

III

THE FACTORIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The Delegation divided into groups to visit various factories and undertakings; the details of their investigations will be the subject of further reports to be published in pamphlet form dealing with particular industries. Here we have space only for a brief description of a few of the factories visited, which will serve to illustrate the general conditions throughout Soviet industry.

Metal and Engineering Works

The Metal Workers' Section of the Delegation visited metal and engineering works of every description, including blast furnaces, steel furnaces, tin and sheet mills, foundries and engineering shops. In every instance, without exception, at the factories we visited new and modern workshops were either erected or in course of erection. German and Belgian machines of the latest types were very much in evidence, either at work or waiting to be installed in the new factories when completed. We were told by the responsible persons at each factory that the machinery they needed would have been purchased in Britain if credits had been available. And although much of the plant in use is antiquated, the Delegation was everywhere impressed with the achievements already made in the short period of five years of reconstruction since the Civil Wars and the famine. New factories and workshops are being set up, and are already partially in use, which compare very favourably in equipment with the most modern undertakings of any capitalist country in the world.

Attached to every factory we found training schools, workers' clubs, clinics and every possible institution for the comfort and safety of the workers. Cultural and social life find their place in the organisation of every factory. The workers have their own theatres, reading rooms, games rooms, rest rooms and study circles. In the clinics we saw the babies of the mothers who are at work being cared for on the most modern lines, while nursing mothers are allowed time off work each day to feed their children.

At Gorlovka, in the Donetz Basin, we found a magnificent Palace of Labour, where theoretical and practical lessons were being given to boys and girls by fully qualified teachers. The boys and girls enter the school at 14 years of age, and receive three years' training, during which period they are