important for the contemporary villager was the time the custom afforded parents to acquire resources for wedding rituals. The most common response to queries about when a newly cohabiting couple would marry was "when her parents get enough money for the banquet." However, the ritual inflation rampant in Bulgaria was also altering this calculus, and villagers were starting to stage small-

scale celebrations on the night the bride came to the groom's home.

Given the coordination between household factors and informal activities, it is not surprising that the rural/urban antagonisms described in Chapter Four were particularly acute between prior household members who continued to cooperate economically, notably between parents and adult children. Not unlike capitalist exchanges, the informal economic exchanges binding together rural and urban households were open to conflict over issues of equity. At the same time, the involvement in overlapping economic projects perpetuated expectations that were often not fulfilled. For example, while there has been a clear switch in the flow of wealth to children from parents as Caldwell (1982) suggests, parents still expect emotional support and companionship from their children. In fact, this expectation may have increased with the increased investment of parents in fewer children. Also as the parents, generally living longer than in the past, became disabled, the flow of wealth was expected to reverse somewhat. Such expectations, however, generated conflicts, heightened by the fact that with demographic restriction fewer offspring existed to fulfill them.

These factors in a household context again bring us back to the agricultural reforms of the village. The success of akord projects followed from the need to

provide increasingly for fewer offspring who were often not around to contribute in return. As one woman described her situation,

I have to raise strawberries on akord and this year I have contracted for an additional half decare of seedlings as well. We cannot live on our salaries alone. I have two daughters in high school in Mihailovgrad and that takes a lot of money--room, board, clothes--and everything in town is expensive. So I have to take on akord contracts. The girls help on Sundays when they are home but I am saving all my vacation from work for the days I have to gather strawberries.

Strategies

As the above example reveals, when we focus on how particular households negotiate economic possibilities and requirements, the descriptions sound a lot like those produced by analyses of "household strategies." Recently, Rouse (1989) and others have challenged such perspectives, questioning whether households can have "strategies." This critique, however, reveals deficiencies in the application of the concept rather than the concept itself. With some qualifications I think we can avoid these pitfalls and still reap significant insight from the concept.

The first such problem raised is that the concept of strategy implies a "formalist" logic and limitless possibilities. Neither is necessarily the case. Strategies imply simply that people are attempting to achieve some objective within particular sets of

constraints and possibilities. Both objectives and possibilities are going to be shaped significantly by cultural and political-economic considerations, and both can change and be affected by actions people take in pursuing them. These considerations are well expressed in Bourdieu's (1977) idea of strategy, which encompasses both constraint and action. It presents people as agents operating in response to the structures around them, but at the same time posits a disposition to act in ways made habitual through living with these structures.

The second major criticism of the idea of strategy, especially when attributed to households, is that it collapses divergent actions into a common project. That is, household and family members often pursue very different, perhaps conflicting objectives. In Zamfirovo a clear example was the opposition between a father's preoccupation with acquiring resources for building a new house so his son would stay in the household after marriage, and the son's consuming objective to find a job that would take him to Sofia. A more common conflict was that over the allocation of household resources between the generations in three-generation households. Nevertheless, in all these cases connections within the household made it essential for members to work out their differences or coordinate their different objectives in some way. A given individual's objectives and ways of pursuing them were shaped by the rest of the household.

What others were doing and providing clearly affected what one could do even in the pursuit of very individual objectives. This makes the idea of household strategies a legitimate way to characterize outcomes, provided we do not neglect the conflict and negotiation involved in the process.

Finally, it may be that the concept of household strategy is a socio-cultural variable rather than a theoretical construct. That is, the idea of households as coordinated economic decision making units is more valid for some times, places and social groups than for others. For example, Hart (1986) found that the degree of coordination and interdependence between members of households in rural Java varied with the economic position of the household. Landless households appeared to decide on the activities of individual members on the basis of the opportunities available to the household as a whole, whereas households with some degree of control over productive resources showed less coordination. If the applicability of the concept of household strategy is a variable, there are reasons why Zamfirovo, indeed much of eastern Europe, might be more accurately characterized by this perspective than other places. Kideckel (1992) observes that collectivization strengthened households as units resisting the state's demands but at the same time divided households from one another, in an ongoing struggle to secure adequate labor and material resources

for their own survival. This characterization strongly suggests that the idea of household strategies is more applicable to the east European context in 1987-88 than perhaps it was for the Mexican community of Aguililla, which provides the basis of Rouse's (1989) critique of the idea of strategies.

Evidence that the household operates as a distinct unit in Zamfirovo is suggested by the pivotal role of the house itself as a representation of the household. Villagers wanted to have houses that reflected the composition of their respective households. If the family included a young couple the house had to be modern and have separate floors or spaces for different generations. This concern went beyond requirements of space or convenience. Moreover, the behavior of household members toward non-members was quite different depending on whether the non-members were inside the house, rather than, say, in the street. Certainly, hospitality was a cultural value, but the difference was too great to be based on hospitality alone, and there were other situations where hospitality was required outside of the house and the same degree of inclusion did not emerge. Inside the house it was as if one literally became a member of the household. This association of house boundaries with the household may reflect the distinctiveness of separate households within the village community and economy.

