
Iliana Marcheva**ON THE HISTORY OF THE ECONOMIC REFORM IN THE MID-60S
IN BULGARIA**

(Summary)

The author makes a critical review of the existing historiography on the creators of the economic reform in Bulgaria in the mid-1960s and its meaning. The concepts about the creators of the reform and about the reasons why the Bulgarian government abandoned it are corrected on the base of archival documents, memoirs and research works from Eastern Europe and USSR. The designers of the reform are young deputy ministers, associate professors, chosen by T. Zhivkov. Among them there were people like Emil Hristov, David Davidov, Stanish Bonev, Grisha Filipov, who were influenced by the ideas of the Soviet economists and most of all by the 1962 ideas of Evsey Liberman. Todor Zhivkov supported those economists quite actively. Thus, the Bulgarian reform became part of the general process of introducing the profit as selfsupporting into the economic behavior of the state enterprises in the Eastern Block in an attempt to intensify production. Professor Evgeny Mateev was one of the major critics of the reform, as it, according to him, introduced extrinsic for the organization of the socialist economy motivation, i.e. profit, which, he thought, would confuse and hamper planned economy – the main advantage of the socialist system. Bulgarian reformers operated in a very conservative environment. There were opponents of the reform not so much and not only among scientists and government but also in the society. Warnings against this reform in its attempt to intensify production by activating mainly pecuniary motivation show that public was much more egalitarian than the government

and did not want social stratification. In the initial experimenting with the reform, in the absence of unemployment and public ownership, it became apparent that there were no other ways to get people to work more efficiently except by strengthening the prerogatives of the party and its organs as well as the administration. This inevitably distorted the meaning of the liberalization of the market principles, on the other hand - it showed other downsides: use of monopoly; group and individual selfishness; servility; conflicts between workers and specialists. The new problems ostensibly made Zhivkov search for compromises, for a transitional period in the implementation of the system, as well as made him move towards the other trend for improving the management of formerly confiscated economy - automation. In the context of the Cold War, Western experts on the Soviet Union with their conclusions about the anti-Soviet nature of the reform also contributed significantly to the gradual abandonment of the reform not only in Bulgaria but also in other Eastern European countries.