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NAMES AND PARTY POLITICS (III)

Pervukhin - Still in the Presidium

On two occasions, at least, only the name of M.G. Pervukhin has been missing from a full list of Presidium members and candidates published in the Soviet press. In February 1958 he was not included among the signatories of the letter of the 23 top Party-State leaders who thus acknowledged their acceptance to nominations for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR<sup>1</sup> - an omission that can hardly be explained by his ambassadorial duties abroad. Fourteen months later Pervukhin appeared as an even more conspicuous exception, being omitted from the otherwise complete Presidium pledge of allegiance to the First Secretary on his 65th birthday.<sup>2</sup> Despite these two manifestations of his peculiar position within the top leadership, there has been no official announcement that Pervukhin has been deprived of his membership in the Presidium because of his mistakes in supporting the anti-Party group on some issues.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in March of this year Pervukhin was frequently in Khrushchev's entourage during the latter's prolonged visit to the DDR; and together with the Party-State leader he is now accompanying the DDR delegation in its tour of the Baltic republics. From the listings of those present at the dinner given by the Central Committee and Council of Ministers in honor of the DDR delegation on June 8<sup>4</sup> and the breakfast held at the DDR embassy on the next morning,<sup>5</sup> it is clear that Pervukhin - named after Pospelov and before Polyansky in the listings of Presidium members and candidates present on both occasions - still enjoys the protocol status of a candidate member of the Party Presidium, even though he has been deprived of almost all of his former power and prestige. In pictorial form this loss of political stature is strikingly shown by the absence of Pervukhin from the Pravda photo of the arrival of the DDR delegation, although both Pospelov and Polyansky of the Presidium, as well as Aristov, Ignatov, Kirichenko, Kozlov, Mikoyan, Mukhitdinov, and Khrushchev can all be identified.

On the eve of the second anniversary of the abortive attempt of the anti-party group to remove Khrushchev from the Secretariat and Presidium of the Central Committee, the position of Pervukhin

<sup>1</sup> See Background Information, "Names and Party Politics," 10 February 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Pravda, 19 April 1959; see Background Information, "Khrushchev at 65 (III)", 24 April 1959.

<sup>3</sup> See Background Information, "Khrushchev and the Presidium, (VII, VIII)", 4, 12 February 1959.

<sup>4</sup> Tass, 8 June 1959; Pravda, 9 June 1959.

<sup>5</sup> ADN, 9 June 1959.

remains anomalous. Ostensibly, still recognized as a member of the Presidium, his presence and public appearances - in the Soviet Union, in the DDR and in the West at Geneva - continue to pose a problem of interpretation. The final clarification of his status may, as happened in the case of P. Ponomarenko, candidate member of the post-Stalin Presidium from March 1953 to February 1956 while serving as Ambassador to Poland (May 1955 - Sept. 1957) and India (Sept. 1957-April 1959), be postponed until a new election of leading Party Organs at a Party Congress; or, as is more likely, his future public role will be determined when Khrushchev deems it expedient to close his case against the "anti-Party group".

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