With these qualifications in mind, we can look at the coordination of the various issues covered in this dissertation in terms of household strategies. It has already been noted that the majority of village households in the late 1980s were three-generation stem families, and the significance of this form would be increased further if the developmental cycle were taken into consideration as Berkner (1972) cautions us to do. This arrangement was clearly strategic in the context of the village economy. Survival for a village family required extensive work in personal agricultural production, especially in the vegetable garden and tending animals. Even a few sheep, a goat, and a pig or two required daily attention and occasionally a whole day as the neighborhood shepherd. Cultural requirements for homemade wine, so central to village life and hospitality, necessitated investment in viticulture. At the same time people had to be employed full-time in the state sector until retirement in order to qualify for state pensions and to earn cash needed for the expanding consumer market. This situation resulted in what Halperin (1990) has characterized for Kentucky as a "multiple livelihood strategy." Managing all the requirements was difficult, if not impossible, for a nuclear family, but a three-generation household was much better equipped to handle it. At some point the older generation could be expected to retire and, while

receiving a pension, take care of young children and do most of the work in the personal economy.

Villagers described their household arrangements in these terms, as accommodations and manipulations of economic requirements and possibilities. Furthermore, the members of the household did not have to share similar goals or objectives to jointly recognize the attraction of the arrangement. One social event brought this out clearly. While I was having dinner with a three-generation family consisting of a couple nearing retirement age, their son, his wife and the young couple's two children, there was an argument about the work schedule. The son did not want to bother with some activity the mother was insisting needed to be done. Despite their disagreement, before the end of the evening the son had told me explicitly that he could not survive without his parents in the household. The situation was also beneficial to his parents, but not as essential at this point, since they had their pensions and were still able to work extensively in their personal plot. They saw the arrangement in terms of security for the years when they would not be able to farm enough to provide for themselves. Pension money was usually inadequate and in any case it would not provide the necessities that were produced in the personal economy.

We can see in this arrangement why more households did not divide in order to get access to more personal

plot land as one might suspect, given the importance of personal production. The reason lies in labor resources. Households needed to stay together to have enough labor flexibility to exploit the personal plot to its fullest. While such larger household might have been able to exploit more than their personal allotment of land, neither of the two smaller households that would have resulted from division could have managed the minimum on their own. Better off together, they could get access to additional personal land through the numerous informal machinations outlined in Chapter Six. Yet another alternative was to use extra labor on lucrative akord contracts such as strawberries. This possibility accounts for both the national interest in akord reforms and their local success. Still, the akord "solution" was limited because villagers could expand their production of grapes or vegetables through informal ways. Consequently, it was only those households with little informal access to extra personal land that went to the trouble of building separate residences in order to qualify for more land from the village.

The productivity of the three-generation strategy in the context of the various economic reforms described in Chapters Two and Three lies behind the ritual inflation and extensive house construction evident in recent years. The three-generation strategy provided more discretionary money and resources, especially at the stages of the life

cycle that were ritually most inflated--christenings and weddings. Demographically, a household was likely to be sponsoring such events when it still had a productive older couple in residence. In contrast, death rituals were not inflated to any appreciable degree except when the dead were young people. In fact death rituals for older villagers were less ritually elaborated than in the past. Also, the correlation between modern houses and families with sons existed not only because the parents wanted their sons to live with them, but also because the three-generation household was able to produce the resources and labor necessary for the project.

The strategic nature of the three-generation household is reflected in the homogenized household economy that accompanied it. By the time I had talked to representatives of 20 or so households, I was able to predict the basic outline of economic activities characteristic of any three-generation household. All would have the maximum amount of personal plot divided according to the description in Chapter Three. They would usually have a small plot of strawberries on akord contract. They would have a large collection of animals, including several sheep, possibly a goat, two pigs, chickens or ducks, and a donkey used for cartage. The older generation would retire at minimum retirement age and take care of most of the agricultural requirements. They might also work part-time periodically for extra

money or to acquire access to products gathered by the farm brigades. The younger couple would be employed in village enterprises, certainly not field labor, and would help in agricultural work on the personal plot during periods of high labor demand. Typically, it was the daughter-in-law who did the cooking and other domestic activities. Children worked during harvest and other periods, but for the most part they were occupied with school, and the older children most able to help were actually living away from home except for weekends. Household members typically discussed what had to be done each night at dinner and decided upon the work assignments of each member for the following day. Having been present for numerous such discussions, carried on informally and almost imperceptibly between other conversational currents, it was clear to me that these individuals were strategizing and while each individual might have had different interests, these were coordinated with the others.

