

(continued from previous page)

defended the *moujik* against the pure Marxians and the exclusively proletarian-minded collectivists. Soon his chancellery became the place of pilgrimage to which peasants from all over Russia flocked to launch complaints and to air grievances. They called the President simply "starosta," which means "Elderman of the village."

HIS waiting-room became the most visible link between town and countryside. It became an institution. Kalinin himself listened patiently to long, incoherent tales of life in innumerable villages and hamlets.

In the years of inner Party strife, Kalinin sided with the right wing of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsy, whom the left opposition, led by Trotsky and Rakovsky, accused of tenderness towards the *kulak*. Stalin took a middle position between the two factions. In 1929 he decided to strike at the *kulak* and to collectivise farming. Just as 12 years before Kalinin disagreed with Lenin over "proletarian dictatorship," so now he disagreed with Stalin over collectivisation. But now, as then, when his views were defeated, he followed the party and its leader.

DIPLOMATS in Moscow like the old characteristic figure of the bespectacled, goatee-bearded man at the Catherine Palace in the Kremlin. He has cut short all diplomatic ceremonies.

Kalinin must sometimes think with a smile about the great electoral troubles with which his great American colleague has to contend. He himself has served for a quarter of a century—more than six terms of an American President—and each time he was re-elected the act was simply a matter of routine. Not a single vote against Kalinin has ever been recorded in the minutes of the Supreme Soviet. No. President Kalinin is not bending down under the burden of democratic procedure.

The *moujik's* waiting-room in his chancellery now belongs to the past. Yet the touch of the popular about Kalinin's figure remains genuine. Until very recently, the Soviet President still used to leave the Catherine Palace now and then for a trip to his native village in the neighbourhood of Tver-Kalinin to pay a visit to his very old mother. In her hut the walls were still overhung with innumerable holy icons. And the President used to take his meals together with his mother, eating from one common bowl, according to an old custom of the Russian *moujik*. Kalinin's mother died a few months ago. With her has also disappeared the old common bowl.



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