

The President of the Russian Soviet Republic

MICHAEL IVANOVITCH KALININ, who died recently, was unanimously elected chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the soviets in place of the late Comrade Sverdloff at the meeting of the executive committee on March 30, 1919.

M. I. Kalinin was born on November 7, 1875, in the village of Verkhney Troitzky, Tver government, Kortchevsk, Yaroslavl district, of a peasant family. He lived with his parents till the age of thirteen and from his early childhood helped his father in the work on the farm. From childhood he had a great yearning for knowledge. He taught himself to read and devoted all his leisure time to reading.

When he turned thirteen one of the neighboring landlords, Mordukhai Bolkhovskiy, sent him to the zemstvo elementary school at his own expense, for his father being comparatively poor, could not afford to pay for his son's education. At school he was regarded as one of the best pupils. On finishing his schooling he went to work on Mordukhai's estate, but the life there did not satisfy the inclinations of the young man and his mistress placed him at the Cartridge works in Petrograd as an apprentice. He remained at the works for 2 years and then, when he reached the age of 16, he went to work as a turner at the Putilov works.

In 1898 Kalinin joined the social democratic party and from that time his trials began.

In 1899 he was arrested and exiled to the Caucasus where he worked in the railway workshops. Here he was twice arrested.

It is interesting to note that when Com. Kalinin was exiled to the Caucasus he was permitted to pass through his village and when he appeared there everybody was surprised to see him alive, for a rumor had spread in the village that he was placed into the Petropavlovsky fortress as a dangerous political worker, and there literally ground to pieces in a mill.

As the work of Com. Kalinin seemed too dangerous to the authorities in the Caucasus, they had him transferred to Reval, but still as an exile, and here he continued his fruitful work amongst the Estonian workmen.

In 1908 the authorities in Reval again arrested Comrade Kalinin and decided to exile him to Eastern Siberia. While on the road the Japanese war broke out; as a consequence he was brought back and sent to the government of Olonetz, where he came back under an amnesty and was released.

From 1906 to 1908 Comrade Kalinin worked at the Central Union of Metalists and was a distinguished worker of the Petrograd bolshevik organization.

Later on, after the death of his father, Comrade Kalinin temporarily ceased his political work and retired to the village where for two years he managed his farm.

In 1912 Comrade Kalinin went to work at the Central Tramway Electric station, but shortly after was again arrested and exiled from Moscow and was deprived of the right to reside in industrial centers.

He returned to the village and again took up his farming, but the satraps gave him no rest and he was arrested again.

In 1915 we find him working at the "Ivaz" works. On January 7, 1916, he was again arrested and put into prison where he was kept for a year and then sentenced to be exiled to Siberia. That, however, could not be carried out, for Comrade Kalinin lived in Petrograd illegally and by that time the February revolution took place and he was set free.

He has a wife and three children and a 60 year old mother who lives in the village where she manages the farm. Comrade Kalinin from time to time visited the village and took an active part in the construction of rural life. Soon after his election M. I. Kalinin in an interview with a correspondent of the "Pravda" an organ

of the Central Committee of the Russian communist party—made a few brief remarks referring to the immediate aims of the soviet government.

"In the first place," said Comrade Kalinin, "it is necessary to induce the middle-class peasantry to take part in the revolutionary struggle with the same intensity as the proletariat does. It is essential that soviet government should become near and dear to the village. As chairman of the Central Executive Committee, I consider bringing the soviet government into closer contact with the village my principal and fundamental task.

"It is necessary for us to offer resistance to the robbers pressing us from all sides. Can we offer resistance? Of course we can if we are strong, then the unity between the proletariat and the peasantry will render it firm and lasting.

