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The Bulgarian Road to Europe during the Second Half of the 20th Century. A Socio-economic Outline

(Summary)

Bulgaria's socio-economic development during the second half of the 20th century is outlined in the article, 'the thesis is put forward that this development followed the stages of the West European modernization - the second industrial revolution and mass production. The building up of an Industrial society in Bulgaria benefited from a number of external and internal political factors: socio-economic rivalry between the two blocs during the Cold War; turning the country into Moscow's most obedient satellite the price of which was receiving cheap Soviet raw materials and credits; the potential of the Party-State to mobilize the country's resources to catch up with the highly developed countries. The accelerated equalization with Europe produced results in the 70s with respect to the building up of a medium-developed, urbanized, mass industrial society. The Party-State, however, proved unable to ensure the further development of the mass society and its transition to an information one which was established in the 80s in Western Europe. The crisis that followed especially from the mid-80s was a vivid proof of the exhaustion of the economic potential of the system of central planning. In the same negative direction was the effect of the external factors: the weakening of the USSR, the contradictions in COMECON and the discontinuation of the cheap Soviet resources of vital importance for this country's economy. Thus the socioeconomic progress achieved in the hothouse conditions of the Eastern Bloc could not be kept up

after 1989 and Bulgaria", again lagged behind the Europe of the information society and the high technologies