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FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

**CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATION IN COLLECTIVE
MENTALITIES DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME.
HISTORICAL – ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

DOCTORAL THESIS

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The East European societies in the second half of the XXth century were defined by the concentration of Power and the aggressive social engineering interventions of the ruling Party. The creation of the New Man and of the communist society was the ultimate objective of the Power in their quest of transforming Reality. In order to achieve these totalitarian objectives, the communist regime aimed to reconfigure the perception of the Past, to impose a value-oriented discourse to reshape mentality (inherently retrograde) in conscience (socialist in essence). The society reacted to this invasion of power through adaptation, the search for stability, a *modus Vivendi* and resistance.

This thesis is an analysis of holidays and celebration in a period when the Communist Party is considered the agenda setter in every dimension of society. The concepts of holidays and celebration are defined in relation of the purpose of their use, namely, for the study of the ritual system in a period when the Romanian society has been controlled by the communist party. Consequently, we consider the public holidays from this period actions of ritualized political socialization which dominated the public sphere and reproduced projected images of collective memory. Holidays and monuments are considered in the same time memory vehicles and interpreted as ways in which local communities construct rationalities about their past. The concept of ritual is used in the sense of repetitive social activity, culturally standardized, with a primarily symbolic nature and acted with the purpose of influencing human behavior.

There are two important dimensions of holidays that were in the centre of our interest and thus, define the present thesis. On the one hand, the evolution of the communist regime's festive calendar molded by the reason of power exercise (legitimacy and social control), on the other hand, ideological competition that shapes the constructed semantic field of the holidays and monuments. Thus, the denotatum of holidays and monuments vibrates between two registers of interpretation: the dynamic register of the ideological metanarrative imposed by the communist regime and the metanarrative defined by Lowenthal's concept of *heritage*.

The content and structure of the thesis is shaped by two theoretical options. The first is grounded by the epistemological constraints in the research of collective mentalities regarded as inherently social constructs. The accessibility to collective memory is reduced to its manifested forms, which gives them perceptible shape and are bearers of meaning. The semiotic dimension is constructed by the elements of what generally is considered as "collective" in the collective memory: narratives, discourses, symbolic practice and

monuments, all functioning as important vectors of memory. For the interpretation of these memory traces we have chosen the essentially hermeneutic operation proposed by the Mikhail Bakhtin, consisting in the identification of the two poles of the festive mnemonic text. The first is constituted by *structure* and *shape*, the other can be revealed through a *flow of texts*. The first pole of the collective memory interpretation determined the inclusion of the whole festive calendar of the community in our research and the option for a longer period in order to reveal the process-nature of the public rites and the contextualization of these rites. The second interpretative pole of the festive mnemonic text implies accepting the premise that the denotatum of public holidays is constructed in real social context and the interpretative registers are shaped by the other holidays performed in the same social context and the specific situation of their production. Thus, collective mentalities are reduced to a set of actions having discursive form and become analyzable.

The second theoretical option is a consequence of the epistemological paradigm of considering the festive calendar a discursive field in which the referent of the holidays is configured. Thus, the option of ordering the information can not be other than the theoretic frame of a case study, in the sense of reducing the data's to a defined unity that offers the analytical possibility of high intensity and the possibility to generalize the produced conclusions. In developing aspects of the Power – history production relationship, strategies shaping the collective memory and public holidays, we have drawn on the theoretical and interpretative dimensions of facing a difficult past in postwar Germany. Thus, Historikerstreit, the analysis of Nazi holidays and commemorative ceremonies, concomitant with configuration of soviet festive calendar are interpretative landmarks.

The structure of the thesis is shaped by a hermeneutical direction of constructing discourses about the past. This interpretation is indebted to the two theoretical paradigms coming from two close fields of the social sciences: history and anthropology. The nature of the communist regime of using holidays for the purpose of maintaining Power makes the sole interpretation of the symbolism of the public holidays futile for the aim of generating meaningful information about the society. Historicizing the interpretation meant the construction of the semantic field from two interpretative directions. On the one hand, the contextualization of the discourses, the analytical quest of “thick reading” the oscillation of meaning between the cultural registers of the local community, regarded as identity metanarratives, and the discourses that dominated the public sphere. On the other hand, the interpretation of symbols and rites as actions and discourses shaped by their historic condition, being part of the diachronic and synchronic social complex.