So predictable was the general economic strategy of the three-generation household that any major deviation indicated informal factors at work. More than the average number of animals in a household was a dead giveaway. While most households killed one pig each year and sold one live to the state, some households raised several pigs for sale. Of these, one was the cook at the cooperative canteen, who was able to bring home a bucket of slop every

day to feed them. Another was a close relative of the farm official responsible for buying village animals. It was clear that his control of the books gave his relative some advantage in this regard, and his relative, by raising several pigs, helped insure his plan fulfillment. As we noted above, the man who raised several sheep for the state had daily access to feed supplies at the cooperative farm. Herein lies the solution to the debate described in Chapter Three over the profitability of raising animals for sale to the state. Profitability depended heavily on the household resources of those involved, especially the availability of labor and access to informal connections. Thus, some people insisted that it was not profitable, because for them it was not, while for others, with other resources, raising animals for sale could be profitable--it depended on the profile of household resources.

The manipulation of informal resources was itself indicative of economic strategizing and usually occurred in the household context. It was not just a matter of using what was available, but an attempt to establish needed informal connections. This was mirrored in a lack of attention to other informal possibilities deemed unimportant. Informal relations were very calculated. I heard too many people talking about these relations in terms of what the other party had done for them, or what they might expect in the future, to see it as a strictly

social economy. This was brought home to me in the comment by one of my informants about another. The woman being discussed was the wife of a former village leader and was often asking others for favors of labor or goods. As the other women observed, "she got used to doing that when her husband was a village leader and people wanted to have good relations with him. Now she keeps doing it, and people refuse, or make excuses, and she gets mad."

There were certainly cultural obligations towards kin, friends, and perhaps neighbors that figured into household strategies and were less subject to economic calculation. Kinship relations were the most significant. One woman explained an obligation to me this way: "It is for kin so we have no choice. We have to do it. The other day the same request was made and we could refuse because it was not kin. But this is kin so we must." At the same time, there were clearly limits to kin demands. When a retired informant living alone with her husband called upon a sister to help out in their vineyard, the response was, "Why don't the children come from Sofia and do it for you?" Apparently, altruism was limited to a small circle of kin.

The above example brings up the obvious fact that despite the strategic value of the three-generation arrangement, not all households in Zamfirovo conformed to the model. A glance at Table VII.1, based on a sample of fifty village households in 1988, reveals that the single

generation household was also prevalent. As previously outlined, this was the combined consequence of the population processes recounted in Chapter Four. The fertility decline evident since the 1920s left many households in a vulnerable position when the migration of the 1960s set in--households with few children were more likely to be left with none. Additionally, the demographic restriction meant that some couples had only daughters. With traditions of patrilocal residence, many of these couples too were destined to be single-couple households at some point. In the latter instance, however, strategies similar to those of the three-generation household could be realized with the continued cooperation of the daughter and her husband. While most young couples in the late 1980s lived with the husband's family, it was common for them to continue to help out and cooperate as well with the parents of the bride, though the willingness on the part of the son-in-law to do so was often directly proportional to the contribution of his in-laws to his own financial well being. Given these types of considerations and the ubiquitous role of informal connections and resources, there were in the village a diversity of strategies even between households with similar structures.

One particular household poignantly illustrates the nature of household strategizing. It was a three-generation household distinguished by the lack of any

adult women. The older mother had died two years before I arrived in the village, leaving behind her husband, son, daughter-in-law and two granddaughters. While I was in the field the young wife died of cancer, leaving a household consisting of an elderly man, his son, and the latter's two daughters, ages five and 13. The old man was retired and the son employed in the village commerce cooperative. It was a difficult situation and the strain was clear in the retrenchment of household economic activities necessitated by the decrease in household labor.

Their yard was two decares, one of which was given over to various crops including grapevines, tomatoes, potatoes and peppers. There were several fruit trees in the yard as well. They also had unofficial use of a garden plot near a stream which they irrigated and used for vegetable crops. For personal plot use they had one decare of vineyard, one decare of alfalfa, one decare of corn and two decares of wheat. The corn and wheat plots were alternated yearly. Their personal vineyard was a long distance from the village and since they did not have a car it took over an hour to reach by foot. This distance and their lack of time made it impossible to keep the vineyard properly hoed.

The old man took care of the vineyard himself, except for hoeing and harvesting--the son helped with the former and another son came from a nearby town with his car to

help with the harvest. This son's otherwise limited assistance to the household was a bone of contention for his brother living in the village, and while the latter complained to me repeatedly about it, he never confronted his brother, claiming, "it is not worth ruining good relations with one's brother."

