

KHRUSHCHEV'S ROLE ON 'MEMOIR' UNCLEAR

The managing editor of Life magazine, which this week published the first installment of the purported reminiscences of Nikita S. Khrushchev, said yesterday he did not know whether the material had been obtained with the former Soviet Premier's knowledge or consent.

Appearing on the Today show on the National Broadcasting Company television network, Ralph Graves, the Life executive, said:

"We simply don't know. That's one of the things I wish I did know. But, as I say, he only said, 'I didn't pass them on.' He doesn't say that nothing ever existed."

Mr. Khrushchev, in a statement released last week by Tass, the official Soviet press agency, called the material "a fabrication" and dissociated himself from its publication.

Mr. Graves was asked about factual errors that experts had noted in the material. He replied that it was "not in any sense a formal state paper or formal autobiography; it really is reminiscences."

Mr. Khrushchev, he said, is

"remembering at a fairly advanced age and I think it's perfectly natural for him to misplace some dates, places, chronology. I don't find this surprising at all."