There are scholars whose ideas leave a long-term imprint on the development of Bulgarian economic thought. One of them is Professor Atanas Leonidov. The 80th anniversary of the renowned economist is an occasion to review his rich work and his contribution to the development of economic science.

A. Leonidov was born on 16.03.1934 in the village of Golyamo Belovo. He studied his higher-education course in HIE “Karl Marx” (today UNWE). In 1959 he graduated his major in “Planning people’s industry”. Between 1962 and 1965 he studied a PhD course in HIE “Karl Marx” where he successfully completed his dissertation paper “Foreign financial obligations of Bulgaria and their reflection on its economy between the two world wars (1918-1939 г.).” In 1965 he was hired as a researcher in the Institute of planning as part of the State committee of planning. In 1968 he started work in the Institute of economics of BAS, where he worked until his retirement in 2004. He defended his PhD thesis for acquiring the scientific degree “Doctor of economic sciences” in 1991. Its topic was “Economic views of contemporary conservatism”. From 1992 he worked as a senior researcher first degree in the Institute of economics.

The professional experience of prof. Leonidov is closely associated with the Institute of economics (today Institute for economic research) of the Bulgarian academy of science. There he was a long-term researcher in the section “International economics” and member of the Scientific council of the Institute. The number of his publications goes beyond 100, including ten treatises and participation in treatises, papers, about 50 scientific articles in respectable national and foreign editions and others. Professor Leonidov has knowledge of written and spoken French, English and Russian, as well as written German. He has publications in Russian, Czech, German and English. He took part in tens of conferences in Bulgaria and abroad, in some of them he was a plenary speaker.

Prof. Leonidov’s development in science is characterized by consistency and purposefulness. His scientific interests are focused on problems in world economy, economic theory and history of economic thought. There for a number of years he has been indisputably recognized and respected.

A. Leonidov is an excellent expert in world economy and studies of eco-nomic processes. He has kept his interest in those till this moment. The orientation of the research work of the famous economist in this field concerns two scientific specializations: between September 1969 and July 1970 he specialized in the Economic commission of OUN in Geneva (Switzerland), and in 1981-1983 he specialized in the Institute of world economy and international relations (IWEIR) in Moscow. Until 1990

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1 This is how the section is called today. In the course of time its name has been changed.
and after, he made analyses of the economies of leading countries in the world – USA, France, FRG. The focus of his scientific interest was on the models of development of the Western countries mentioned above, the role of the market and regulation, the current condition and problems of market economies.


As early as the initial stage of his professional development and progress prof. Leonidov formed a particular attitude and preference to work with the History of economic thought (HET), historical interpretation of theoretical issues, main schools and representatives of theoretical economic thought. One of his earliest publications in this thematic field is the article “Foreign competition and economic development: the theory of P. Kuerbis about open economy” (magazine “A bourgeois theory about international economic integration” (chapter from a book, 1981) and the article “Unorthodox Keynesianism” (magazine MEMO, issue 4 1983). Undoubtedly, the treatise “Neo-conservatism and bourgeois political economy” is the highest point of his efforts in this field and in the period until 1990. The book deals with revealing the complex and contradictory tendencies of the evolution of Western economic thoughts in conditions of the crisis of reformism and Keynesianism and a turn to neo-conservatism. The author analyses the essence and content of the then new variations of economic neo-conservatism (monetarism, the new classic school, the theory of economy of supply, the new views of the representatives of the Austrian school). The manifestations of the reviving neo-conservatism are viewed through a comparative analysis of the ideas of Keynesian followers and in a close link with the practice of state regulations and “Raegan economy” in USA in particular. Prof. Leonidov’s treatise “Neo-conservatism and bourgeois political economy” is an indisputable contribution to the development of Bulgarian economic thought. The book is written with exceptional erudition and depth. It makes an impression with the great number of authentic foreign sources on which the research is based in the publication mentioned above. In a time when social sciences in Bulgaria addressed various types of restrictions, including access to Western literature, prof. Leonidov’s book gave an example of how one can and has to carry out serious and diligent scientific research. The treatise affirms A. Leonidov as a recognized authority in the field of economic theory and HET.

2 It should be noted that here there is no complete list of all publications of prof. A. Leonidov concerning the scientific issue mentioned. Only certain publications are listed as examples. A similar approach will be applied in analyzing A. Leonidov’s work further.


4 Under this name President’s Raegan economic policy grew famous.
After 1990 prof. Leonidov enlarged his scientific work in the field of History of economic thought. There followed publications about A. Marshal, J. Shumpeter and J. M. Keynes. He was one of the scientific editors of the Bulgarian translation of the famous M. Blaug’s book “Great economists after Keynes” (1998), which is a precious gift for the Bulgarian readers. He kept on making his theoretical analyses of particular issues in the field of HET as revealed in the following publications: “Western theoretical views about balance of payment and currency exchange rates” (1991), “German neoliberalism” (1995), “New tendencies in General economic theory” (2006) and others. A. Leonidov’s contribution to the development of HET in Bulgaria is sizable and acknowledged by everyone, while his publications in this sphere are an example of deep and original viewpoint on the issues, in which the analysis of particular famous economists or scientific schools is combined with clearly expressed author’s assessment and conclusions.

The processes of transformation in Bulgarian economy after 1990 left their imprint on prof. Leonidov’s scientific work. Together with his long-lasting interest in the two problematic fields mentioned above – world economy and HET, the famous economist shifted his attention to two more significant scientific problems: the issues in the period of transition from planning to market and the topic about economic growth.

