

XI

THE JOURNEY, MEETINGS AND IMPRESSIONS

The voyage from London to Leningrad in the steamer "Soviet" was a fitting introduction to what we were to find in Soviet Russia itself. The kindness and comradeship of every member of the crew deserve acknowledgment; and in conversations with them we began to realise the high level of political consciousness which now exists throughout every section of the Russian workers. We saw the conditions of the seamen and firemen—their quarters, rest room and Lenin corner—and especially appreciated the comradely relations existing between captain and officers and crew. It was a remarkably pleasant voyage in every way—but for one day's rough weather to which most of us succumbed.

* * * *

Our reception at Leningrad was thrilling. We were met on the quay by representatives of the Leningrad Council of Trade Unions, amid tremendous cheering from an enthusiastic crowd of workers, soldiers and sailors. In response to their welcoming speeches we presented a manifesto signed by all members of the British and Irish Delegations congratulating the Russian workers and peasants on their magnificent and inspiring achievements, and pledging the assistance of the British workers against imperialist attacks. Our manifesto also assured the Russian workers that the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee had been carried out without consulting the rank and file of the Trade Unions, and we pledged ourselves to work unceasingly for the re-establishment of Anglo-Russian Trade Union unity as the medium for closer contact and for the defence of the gains of the Revolution. After the reception on the quay we were driven to a rest home—a magnificent building which had formerly been a nobleman's palace—and after a meal and further speeches of welcome the main part of the Delegation left for Moscow.

* * * *

Those of us who went overland had our first thrill when the train ran into Soviet territory under a great banner stretched over the lines and inscribed "Welcome to the workers of other countries; Communism knows no frontiers!" At the little frontier station of Niegerolye, British, German, Czecho-Slovakian and French delegates were taken to the station hall, where a meal was given us and speeches of