

Bulgarian Communists Name Zhivkov to Retain Leadership

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Special to The New York Times

SOFIA, Bulgaria, April 2—Todor Zhivkov, whose tenure as a Communist Party leader exceeds that of any of his Soviet-bloc counterparts, was redesignated today as head of the Bulgarian Communist Party for five more years.

Mr. Zhivkov, who is 64 years old, concluded his party's 11th congress here today, singing a Russian song, arm in arm with a Soviet Politburo member, Fyodor D. Kulakov, who headed Moscow's delegation to the congress.

Three members of the ruling Bulgarian party Politburo, Todor Pavlov, Ivan Popov and Zhivko Zhivkov, were unaccountably dropped, reducing the size of that body to nine. Bulgarian officials said that the small size would make voting in the Politburo more efficient.

No Political Significance

But the departure of the three members had no immediate apparent political significance.

Bulgaria will clearly remain Moscow's most loyal ally in Europe. Bulgaria's domestic policies will remain as authoritarian as ever and Mr. Zhivkov remains the nation's virtually absolute ruler.

As usual, the proceedings of the party congress, which is theoretically the highest ex-

pression of "socialist democracy," were unanimous.

Mr. Zhivkov's report to the congress was published in advance, in the form of a book, which was distributed after he had delivered the speech. The book concluded with the notation, also printed in advance, saying: "The report was often interrupted by spontaneous applause and its conclusion was followed by stormy, prolonged, unabating applause which turned into an ovation."

Mr. Zhivkov became first secretary of his party in 1954 following the death of Stalin. He was appointed to the top party post by his predecessor, Vulko Chervenkov, whom he succeeded in getting purged seven years later.

The New York Times

Published: April 3, 1976

Copyright © The New York Times