The first chapter, *History and historical cognition* frame the debate on the problems of construction/reconstruction/representation of the past. The vectors of presentation and analysis of these debates are the questions concerning the epistemological status of history interpretations: which are the methods of analysis and interpretation of the historian and how these methods are grounded. Through the critical evaluation of the conflicting theories regarding the historical discourse, it is reasoned the impossibility of historical cognition perceived as objective, disinterested and impartial. Even though there is a constant effort of distancing from ideological bias, the discursive structure of the present generates ontological and epistemological anticipations which can not be value free, therefore are subjects of ideologies.

Historikerstreit refers to a debate that dominated the interpretative field of history through the importance and sensitivity of the topic, and the profound insights of those who has participated the debate. The involvement of the politics and different ideologies in a theoretical debate on the cognition and representation of the past, *per se* is a first case study of the thesis. The two versions, from GFR and GDR, of dealing with a problematic past demonstrates not only the close ties between history and politics, but reveals also the importance of political regime for the history production.

One of the grand theories of history, Marxism, is debated in an approach defined by a *text* of Marx and two critical *readings*, from two considerably distanced positions: Althusser and Popper. In our quest of capturing Marx's afterlife, there are presented two critical sketches on E.P. Thompson and on the postwar Romanian historiography. The debates on the method and the infallibility of a system (epochal) is not testing the influence of politics on history, generally acknowledged, but the validity of the method and frontiers of historiography's autonomy in a closed ideological frame.

In the second chapter, *Myth and mythhistory*, are presented the perspectives generating useful interpretations for the topic of ceremonies and celebration during the communist period. Thus, the interpretative paradigms of myths and history are analyzed from a strictly utilitarian point of view. The premise of departure of the analysis is that not all the interpretations are *correct*/relevant and the epistemological and methodological choices *ab ovo* define the outcome of the research. The interpretative option chosen to solve this problem is a challenge from multiple points of view, however, there are important benefices as a result.

The third chapter of the thesis, *Ceremonies and celebration between discursive construction and festive practice*, is the analysis of public festivals from Covasna county (including the different administrative names and territorial configuration the Sfântu Gheorghe city and the neighboring region had in the 1944-1989 period). The structuring of the information regarding the communist ceremonies became in the first phase the problem of constructing the typology of the ceremonies, presented in the opening of the chapter. The construction, imposing and consolidation of the official festive calendar were a dynamic process bearing multiple influences. The concept of “political ceremony” is used in the sense of official anniversary or commemorative moment having multiple aspects: commemorating (of events or heroes), celebration (rites and their importance) and informal popular holiday. For the transition period (1944-1948), defined by ideological competition and the ascension of communist party, in Covasna county there were four calendars structuring the time of inhabitants in four different dimensions. Imposing social control and monopoly on the public sphere meant also the enforcement of a festive calendar and a limited set of public rites, which were planned, organized, celebrated and whose results were analyzed by the local party elite. The presentation of the festive calendar of the 1948-1989 period is structured by the model of concentric circles, reproducing the theoretical model of relationship between the periphery and nucleus of ideology. The nucleus is represented by the ceremonies which were fundamental for the self perception of the regime. These ceremonies structure the interpretative narrative of the ideological periphery and projected with the highest sophistication the discourse of Power regarding its relation with the masses. Our perspective is grounded on the one hand, by the interest of the Power to impose its understanding on Time and Reality through setting up public rites, and on the other hand, by the relation of the ceremonies with the historicized time of the regime: through diachronic and synchronic festive events. Following these outlines, there are two significant evolutions presented: the integration of the “progressive traditions” of local communities in the frame of the strategy aiming to establish legitimacy and the process of setting up a festive interpretation of the national past, restructuring the narrative on the past by operating with omissions and glorification. The chapter includes two incursions capturing aspects of the regime’s discourse on elites and identity. The aim is to shed light, on the one hand on the relation between society and local directors of the ceremonies, and on the other hand, on the festive discursive context, the regime’s Manicheist interpretation of “Us” and “Them”.