Until 1988 they had a cow and from it they got a calf every year which they sold to the state. In 1988 they sold the cow as well. According to the son there was no pressing need for milk, since there were no longer any babies in the house. The final decision to sell, however, was made only after the old man fell and was unable to look after the cow. In 1988 they had four sheep. Two years earlier they had had six, but they cut the flock back and said they were going to reduce it still further. This decision relates to recent administrative changes in the cooperative farm relating to sheepfolds. Through a family connection with the proprietor of one of these units, the household kept their flock with the cooperative flock and the cooperative shepherd slipped the owners some of the milk on the side. Two events threatened this arrangement. First, increasing death rates of sheep at the cooperative folds led to increased supervision and stricter record keeping. More important was the introduction of contractual arrangements for cooperative shepherds as described in Chapter Three. Once shepherds had to deduct the costs of the feed and other inputs, they

they no longer wanted to keep the private sheep of relatives. Without this help, the household had to reduce its sheep holdings. The household usually killed three lambs a year for various holiday celebrations. The others were sold to the state. They also sold their wool to the state, though when the mother was living, she worked it all herself for household use. They raised one pig a year for their own consumption. Until a few years ago they had raised two and sold one to the state. They cut back to one because the economy of the household had reduced, leaving less refuse to feed the pig.

When the older woman was living they contracted one decare of strawberries on akord, but when she died they dropped to only half a decare. The son continued this for three years and then stopped completely because he did not have the time. As he characterized it,

last year I had to run up there after work at 5:00 pm and I did not even get to finish picking before the truck drivers took off to deliver what had been picked. Then this year we ran out of wine in March. The vines did not bear well because we did not have time to hoe them. Now we have to spend the money we got from strawberries to buy more wine. What is the point to doing that? I will use the time I spent on strawberries to take better care of the vineyard.

They were also cutting back on their garden production. The son and father had argued repeatedly since the mother's death about the extra garden plot. The son claimed it was too much trouble to haul water from the stream in buckets to water the plot when the garden in

their yard produced enough for their needs and was equipped with an electric pump and water hose. In 1988 the father relented and told a relative who had a vineyard near the garden plot to use it.

Such decisions about the household economy were made by the person who did the work. The son did most of the strawberry work, so his decision to give it up was not contested. Work on the garden plot, however, was more evenly shared and both father and son had to agree to stop it.

This example gives a general sense of how households coordinated their resources and requirements, and importantly, how these arrangements changed. Changes were driven by many factors, from demographic and life cycle changes affecting household membership to alterations in the larger economic system within which households operated. The latter included changes associated with the economic shifts of the inter-war period, the establishment of communism, and the subsequent cycle of economic reforms. It is important to keep this in mind. Otherwise, the three-generation household model prevalent in Zamfirovo in the late 1980s could be explained, as Whitaker (1979:269) has suggested for two other Bulgarian villages in the mid-1970s, as a continuation of pre-socialist cultural traditions which were adaptive to aspects of the socialist situation. Our more detailed ethnohistory of Zamfirovo challenges this view. Stories

villagers tell of the past fifty years show a discontinuous pattern in both the political and economic situation of the village and in household strategies. Due to the disruption, extraction and insecurity of the 1950s, there was a retrenchment of the household as an economic unit. People were insecure about who they could trust for political reasons, and economic scarcity drastically reduced the network of kin and neighbors with whom they could cooperate. Disputes over collectivization ruptured many relations. This situation peaked in the early 1960s and is exemplified by the massive out-migration of that time. During these years, the typical village household strategy became much more restricted and individuated--what we might call a "bunker strategy." As Table VII.2 shows, these disruptions were reflected in a drastic increase in the percentages of couples living alone and in nuclear family households in the 1975 sample--an increase that occurred at the cost of households with five or six members.¹

¹Normally, we could not make associations between the number of household members and particular household forms, given that a household with six members, for example, could have been a couple with four children or alternatively, a three-generation household. However, the data for 1975 were broken down by age groups so it was clear that most of the larger households included three generations and all those with only two members were probably married couples living alone. Of the latter, 80 percent included at least one spouse over 55 years old, while 20 percent were couples still in their working ages (16-55).

Table VII.2: Size of Zamfirovo households by year

<u>Number in household</u>	<u>Incidence by year as a percentage of the sample</u>		
	<u>1920</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1988</u>
1	1	7	16
2	2	49	20
3	7	8	2
4	14	14	14
5	16	11	16
6	19	10	22
7	15	1	4
8	6	-	4
9	5	-	-
10	5	-	2
11	3	-	-
12	2	-	-
13	2	-	-
14	1	-	-
15	1	-	-
16	-	-	-
17	-	-	-
18	1	-	-

Note: Percentages for 1920 are based on the whole village--403 households, recorded an archival document; 1975 percentages are based on one village administrative section--88 households, from a census document in the archives; 1988 percentages are based on a sample of 50 households interviewed by the author. Numbers are rounded off to the nearest whole percentage point.