A characteristic feature of prof. Leonidov’s research work on the issues of transition from planned to market economy is their theoretical approach. The best examples in this respect are the publications “The Bulgarian Model of Transition to a Market Economy: Stabilization and Structural Aspects” (1994), „Towards economic theory of transformation (1999) and “The process of transformation: basic aspects and elements” (1999). In searching for orientation for the ongoing transformation processes in Bulgarian society prof. Leonidov focused his attention on the German model of social market economy. A number of his publications at that time help Bulgarian scientific thought and the proponents of economic policy to get familiar much better with the theory and practice of the German model of economy. Alongside, in the focus of prof. Leonidov’s scientific interest there also come the issues of structural adaptation of Bulgarian economy, both in relation to the ongoing transition from planned to market economy, and later in relation to associating Bulgaria to the European union (the key work here is the collective monograph “Associating Bulgaria to EU: structural adaptation of national economy” (1995), in which A. Leonidov is one of the authors and scientific editor.

A very significant trend of prof. Leonidov’s professional interest, which refers to his latest economic research work, is the group of issues of economic growth. In fact, his interest in this topic is not new – one of his first publications in 1976 deals with the problem - “The policy of economic growth in developed capitalist countries – theory

5 Alfred Marshal i savremennostta (1990); Y. Shumpeter i vazrazhdaneto na negovite idei (1993); Za nov prochit na Keynes (1991); Keysn i keysnianstvoto (2010).
and practice”. After 1990 this interest went deeper and today it is a central focus of prof. Leonidov’s research work. With it the famous scientists shows again his characteristic feature to work on the most relevant and significant problems – at the moment the issues of economic growth are right in the centre of the dominant modern economic theory, as well as of modern politics 7. Prof. Leonidov’s studies on the issues of economic growth are characterized by comprehensiveness: the scientist deals with the theory, empirics and policy of growth. The theory of growth takes an important place in prof. Leonidov’s analyses of economic growth. The theoretical summaries in his work in respect to the active issue of “economic growth” in the history of economic thought encompasses the evolution of ideas from classic political economy to the endogenous theory of growth (see “Theory of economic growth from A. Smith to P. Romer (2002), part 1 and 2). The emphasis on studying the theory of growth is definitely on the endogenous theories. A. Leonidov is the first in Bulgarian economic thought who, in a number of papers presents a thorough and competent review of the endogenous theory of growth as one of the new theoretical trends in this field. There he reviews the prerequisites for the origin of the endogenous theory of growth, outlines its general features and differences in comparison with the neoclassical theory (the model of Solow) and the neo-Keynesian theories of growth, analytically presents the model of P. Romer and makes various conclusions which result from the endogenous theory in respect to economic policy.

In prof. Leonidov’s scientific work the evolution of views in the field of theories of growth is closely associated with the empirics of economic growth. He studies and analyses carefully the changes in the long-term tendencies of development of market economies, as well as the factors that determine those tendencies (publications like “Economic growth of industrially developed countries: new features and long-term dynamics of micro-indicators” (1993), “New tendencies of the economic growth in USA and EU: a comparative analysis” (2004), “Information revolution, globalization and economic growth” (2001) and others. This interest and the deep study of economic growth establish prof. Leonidov as one of the leading macro-economists in Bulgaria in the years after 1990.

A. Leonidov is a scientist with rich scientific work, indisputable and numerous contributions to Bulgarian science. He deserves the respect professionals cherish for him. In the course of years his competence and scientific achievement were given recognition under various forms. Between 1995 and 1997 Leonidov was Chairman of the Scientific commission on economic issues at SAC (Supreme attestation commission). Then, for a number of years he was Chairman of SSC (Specialized scientific committee) on economic theory and macroeconomics at SAC. He is a member of the editorial board of a number of editions, as well as the editor-in-chief of the “Economic thought” magazine between 1993 and 1995.

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8 See: Endogennata teoriya na rstezha i osnovnite ikonomicheski shkoli (2006); Endogennata teoriya na ikonomicheskiy rastezh: chast 1 i 2 (2006).
In his prolific lifetime prof. Leonidov participated also in preparing PhD postgraduates. His influence on establishing a big number of young economists, who are already established and famous Bulgarian scientists today, is much stronger and a result of his work in the system of SAC, of his close relations with academic circles and his long-term activity in the Institute of economics at BAS (Bulgarian academy of science) – a centre for preparing qualified staff for Bulgarian science. Currently prof. Leonidov continues his activity as a member of the Council of the Centre for economic theories and economic policies (established in 2012) as part of the Faculty of economics in SU “Kliment Ohridsky”.

The name of prof. A. Leonidov is well known in the University of Economics – Varna. In the last two decades he has been a regular guest and active participant in the conferences organized by UE. His publications are known, read and quoted by the university academic staff. Especially close are prof. Leonidov’s relations with the department of ‘General economic theory’. The renowned economist takes part in scientific forums and discussions organized by the department, he writes reviews at competitions for awarding academic titles to members of the department and others and he is widely respected.

In conclusion, I couldn’t help sharing my personal impressions from prof. Leonidov. I have known him for a long time. In the course of ten years he and I were members of the SSC on economic theories and macroeconomics at SAC (2001-2010). I know quite well his publications because I think that he is one of those economists whose every single paper is worth reading. He was the reviewer at habilitation competitions and I am most grateful to him for this. We have had many discussions on scientific issues that impressed me for his erudition, professional awareness, broad outlook and objectivity. My great respect for prof. Leonidov is due to his competence and indisputable contribution to science, as well as his ethics, attitude of a colleague and goodwill. I consider my personal acquaintance with prof. Leonidov a great privilege.

Last, I would allow myself on my behalf and on behalf of the whole academic staff of UE-Varna to congratulate prof. Leonidov for his 80th anniversary and wholeheartedly wish him many years to come with health and creative longevity, so that he can manage to put the projects he works on now into practice!