The interpretation of the ceremonies is constructed on the unpublished sources of party documents from the Covasna county branch of the National Archives. Party documents became the most important sources of this research for two reasons. The first reason is the

lack of information from the other accessible sources, such as newspapers and participants memory. This pauperism of the information regarding the public ceremonies resides in the nature of our research. The ritualized social actions are organized in a simplified set of events. The form of manifestation, reduced to a few symbolic elements, aimed the configuration of a field of interpretation unanimously accepted. The unanimity of the festive discourse and the repetitiveness of the forms make impossible the organization of these elements in a narrative. For this very reason, the memory of the ceremonies is interpretative and analytic in essence. The oral history interviews conducted in the frame of the research reassures this hypothesis. The most relevant information regarding the ceremonies is the normative approach of the subjects toward a history of *oppression*, the denial of the possibility of real celebration and festivity. Newspapers, having in mind the strict of the regime on the production and dissemination of public information, have projected an image of the ceremonies with high ideological conformity. The analysis of ceremonies based on these information would be restricted to the analysis of a highly ritualized and festive discourse. This discourse would not be *on* ceremonies, but it would be a discourse *of* the ceremonies.

The second argument is grounded by the hermeneutical option of interpreting the party documents. The selection and structuring the information from the party Committee, Bureau, and Secretary meeting minutes, the reports and informing notes sent to the Centre, was defined by the hermeneutic circle constructed by Ricoeur and the criteria of ideological unconformity. The setting up of the festive calendar presupposed a considerable logistic effort from the county Committee of the party. The detailed planning followed by meetings of evaluation provides relevant information in this regard. The language of the meetings is getting step by step revolutionary in the 1944-1948 period, through the introduction of the linguistic inventions of the “wooden language”. The analysis of the ceremonies, especially from the periods of setting up new public ritualized events, produce important data regarding *what did not happen* according to the expectations. These data, checked with the analysis of the rumors reported and discussed in the party meetings, produce the information that shape the image of reception, signs of the reaction of the society facing the regime’s action aiming the implementation of a strategy to reconfigure the collective mentality. The first lie (inconsequence in the discourse and not in relation to a constructed reality) is from a meeting in which are condemned the violent measures taken in Odorhei county in the process of making the collective farms. The official nature of the discourse and the eternal *qui prodest* were the two moral filters that in all times instituted the necessary distance between the interpreter and the interpreted. For these reasons, the discourse of the elite greatly defines the

interpretation from this research. In the last decade of the regime, not only the evaluation of the ceremonies disappear from the party meeting minutes, but there has been established a highly formalized ideological discourse that restructured reality according to the horizon of expectations defined by the Party. The formalism of the “wooden language” meant the use of a limited set of expressions of a self-referential discourse.

The theoretical and methodological choices grounding the interpretation of the above mentioned sources raised a series of questions. Considering the Marxist historicism from the perspective of those who are denouncing it in its totality is a hardly reasonable decision, judging from the angle of the text and the method. The first reason would be the hardly identifiable border separating the Marxist historian from the rest of the historian community. Secondly, such a grand global judgment would suppose a holistic perception of ideology, which due to its malefic nature “contaminates” historiography. The central argument of this presentation supports the enunciation according to which the conceptualization of historical discourse is not only a problem of style or scholarship, but it is a conscious or unconscious interpretative option. Festive history is not a sole result of the power relations. It is an intellectual construct of a past image shaped in a various level by myths of origins and the force of what Lowenthal conceptualized as being “heritage”.

Myth is unperceivable through logos. This statement is one of few which have been widely accepted. However, the critic of interpretation is grounded by a rationalistic paradigm characteristic to researches in general, as it has been described by Karl Popper. Consequently, we have considered the interpretations, theories or methods through which myths were analyzed. The methodological problems signaled in the introduction to this chapter, has been developed on the vectors of myth – anthropology – history – festive history. One of the more important gains of this interpretative option is the constant correspondence between these theories and the analytical quest of the thesis: the interpretation of the ceremonies and celebration during the communist period.

The interpretation of the myths is rooted in the conceptual field in essence ahistoric. This makes the nature and interpretative method different from the myths examined in the third chapter. Raoul Girardet, in a manner very closely resembling the way a historian operates, identifies the mythical construction of the political imaginary which he considers structures, polymorph mental images that can produce multiple resonances and signification.¹ Thus, the Conspiracy, Savior, Golden age and Unity are structures of the

¹ Raoul Girardet, *Mituri și mitologii politice*, Institutul European, Iași, 1997, p.6.

imaginary present in different European political cultures. The interpretative method used by Girardet is in essence comparative, deeply rooted in the tradition of structuralism and historic in deconstructing these myths. The explaining through the identification of the sources of these topos, and means of their dissemination is completed by reference to the psychic characteristic (the state of threat, incertitude, and panic). These myths are political in Raoul Girardet's assessment because are used by groups and movements with the intentions to accede to power.