The same disruption was suggested to me by the discovery that several young adults in their thirties with whom I became friendly were raised by a relative other than their biological parents. I knew of four such cases and there were probably more, as adoption was not something villagers commonly revealed. In these cases, the family giving up the child typically had another child

and in all cases the relative adopting the child was childless. This option provided parents who were uncertain of their ability to take care of another child the possibility of seeing it raised by a relative as part of their larger family. I interviewed one mother who had given her son to a sister. She said she did it because "times were so difficult and uncertain. Nobody knew what was going to happen and we were having problems providing for one child."

By nearly unanimous agreement of all village informants the situation began to change perceptibly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is from that period until the late 1980s that the three-generation household became a more viable possibility, as reflected in the increase in six-member households in Table VII.2. The changes were evident in such things as the electrification of the village, the arrival of water and sewer, the establishment of non-agricultural enterprises, the construction of a large new kindergarten, the increasing availability of consumer goods and, most importantly, an increasing sense of stability and security, allowing villagers to spend more of their increasing incomes. Many of these changes were related to reform programs discussed in previous chapters. Combined with official migration restrictions and even a slight increase in rates of reproduction (McIntyre 1980:156), this situation underwrote the return of the three-generation household as

a desirable strategy. This in turn also influenced the state's attempt to try and tap the resources of this productive unit through reforms integrating the personal production of households and involving them in contract production.

This analysis challenges evolutionary models of household structure which see it as a one way progression from complex to nuclear structures. In Zamfirovo, people gave up and readopted three-generation models at different times. However, as previously mentioned, the actions people take in regard to households are not always reversible and many households eviscerated in the 1950s were not in a position to adopt the three-generation arrangement after the 1960s.

Nor was the revived three-generation model identical to that described by Sanders (1948) before World War II. The differences emerge when we look at strategies rather than simply at form. The three-generation household of the late 1980s was much more individuated and less reliant on communal arrangements than in the past. Whereas pre-war extended family households provided labor important in communal exchanges, it was the need to be self-reliant in the face of devastated communal relations that contributed to the attraction of the three-generation model after the 1960s. This difference provoked Jowitt (1978:69) to suggest that "new forms of 'familialism'" had emerged under communism.

This sense of novelty derives in part from the restriction in the interactions with non-household kin and community members. The decline of communal interdependence was partially a direct result of the massive out-migration which reduced the density of kin relations in the village, which had previously provided one of the important bases for community cooperation. The legacy of this history was seen in the new fashion of the late 1980s for large family reunions. While ostensibly affirming the value of kin, such reunions actually revealed a desire to re-establish connections to family and kin which had been severed by the disruptions of the 1950s and early 1960s, and not maintained despite the revival of a form of "extended family" households.

A decline in community interdependence was evident between non-kin households as well. Existing anthropological discussions of rural eastern Europe typically iterate the importance of mutual help between households, explained, like the three-generation household, as an age-old cultural tradition given new life by the difficulties of the socialist system (see Cole 1976). I do not question the existence of such communal activity in Bulgaria, but I think it was less extensive there than elsewhere in eastern Europe, and much more circumscribed and calculated in the late 1980s than in the past. This restriction reflects the changes and forces we have discussed in the preceding pages. Not only did

migration reduce the kin base of villagers remaining in the village, but it also established important connections with urban dwellers, which shifted the rural community basis of mutual help to a rural-urban axis. While the latter generated rural-urban conflicts, cooperation still continued between rural and urban family members. At the same time the economy of shortage pitted villagers against each other for satisfaction of consumer wants available in the village. Sharing within a small circle of households continued, but valued goods were too limited for any household with informal access to share with many others. The inclusion of a few meant the exclusion of many. As previously suggested, this fact underlies the validity of looking at household strategies in the east European context.

Of course there was also the cross-culturally documented role of television in destroying community interaction. This was particularly true for Zamfirovo, where nearly every household acquired a set in the early 1970s and where watching television had replaced a traditional form of socializing known as the sedyanka. The sedyanka was basically a work bee which was hosted by different households and attended by neighbors and friends who helped out in some project, like carding wool or shucking corn. It was also an important occasion for courting (see Goev 1986). In the late 1980s, there were no such large work gatherings and when small groups of

women got together to work and socialize, it was more common for each woman to bring wool and knit something for her own family than to assist the host.

As was clear in descriptions of informal activities in Chapter Six, cases of mutual help were often meticulously calculated and even exchanges were expected. Indeed mutual help beyond close relatives was so calculated that it resembled a barter economy for labor. Thus while sheep were pastured communally by neighborhood, and neighbors took turns as shepherd, it was nearly impossible to get someone to change days with you or take your place, even for money. Trying to find someone to help do any arduous labor was very difficult and if accomplished required an exact return of the same. Attempts to exchange one type of work for another often resulted in one or both parties complaining about getting the short end of the deal. One villager made the nature of mutual help explicitly clear with a semantic correction. When I referred to the established examples of mutual help in the village by the term "favours," he corrected me saying, "Favors? They are exchanges, not favors."

