

The Bulgarian Economy in the Twentieth Century

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John R. Lampe's book on the Bulgarian economy in the twentieth century (Lampe, 1986) is part of the Croom Helm series on the contemporary economic history of Europe. The general editor of the series, Derek Aldcroft, has written an editor's introduction to the present volume, in which, the salient characteristics of the Bulgarian economy are succinctly stated. Priced at £25.00 and running into 245 pages, Lampe's book does provide a very good account of the Bulgarian economy. Given the lack of good accounts of the Bulgarian economy, with the notable exception of Feiwel (1977), Lampe's volume fills an important gap. Lampe needs no introduction as an economic historian writing on Balkan economic history. In fact, one of the avowed intentions of the present volume is to update, expand and revise the extensive treatment given to Balkan economic history in Lampe and Jackson (1982). This earlier book covered the period from 1550 to 1950. Therein lies the present book's weakness. Read as an independent account of the Bulgarian economy, the book is eminently readable. But read in conjunction with Lampe and Jackson (1982), one feels that John Lampe should have concentrated on Bulgaria's experience in the post-1950 period. For the period preceding 1950, the treatment in Lampe and Jackson (1982) is far superior to the treatment in Lampe (1986) and there has been very little in the nature of updating, expansion or revision in the latter as compared to the former: And Lampe's treatment of Bulgaria's experience in the post-1950 period has simply not been extensive enough. In all fairness to Lampe, one has to agree that the continuity between the periods before and after the Communist accession to power has to be emphasized. But the general points made about the weakness of Lampe (1986) still stand. Lest this sound too harsh, one should iterate yet again that read as an independent account of the Bulgarian economy, the book is eminently readable.

An introduction by the author gives a broad overview of the book. The first chapter is on the initial growth experience in the period 1878 to 1918. It discusses the Ottoman legacy and the setting up of an independent Bulgarian state in 1878. In agriculture, it outlines the