The historiography of myths and history has an internal structure and logic focused around two major issues: historical cognition and the nature of myths. Historical cognition is analyzed with a varied complexity, but with the same set of conclusions presented in this thesis: the inexistence of an objective reality of the past; the situated-ness in the world of the historical interpretations and the conditioned nature of the historic discourse. These conclusions, that became paradigmatic for historical research leaves open an epistemological breach through which history establishes contact with the mythological universe. Even though, the semantic field of myths is often regarded in the public discourse as being in antithesis with the objective knowing of reality, it has been reinterpreted in many ways. First of all, it has been disappearing the contrast between reality and imaginary (to which myth has been tied to). The events in the aftermath understanding of history becomes more and more dubious but in the same time better informed than most of the participants to the event. For this very reason, history seems to be "the nucleus of contemporary bias, surrounded by questionable historical facts."² History makes truth milder, but this is known only a few outside researchers and even fewer are accepting it. To be trustful, history has to be heavily grounded by "hard facts" accessible to everyone and it has to accept at least some parts of the mainstream historiography. Firstly, because this consonance with the mainstream historiography provides the aura of truth to the historical narrative, without checking the proofs of the statements we can believe it. This is why, the credibility of the historian is one of the most valuable feature, he/she has to be the guardian of the truth. Secondly, the incompatibility with the image accepted by the mainstream historiography generates doubts at prima facie. Such doubts would make impossible the very existence of any kind of past image, the feminist and afro-american historiography widens the spectrum of historiography but does not denies it.

² Ibidem, p.12.

Heritage is nothing of the above mentioned. It is not verifiable, not even plausible, just plain faith in the past.³ Heritage is often said to be a form of perverted history, but it's not by far. Uses historical traces and tells stories about the past, but these are not accessible to analysis or comparison. Heritage exaggerates and operates with omissions, invents new things and forgets. Heritage is immune to critical revolutions because is grounded on catechism and not erudition: does not matter the checking of facts, but the fidelity of faith. Heritage is differentiated from history not because it is biased, but due to the attitude to these biases. Heritage implies public endorsement and by the practice which can be qualified as being mythological, to celebrate some events and shadow others, creates a past that is *pleasant*.

Festive history means, according to the meaning attributed by Doru Radosav, a use of history to create and maintain a historical and political conscience in the public opinion, molded by the discourse of the power or the dominant ideology in one society or state. Ceremonies and celebration entails history and historical truth both on the level of historiography and in the scenario of the celebration. Historical events are commemorated or foreseen and staged in a specific scenario with the participation of the institutional (state, school etc.), organizations and political parties. Thus, holidays become impregnated by politics and used.⁴ The transformation of holidays in *loci* of ideological discourses imposed and controlled by the Power is no doubt the main characteristic of the holidays. The aim of these deeply formalized political rites is to impose an image of the socio-economic, politic and cultural realities in correspondence with the deployed mythologies. But, it can be reasonably assumed, that this applied mythology in the case of public ceremonies has two contradictory facets. On the one hand, the reference to mythical images, as it has been signaled in the above mentioned sketch on the nature and functions of the myth, this symbolic reference is situated in a diffused semantic field. The capacity of myths to create a certain sense of the discourse on the past resides exactly in this characteristic of the myths to create public endorsement. On the other hand, the powerful myths are understood in a semantic system defined by culture and symbols, implies reference to a set interdependent structures. The ideologically dominant discourse conserves its status of monopoly by a process of pauperization of symbols. In the case of Romanian communism (similar phenomenon to the soviet one) is produced a paradigmatic change in the content of the holidays. These are moving from a register of scientific myths inspired by vulgar Marxism

³ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, Ed. Free Press, New York, 1996.

⁴ Doru Radosav, *Istoria festivă. In., Teoria istoriei și curente istoriografice contemporane.*, Cluj Napoca, 2002, pp.59-62.

toward a register of symbols of the national myths. The causes of this transformation can be explained with reference to the international relations as well as to the social and economic failure of the indigene communism.