As is often the case, this shift is vividly reflected in ritual activity. The clearest example was the change in soldier send-offs. This ritual and banquet took place annually when the new draftees went off to the army. In the past the whole village coordinated a large event for

all the village boys going into the army in any given year. By the time of my fieldwork, every household with a new soldier had its own banquet and ritual. This change was driven in part by the official prohibition of such rituals, but participants had them publicly anyway and told me they preferred to have their own ritual with their own friends and family.

From such experiences in Zamfirovo, compared to descriptions of the past by older villagers and published historical accounts (Krustanova 1986; Mitovski and Rousenov 1986), I am forced to concur with Bisselle (1973:88) and Skovierova (1988), who conclude that community and neighborly ties in Polish and Slovakian villages, respectively, were weakened during the socialist period. While the degree of change is variable, the disintegration motif seems more apt than the stress on such mutual help found both in Bulgarian sociological scholarship and American anthropological analyses of rural eastern Europe.

The reader may recall that villagers attributed the completion of the collectivization drive to the extensive interdependence of village households, so that once a large number of villagers joined, the remaining households had difficulty securing needed assistance. While this testifies to the importance of communal arrangements before collectivization and their subsequent irrelevance, we have also suggested that the bases of cooperation, such

as communal lands, were already under attack in the inter-war period. This erosion, so characteristic of agrarian capitalism, was clearly underway for some time, and was simply furthered by collectivization. It may be that the demographic transition was in part a response to the reduced possibilities for cooperative work described in Chapter Two. At the same time, a reduction in the birth rate further reduced the labor resources available for cooperative exchanges of labor. The timing of events suggests that the two were related, as fertility restriction around the 1920s would have been reflected in the reduction of working age children in the middle to late 1930s, a time when the assault on communal resources was strong.

For anthropologists without an historical perspective, it is easy to see only the mutual help evident in contemporary villages of eastern Europe and present it as an important aspect of socialist social structure. In fact, mutual assistance was greatly reduced by both pre-socialist and socialist developments. While the restriction of possibilities for mutual community assistance was a factor motivating village households to adopt three-generation structures in order to provide for themselves, the resulting bi-modal profile of household structures further undermined mutual interaction. Households with three generations were not in need of much help from other households, and while those with only an

older couple were often labor-needy, they had little to offer in symbiotic economic exchanges.

As I have suggested elsewhere (Creed 1991a), these differences in household resources have consequences for ideological contestation, especially that provoked by reform processes. Villagers' ideological interpretation of perestroika, for example, correlated closely with household economic strategies. Households with ample labor resources were much more likely to downplay the potential conflict of perestroika with ideological precepts of socialism. In contrast, households with limited labor, such as the case just described, drew upon the ideological precepts of socialism to criticize and condemn the new program. This difference reflects the local assessment of perestroika as differentially benefiting those with more labor resources. These economic concerns interacted with ideological views already held by villagers in shaping their opinions about reforms. Household composition was clearly a crucial determinant of the former.

Equality and Differentiation

Having advocated attention to household economic strategies, it is impossible to avoid the thorny issue of the differential economic outcomes of these strategies for different village households. By now it should be clear why this is such a difficult question--there are simply

too many factors to consider. The official occupations of household members and their salaries or pensions are just the beginning. Discretionary labor resources and the whole profile of informal resources at a household's disposal are equally, if not more, determinant, and unfortunately, more analytically elusive. All these resources have to be gauged against the requirements of the household. Having more labor in a three-generation household may not necessarily mean a higher standard of living if much more labor must be expended to maintain it. Additionally, there is a problem in evaluating socioeconomic differentials in an economic system where cash was of less value than important personal connections and where there were limits imposed on material consumption by an economy of shortage.

Finally, everything was complicated by changes over time. We have seen how household possibilities were affected by generational changes. More importantly, the context in which these factors operated and which ultimately defined their utility also changed. The primary process in this regard was political and economic reform. Clearly agricultural reforms enhanced the utility of the three-generation household. At the same time other reforms eroded the value of political clout in the village and increased the utility of informal relations, restricting the privileges of the political elite. This is a local-level example of the evolution Borocz (1989)

suggests for eastern Europe as a whole. Borocz cogently points out how the political transitions from a "plan-command system" in the 1950s to the "plan-bargain economy" of the reform era transformed the class structure, creating multiple class positions and a degree of flexibility.

All these contingencies make a class analysis of the village population in 1987 less than useful. The situation calls to mind the Swiss alpine community describe by McGuire and Netting (1982), where numerous factors maintained community equality. Similarly in Bulgaria, while a class analysis of the society as a whole could be instructive, at the village level the population was more homogeneous and the variation more gradual. For example, if we use Borocz's (1989:305) concept of "control over the labor of others" as a central criterion of class, most Zamfirovo residents end up in the same boat. A class analysis would have to look instead at most villagers as a single group and examine their relations with both the urban populations and the political power holders at higher levels, which, indeed, I have been attempting throughout the dissertation.