"I consider my election as chairman of the Central Executive Committee symbolical. I am at the same time a workman and a peasant. I personify the union between town and village. Even now I am managing a farm as much as my duties will permit me, and I will continue to do so. I stand between the poor and the middle-class peasant, my farm is not large, but in good order. I know rural life as well and the psychology of the peasant is quite familiar to me. I know that every peasant must love the soviet government. Because I am a peasant I take a part in the revolutionary movement and serve the soviet government. From the standpoint of his economic interests, the middle-class peasant must support the soviet government. Misunderstandings may arise between the soviet government and the middle-class peasantry, but hostility never. We must protect the middle-class peasant from every kind of oppression, misunderstandings, red-tapeism and bureaucratism; to assist the economic development of the village and in no case to destroy, but to

encourage small industry, handicraft, etc., among the peasants.

"I would like to say a few words about the Petrograd proletariat. Nobody has suffered so much for the revolution, nobody has invested in the cause so much energy and patience, as the Petrograd workmen. And, undoubtedly, they have the right to demand our particular attention. The Petrograd workmen were starving. Only a short time ago Petrograd suffered from hunger more than Moscow. At present, the food question in Petrograd, if not better, is at least not worse than in Moscow. It is necessary to improve the food conditions of Petrograd for the reason, I repeat, that the Petrograd workmen fully deserve all the attention we can devote to them. Petrograd workmen will yet again give evidence

On April 26, last year, Comrade Kalinin began his "All-Russian tour." A special train was constructed in Moscow which is called "The October revolution," the route comprises: Orel, Kursk, Woronege, Lysky, Novokhopersk, Balashov, Penza, Riazan, Jitemir, Kieff, Elisavetgrad, Odessa, Kher-son and the Crimean peninsula. Apart from the principal aim of this tour, that is to come into closer contact with the village, to draw nearer to the province, to know what it requires, it has an educational purpose as well. There is a book store in the train, moving cinema, theatre, museum and exhibition, etc., wherever Comrade Kalinin comes he speaks with the peasants and workmen, takes interest in their business, listens to all their complaints, etc.

His speeches are the simple speeches of the peasants. Here is an extract from his speech which he delivered at a crowded meeting held by red army soldiers and peasants in the government of Simbirsk:

"The red army is performing a noble task and it faces great difficulties. Our enemies possess science, technique and foreign gold, and still we beat them. We beat them because our army is conscious that in

the event of our defeat the landlords and the bourgeoisie will suck our blood and the blood of those who come after us. I urge you all not to be discouraged and to devote all your free time to studies in order to acquire knowledge and impart your knowledge to your family and to your fellow-villagers, which will enable you to take an active part in the administrative work and to dismiss all bureaucrats among whom there are many of our disguised enemies.

"The aim of the soviet government is to abolish bureaucracy, to place the administrative work into the hands of workmen and peasants: today to plough your field or work at the bench and tomorrow to manage a district, government or state, and on the next day to return to your plough or bench.

"Comrades, we are passing through a hard time, but at the same time a heroic time. Those who have lived quietly during this time will not be remembered by posterity. People will forever remember our time, our deeds. Centuries will roll on and our children's children will narrate our heroic struggle, how we could sacrifice our lives on the altar of freedom, for the welfare of the people. In their songs they will sing about us, glorifying our struggle. Individuals—Kalinin, Petroff, Ivanoff will be forgotten, but they will remember us all with awe and pride."

Actors, travelling in this train, gave theatrical performances, cinema pictures were shown, books were distributed. A newspaper, edited in the train, which contains the latest telegrams of the Russian telegraph agency. This paper gives different information to the peasants and carries on propaganda.

The workmen and peasants met the president of the Russian republic with great enthusiasm. Many enthusiastic letters and telegrams connected with the arrival of Comrade Kalinin, "The All-Russian Elder" as he is called by the peasants, were sent from the provinces to the centre.

THE WINITSKY TRIAL

THE first trial in the State of New York for the crime of belonging to the Communist Party began before Judge Bartow S. Weeks on March 15. This is the Supreme Court judge who recently gave Benjamin Gitlow a maximum sentence under the Criminal Anarchy Law for the crime of publishing "The Left Wing Manifesto."