In the dynamic perspective, the festive history is a product of many successive elaboration, and the historical interpretations means a competition between history and myth, or history and heritage. The myth – history relation is treated in the thesis from the critical stance bearing the intellectual mark of Karl Popper. In the conceptualization of Peter Munz, myth and history are interdependent in the sense in which there is no historical narrative without elements of mythos, and there is no myth without a referent placed in the (most often abstract) past.⁵ The historical narrative about the past (*historia rerum gestarum*) does not cover the totality of the past (*res gestae*).

Selecting and structuring the past events in a narrative form are operations deeply rooted in what has been defined above as being heritage. The myth, by reference to a historical event evokes universal characteristics. It is true in this understanding, and not by reference to specific past event. Because of these reasons, myths are universally concrete narratives.⁶ The holistic presentation of a particular event would mean the presentation of lots and lots of worthless (meaningless) details. In contrast, the story of the universally concrete has a universal power of fascination. Munz argues the impossibility of writing history with particular statements. In order to create an edifying structure, the historical discourse needs universal statements, meaning myths. Munz introduces the logic of Popper through the conceptualization of the mythological structures as texts and thus, they become subjects of logical analysis.

Consequently, it is worthy to consider at first, the idea of interferences of myths in the historical discourse. This interference confers interpretative substance because of two perspectives opened. On the one hand, it can be considered as being relevant for the problem of reception of the imaginary phenomenon. The individual recognizes through the mythical structures transformed in interpretative paradigms the narrative and its significance. The inclusive and identity oriented feature of the myths presupposes the sense of familiarity, constructed from particular and universal statements. On the other hand, such an interpretation opens the possibility for the interpret to integrate the reception and collective imaginary in the discourse on myths.

⁵ Peter Munz (1921-2006) historian and philosopher at Wellington University, his work being highly indebted to the influence of Karl Popper and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Peter Munz, „History and Myth”, In: *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.6, Nr.22, 1956, pp.1-16.

⁶ Ibidem, p.3.

Secondly, the quest Peter Munz is performing sheds light also on the topic of relation between historiography and the cultural system defined by heritage. *Historia rerum gestarum* is an ideologically charged discourse on the past because of the interference of myths, and in the same way, history is a source for fueling these myths.

The period of imposing and consolidating the communist regime was followed by the slow transformation of the symbolic arsenal used in the frame of public ceremonies and a constant dynamic of the regime's discourse on identity. There are many analytical vectors in the scholarship to capture this dynamic out of which two became fairly popular. On the one hand, the systematic analysis of state, of the regime and communist society coined by the contribution of Katherine Verdery of the weak, untotalitarian state. On the other hand, there is the analysis of the indigene communism in the mainly political-economic context. Thus, we have the convincing image of constant transformation that covers the totality of the system. The thesis discusses the changing strategies of the communist regime in order to transform society and argues the failure of party structures to organize the society in an image which would reflect the proposed ideals. By this interpretation, the thesis contests the totalitarian interpretation of socialism, interpretation that mistakenly changes aims with the results. However, the thesis is not reduced to a single set of rationing. It does interpret the results of the implemented policies – even though, from the point of view of party officials – these results were not the one expected. Ceremonies are not exempt from this rule. Even though there are important arguments sustaining the essentially anthropologic point of view regarding the resistant nature of rites to the transformation of the social and politic context. For the analysis of the communist public ceremonies, used as tools for reaching certain objectives, this point of view seems not to be enough. There are many processes through which communist ceremonies change: (1) the indigenization of the regime, (2) the aggressive imposing of the cult of personality and (3) the ossification of the regime.

Consequently, the collective mentalities are structured by discursive competition of two dynamic vectors. On the one hand, there is an image of the social reality and horizon of expectations projected by the ritualized and official public ceremonies producing a set of polymorph symbols, ambiguous and self-referential. On the other hand, there are counter-images projected in the same discursive system, but these are not part of the official ritual calendar and have subversive forms of manifestation for the symbolic order imposed by the official discourse of the communist ceremonies. The high number of ceremonies is a sign of a mentality engaged in a symbolic conflict specific for the period of crises. The lack of an order established by a system of values emerging from the social practice generates the

dynamism of representation and the interpretation of concepts in the Manicheistic and messianic ways.