An interesting comparison emerges here with Nagengast's (1991) excellent study of Polish farmers. She shows that class differences in the Polish countryside, in contrast to Bulgaria, were actually perpetuated in the socialist period. At another level, however, our analyses

are actually parallel, in that both see the rural class profile under socialism as closely linked to the pre-socialist situation.

This is not to deny that there were economic differences in Zamfirovo, but to suggest that their extent and consequences were constrained by the factors previously discussed. A conversation involving myself, a retired skilled craftsman who worked part-time for the cooperative farm, and a young truck driver for the farm made this point nicely. The truck driver pointed to the retiree and commented: "People like him, they work very little--only a couple hours a day. The rest of the time they stay at home, and they get bigger salaries than I do for working all day." To which the older man retorted: "True, you are on the job all day, but most of the time you are doing your own personal work and using the farm's truck to haul fertilizer, hay and everything else." The driver smiled and did not refute the characterization.

Outside of a few gypsy households, only one group was really impoverished: elderly villagers with no family or informal connections. As their health declined these individuals were forced to live solely on their pensions, and their situation could become quite severe. At the other extreme of the continuum, village political leaders had, through past political positions, been able to establish connections of continuing economic value to the village, which sustained their privileged position even

after their political power over the village population became less significant. Since these individuals controlled the village in many ways and used their power to promote their relatives, maintaining control over generations, they were commonly referred to by villagers as "the mafia." Two rival "families" at times cooperated and at other times competed in this elite position.

The mafia metaphor suggests that informality, while sometimes instrumental in muting village economic differentials, could also provide a potential resource base for differentiation. This did not happen for the bulk of the population, however, because of a confounding commitment to equality. This is the final factor limiting differentiation in the village. The commitment to equality has long historical depth, and following Schneider's (1990) analysis, we might suspect that its survival owes a great deal to both Orthodox Christianity and the area's limited exposure to capitalism. The village has, in fact, never had extensive differentiation. Until the second World War, most villagers were smallholders and older villagers could list the five or six "rich" families living in the village on the 9th of September. Although this equality was reinforced and solidified into state ideology during the socialist period, most village residents were committed to it quite apart from their larger political leanings. When I was in the field, it was the most commonly touted aspect of

village life. For many villagers it formed the crux of their identity as Bulgarians. As it was often put, "we are Bulgarians, we are all the same." Even critics of the system acknowledged its equality saying, "We are all equal. We are all poor, but we are all equally poor."

Even in the crucial area of informal activity, villagers resisted being involved in one-sided affairs reminiscent of patron-client relations. Connections had to be mutually beneficial to both parties and equally so. One informant explained his hesitation to ask a relative for assistance saying, "We are embarrassed to ask him. He has already done a lot for us and there is nothing we can do for him. So we will not ask him for anything else." The same sentiment accounts for the ambivalent attitudes toward theft described in Chapter Six. Theft was accepted until it reached the point where a person was perceived to be creating significant wealth differentials; at that point, criticism and censure were brought to bear.

The commitment to equality was also a dominant theme in villagers' criticisms of perestroika, as they surmised it was going to lead to wealth differentials which, as one informant put it, "we are not supposed to have in our system" (Creed 1991a). The same informant also phrased the sentiment in terms of household strategies, saying he could not benefit from the reforms because of his domestic situation, which was low on labor--the implication being that others should not benefit either. Wallimann and

Stojanov (1989:365) make a similar observation about the self-management reforms in industry described in Chapter Five. Given the responsibility to disperse their own wage fund, "most brigades continue[d] to adhere to the norm of equality and to close ranks against the disciplining of individuals." Reforms dependent on such differentiation were not successful.

Given this commitment to equality, we can see why the transition to capitalism has not been greeted with open arms by Bulgarian villagers. Many of the capitalist reformers of the 1990s have targeted this cultural value as a major handicap to a capitalist florescence and taken up every possible rhetorical weapon, even the concept of "civil society" (see Creed 1991b) to destroy it. Their ultimate error is in not understanding that this is not just some aspect of a "peasant mentality" or part of traditional Bulgarian national character that can be eradicated by enlightened argument. It is part of the existing economic system, the complexity of which I have tried to relate in this dissertation. Only by altering the system itself and providing villagers with other viable economic alternatives can the commitment to equality be challenged. While the post-communist system has succeeded in destroying many aspects of the socialist system, it has yet to show any indication of providing viable replacements.