Harry M. Winitsky, the defendant, was executive secretary of Local New York of the Communist Party. Like Walter Gabriel, formerly secretary of the New Jersey State organization, and now an inmate of the State Prison at Trenton, Winitsky had nothing whatever to do with the formulation of the Communist Party program or constitution.

The case of the prosecution is that the Communist Party is in its nature a criminal organization and that anyone who has anything to do with it is thereby a criminal. From this viewpoint, apparently accepted by the trial judge, every document which purports to be a party publication, is admitted in evidence, regardless of any connection with the defendant. Even the proceedings of the Chicago Convention have been admitted, although Winitsky was a thousand miles away from that convention and although these proceedings were never considered of sufficient general interest to publish so that he could read them.

An interesting angle of this trial is the calling by the prosecution of five or six Communists as witnesses, presumably on the theory that the usual method of authenticating the party documents by use of detectives might not prove sufficient. However, under the broad rulings of Justice Weeks, and by his own persistent activity in behalf of the prosecution, all these documents were accepted in evidence before any of the Communist witnesses were

reached. Only Jay Lovestone was finally called to the stand, and after his claim of constitutional right not to incriminate himself, was met by satisfactory assurance of complete immunity both in New York and in the Chicago case, Lovestone was grilled for several hours by the prosecution. Then he was questioned by the attorney for the defense on the meaning of the party declarations of principles.

At one point in the trial, when the Department of Justice stenographer, who attended the Chicago Convention, was on the stand, Judge Weeks took occasion to suggest in an elaborate speech, that the record of the convention would probably reveal that there were meanings in the Manifesto and Program which were concealed in the actual published forms. Upon cross-examination of this witness all this insinuation was swept aside by the positive answers that there was not a single word at any time during the convention about concealing any meanings.

As in the Gitlow trial witnesses were brought from Winnipeg to tell at great length about the Winnipeg general strike, since the Manifesto made an allusion to the general strike as a working class tactic of great political significance. One of these witnesses was the delegate of the policeman's union on the General Strike Committee. He had turned traitor because he believed in collective bargaining only by the workers organized in a single shop. In spite of the animus of these witnesses it did not appear that the strikers were responsible for the least violence in the Winnipeg strike, the few disturbances being provoked by the scab police. Even these disturbances, however, did not amount to much.

Attorney for the defense was frequently

compelled to raise objection to the judge's apparent bias. Between the judge and Rorke—the prosecutor—a witness' neck got plenty of exercise. "Questions to right of him, questions to left of him, volleyed and thundered!" quoted Fallon to the judge, as he objected for the twentieth time—indignantly, if with studied "respectfulness." This time Lovestone was the victim. Between the judge's bench and the prosecutor's table, his head seemed to be in perpetual motion.

After Fallon's and Rorke's plea to the Jury, the judge took great pains to "disabuse the minds of twelve honest men" of any notion that might have lodged there that he was in any way biased or prejudiced against the defendant. The judge in charging the jury, placed an interesting construction on the "law." The only legal means provided for overthrow of the government," he said, "is the ballot. Ergo, the advocacy of any means other than the ballot is illegal. The clause in the Criminal Anarchy Law refers to "force and violence, or any illegal means." Under Judge Weeks' ruling then, any member of an organization advocating overthrow of government by a general political strike, or by prayer and fasting, or mental suggestion, or any method not the ballot, is criminal under the law.

An interesting disclosure in this case was the fact that between the time of the Gitlow and Winitsky cases, a matter of a few weeks, an amendment to the Criminal Anarchy Law was hustled through the legislature which provided against the use of the only legal excuse a witness had for refusing to testify—self-incrimination. Rose Pastor Stokes, in the case of Gitlow, refused on this legal ground to answer certain questions asked by the prosecutor and pressed by the judge, and the court had to concede her right to refuse. This was