With the establishing of the official discourse on the national past, the significance of August 23rd commemoration has been shaped by the whole system of ceremonies that gravitated around the national holiday. In 1979, on August 23rd has been celebrated the “liberation from the fascist domination”, one year later, has been commemorated the 36th anniversary of the “antifascist and anti-imperialist national and social liberation revolution.”⁷ Every year has been reported an increase of the participation to this commemoration reaching 20.000. The interpretation of the other ceremonies is subordinated to these semantic changes. Therefore, in the 1982 political – ideological manifestation dedicated to the achievements of the people, already has brought to front the fight of the Romanian people for defending freedom and integrity of the national territory. It emphasized the “revolutionary significance of the antifascist and anti-imperialist national and social liberation revolution started on August 23rd, 1944 and the contribution of Romania to the antifascist war, till the final victory from May 9 1945.”⁸

The calendar of the last decade of the communist regime presents a specific configuration of historic time projected by the festive discourse of the ceremonies. On the one hand, it can be observed an anchoring of the historical memory in the remote past of the national history established by organizing the seminars, conferences and lectures with topics such as “*The millenary fight of our people for freedom and independence, for the recognition of right to live free in the historical cradle*”. The conceptualization of the national past through the geto-dacian fights was a protocronist interpretative exercise to assure the eternal glory. On the other hand, the discourse is focused on the projection of an image of the present which is by no means less fabulous. The semantic features of the two discourses are similar, these are self-referential mythic interpretations.

The state established a set of rules in relation to which the social behavior was evaluated (support, conformism, dogmatism or dissident). This set of rules of the social behavior increased the ritualized nature of the public manifestation. There are two relevant examples in this regard. The first example is the social behavior from the period 1949-1951 of the verification. On the first public meetings of verification is reported the lack of participation of the party members, the tensioned atmosphere of the meetings, where personal vengeance dominates the discussions. From the analysis of the rumors surrounding

⁷ DJAN Covasna, fond: 535, Comitetul județean de partid, dosar 10/1980, f. 257

⁸ DJAN Covasna, fond: 535, Comitetul județean de partid, dosar 12/1982, f. 183.

the verification procedure the collective fear seems to be the most important social phenomenon of the process. The second example refers to the procedure of examination of the candidates to the party membership. The evaluation of the candidates, meant to assign an elite character to the Party, became very soon a social situation dominated by formalism and ritualized repetition. The questions and the answers, as well as the arguments for the acceptance or refusal of a candidate are discursive constants used and not formulated. Thus, the discursive situation has been separated from the social context or social actions, and became referential only to the metanarrative of the Power. Reality is erased in this context, the past of a candidate becomes a problem of credibility and ideological conformity (of origin or belonging to a structure of clients). After the generalization and repetition of the phenomenon, the members get used to this situation, cooperate and express feelings of “love and gratitude to the Party.” The proceedings from these meetings became more and more similar and the panic created at the beginning of the verification disappeared. Society has produced an answer to the newly experienced situation. This social behavior and public discourse produced as an accommodation can be characterized as being ambivalent or an answer to a social situation of liminality. From our analysis can be observed a pragmatic behavior in the social situations exposed to ideological influences. This behavior is doubled by the organized power relations, relations of patronage which implied mutual responsibilities and which were present at whole levels of the party structure. This is a social phenomenon similar to what Gellner defined as being the “Lady Montdore principle” (be careful how you treat all the girls, because one can never know whom they will marry). The relevance of the principle is arguably because of the intense social mobility characteristic to the regime and the existence of informally structured power relations.

The problematic relationship between the forms of manifestation and the ideological content of the public ceremonies is intelligible considering the lack of particularly communist structure of the rite (form, content, symbols) able to generate public endorsement. The process of altering the semantics of the public rites was a technical problem for the local directors of the ceremonies. It can be argued, that the failure of the communist ritual calendar was due to this misinterpretation: they have implemented strategies of changing the collective mentalities and not a constant adaptation of the ritualized symbolic activity. The integrative strategy of the “progressive traditions” has been the only viable option for the local community studied in the thesis. This integrative project generated a symbolic competition of three semantic fields: (1) the communist metanarrative; (2) the semantic field defined by heritage and (3) the national values promoted by the Centre. The relinquish of the “local traditions” project and the enforcement of the discourse on the

national glory meant the end of a period in which it has been created a festive calendar able to mobilize voluntary participation and created legitimacy for the local party elite.