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NAMES IN THE NEWS - XI

Favors from Father-in Law

According to the only biographical material available here

"Aleksei Ivanovich Adzhubei was born in 1924 in Samarkand. His childhood and youth were spent in Moscow. After finishing middle school and wartime service in the Soviet Army he studied at the school of journalism of the Moscow State University. Even before completion of the university he began to work on 'Komsomolskaya Pravda', first as a literary contributor, a travelling correspondent, then head of the student department, member of the editorial collegium, and editor of the department of literature and art."¹

Although neither the dates nor the reasons for this series of rapid upward steps are known, the year 1955 seems to have marked a turning point in his career -- a trip to the US (October-December) as a member of a group of top level Soviet journalists. On the 40th anniversary of Komsomolskaya Pravda he, among many others, received his first award, the Red Banner of Labor (7 December 1957). Despite his "age" -- 34 -- Adzhubei was named a member of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Komsomol at the first plenum after the XIII Congress in March 1958. About the same time he was elected a member of the Commission for International Contacts in the Orgburo of the Union of Soviet Journalists (Sovetskaya Pechat, #3, 1958).

On May 26, 1959 he was appointed editor of Izvestia, the second most important newspaper in the Soviet Union. Thus, after less than a decade of professional experience this young man from Central Asia and Moscow has moved to the top of the Soviet journalistic ladder, occupying the desk previously held by such former Bolshevik personalities as G. Zinoviev and Karl Radek among others, none of whom, for less obvious reasons than in the case of the above mentioned, have been deemed worthy of being recorded as editors in the article on Izvestia in the latest volume of the large Soviet Encyclopedia. As a preparatory step to moving up in the Party hierarchy, Adzhubei has in a "by-election" to the Supreme Soviet become the deputy from the Kropotkin electoral district in Krasnodar Territory, replacing the director of a local state farm.² For the governmental appointment, Aleksei Ivanovich is indebted to his father-in-law, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, no less than for the Party press

¹ Little Library, Ogonyok, #7, 1959; this quotation and all following material are taken from an article by A. P. in Daily Information Bulletin, Radio Liberation, 1 June 1959.

Vedomosti Verkhnego Soveta, No. 30, 30 July 1959.

assignments. It is still too early to judge whether the talents of Khrushchev's son-in-law warrant these distinctions to a greater or lesser degree than Stalin's son had earned the rank of Lt. General in the Soviet Air Force. In any case there is no precedent from the Stalinist era for this example of nepotism as practised by the Party-State leader whose words have condemned many lesser functionaries for providing less important posts to members of their families.

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