

Bulgaria's Red Leader

Todor Zhivkov

AT his desk in Sofia, with a wash sketch of Lenin on the wall, Todor Zhivkov is likely to wear a light colored business suit, with a broad necktie knotted into the collar of a tan or striped shirt. "But the minute you leave one man who visited him says,

Man going to jerk
in the down the tie
News and open the
the top button of
the shirt. He's
a shirtsleeve

type." The top Communist in Bulgaria, who yesterday hailed Soviet policy toward Cuba and ousted his principal opponents from party jobs, has an open, practical manner and what appears to be a modest outlook. Within a tight framework of the Soviet-Bulgarian alliance, he sees his country as a truck garden for Central Europe.

In the evolution of international Communist affairs, Mr. Zhivkov is strictly a Khrushchev man. Although he joined the party — in its underground phase — when he was 19 years old, he did not emerge to leadership until after the great de-Stalinization of the mid-fifties.

His rise dates from the resignation of Premier Vulko Chervenkov. This was announced on April 16, 1956. Mr. Chervenkov held his party membership until yesterday, when he was expelled.

At U.N. in 1960

Mr. Zhivkov accompanied Mr. Khrushchev and other Soviet-bloc leaders to New York for the tense United Nations General Assembly session of 1960.

While he was here, he did not let down the long-standing barriers to permit any insight into his background and personality. But he did grant a long interview to *The Daily Worker*. In one reply, he said that as far as he could judge "the American people are opposed to war and stand for peace."

The first Western correspondent to call on Mr. Zhivkov in Sofia after he became leader of the Bulgarian Communist party found him a "vigorous middle-aged man of medium height." At the time, Mr. Zhivkov—who was born on Sept. 7, 1911—was a fortnight past his 46th birthday.

Office Unpretentious

He had an unpretentious office in the Central Committee Building just off Sofia's main street. The sketch of Lenin was the only art displayed. The room with furnished with thick Bulgarian carpets, brown leather chairs and an oak conference table.

During the interview, conducted in Russian, to which Bulgarian is closely related, luscious red peaches and big green grapes were served. The host apologized for the peaches, however, saying they were



The New York Times

Khrushchev's man in Sofia

only half the normal size because of a frost.

Mr. Zhivkov comes from a peasant family from the village of Pravets, near Botevgrad, about 27 miles from Sofia. The region, economically depressed, was noted for the heroism of its sons and revolutionaries who fought the Turks.

No information is readily available on whether Todor finished only elementary school or high school, too. It is generally agreed that he attended an art school in the capital and worked in the State Printing Office.

It was a tradition of Bulgarian printers that they were well advanced in social evolution. They were among the first to organize as the Bulgarian Communist movement shaped.

After two years in the youth underground, the young Zhivkov became a full party member, gradually rising in the hierarchy.

He remained in the country during the war and some of his subsequent status is ascribed to this.

Joins Central Committee

With the Communist assumption of power in September, 1944, with Red Army aid, he joined the Central Committee and became a power in Sofia.

In 1950, under Premier Chervenkov, Mr. Zhivkov was elevated to the secretariat of the Central Committee. He was First Secretary when Mr. Chervenkov resigned in 1956. This was three years before the resumption of relations between the United States and Bulgaria, after a nine-year lapse.

Mr. Zhivkov has directed the complete collectivization of the arable land in Bulgaria and the intensification of industrialization, with the aid of the Soviet Union.