In keeping with a theme of this dissertation, we can conclude by pointing out that the attack on notions of equality, like so much else being attributed to the collapse of communism, was actually underway for some time in communist Bulgaria. It was evident in the reforms we have discussed for both agriculture and industry and it became blatant with the advent of "restructuring" during my fieldwork. On October 12, 1987, the Communist Party newspaper, Rabotnichesko Delo, ran a front-page article entitled "The Worker Salary: Restructuring Excludes Levelling." The economist who wrote the article stated that the reorganization of production would have to exclude wage levelling and encourage greater financial differentials between workers. The fact that this appeared in the Party newspaper shows that the Party had already given up the ideal of equality and was jockeying to maintain power in the unstable period of the "second socialist revolution" (Zaslavskaya 1990). At the same time, the Party's abandonment of the ideal, which was so essential to communist ideology and, more importantly, so widely and deeply accepted by Bulgarians, contributed greatly to the further disintegration of the system.

POSTSCRIPT
ANOTHER NEW ERA?

The preceding pages present an analysis of the interaction between cultural, economic and political factors in the socialist development of a Bulgarian village. What is clearly evident in these descriptions is that the periods of Bulgarian political history do not delineate discrete socio-cultural epochs. At the local level the obvious opposition between pre-war capitalist and post-war communist society is not so easily rendered. For example, we have seen that communal aspects of village life were under attack in the inter-war village and that their decline was paradoxically furthered by the policies of the Communist Party throughout the early 1960s, often in ways reminiscent of western capitalist development.

Subsequent reforms beginning in the 1960s transformed the nature of life in the "communist" village, reversing these trends, but only to a limited degree. During this same period communist power at the local level actually eroded. In the 1950s and early 1960s local leaders wielded significant power as representatives of the central government, but subsequent reforms and associated expansions of the informal system enhanced local autonomy and individual independence, preparing the ground for perestroika. Through all of these changes the issue of

equality continued to be a factor, at first reinforced by socialist ideology, then recast during the period of perestroika as the new enemy. The complexities of these changes are missed by simplistic pre-communist/communist comparisons which actually tell us more about our own ethnocentric indoctrination with cold-war oppositions than about social (or socialist) reality.

We have also seen clearly that aspects of the contemporary "transition" were evident in Bulgaria certainly during the time of my fieldwork and even before. The logic behind such catch words as "privatization" and "marketization" can be found in decentralizing reforms recounted here as well as in the systemic integration of the informal sector. Furthermore, the fact that these processes were already underway has had a major impact on the current transition, shaping both the opposition's insistence on extreme change and the villagers' continuing commitment to socialist arrangements. Some of the negative consequences of "restructuring" were evident in the village in the late 1980s, notably shortages of products, increasing labor shortages and impending signs of inequality. Having had a taste of these results, villagers were hesitant to plunge headlong into the more radical market reforms advocated by the opposition after 1989.

For the opposition, however, all these reforms prior to 1989 were associated with the "socialist" past, and

therefore had to be superseded in the rejection of all things socialist. Hence, the prior progress of reforms provided both the starting point for the post-communist transition and a standard against which to evaluate capitalist initiatives. Ironically, it was radically reformed, even marketized and privatized, "socialism" that provided the measure against which to build capitalism. This accounts for the reactionary economic extremes dominating the current discourse on transition in Bulgaria. The anti-communist opposition and "born again capitalists" cannot comprehend the link between socialist reforms and capitalism, revealing the legacy of cold-war oppositions in the East as well.

In this perspective the most disturbing legacy of communism in Bulgaria may not be the economic carnage left behind, as some insist, but rather the ideological version of capitalism that it succeeded in indoctrinating in the population. In an attempt to negate the attraction of capitalism for its citizens, communist ideologues presented the most negative aspects and consequences of capitalism as its essence. The caricature clearly took root and is now the guiding model for the anti-socialist government, insuring that most supporters of capitalism are extremists. Ironically, the caricature also accounts for continuing resistance to change, as it does not look attractive to many villagers afraid of ending up in that quintessential capitalist edifice, the poor house.

Given what we have learned about the transition to communism, however, we should not expect the current post-communist metamorphosis, its extreme economic measures notwithstanding, to signal a definitive cultural transition either. The concern for equality continues to be a force. Other patterns of life and interpretations developed under socialism, like the socialist model of capitalism, will also influence this unfolding history. I characterize this legacy as the "socialist subconscious," by which I refer to the internalization of socialist modes of thinking and behaving, usually without recognition of their socialist pedigree (see Creed 1991b). The socialist subconscious is evident in nearly every dimension of the current transition. Even the current attack on communist symbols, while ostensibly vilifying socialism, also reveals the tenacity of socialist formulas used in the early post-War period. Many less obvious examples, such as the internalization of the system of socialist planning by Zamfirovo metal workers (see Chapter Five), are only evident at the local level. Furthermore, their role in the current transition will only emerge if analysts have the kind of understanding of the socialist period that I have provided here. Little insight can be gained by comparing communist and post-communist periods unless we appreciate the variegated processes of local change that characterized the former. Life for Bulgarians was nuanced and changing even under a "monolith" like communism. This

dissertation, then, provides the basis for a more particular historical interpretation of the current transition and of the perpetual transition always underway in Bulgaria, eastern Europe, indeed, the world.

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