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# Forced Labour Camps in Countries under Communist Domination

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[See table of contents](#)

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economic factors in a free market economy.

According to the theory of the Welfare State, the volume of taxes and public expenditure should, in effect, vary inversely with the cyclical fluctuations, in such a way as to stimulate or discourage, as the case may be, private investments and thus to maintain at a stable level employment and national revenue.

On the other hand, in order that this stabilization does not operate at too low a level, and that the general prosperity be thus compromised, the theory includes the necessity of insuring that the low income classes who have the biggest tendency to consume, receive enough revenue to permit them to maintain a sufficient demand on the commodity and services market.

The method provided, to this latter end, consists, on one hand, in the reduction of indirect taxes of a general nature, and on the other hand, in financing by progressive direct taxes which put unproductive savings to work, a comprehensive programme of social security, of which the payments, by increasing

directly or indirectly the purchasing power of the masses, must insure a maximum utilization of productive forces.

The economic by-product that is expected from these programmes of social security in a general policy of stabilization of the economy at a high level of employment and revenue, must not make us forget that they are first of all inspired by social preoccupations, by the thought of guaranteeing to the economically weak classes, this supplementary welfare which they demand and which, even in an economy of full employment they cannot earn for themselves by their work.

While remaining within the limits of a sociological interpretation, we hope to have shown that the new system with the political-economic conception which inspires it, is the normal product of the classic economy state of the 19th century; that it is born, on one hand, from the unsatisfactory conditions and insecurity produced by the laissez-faire economy; on the other hand, from the incorporation of the popular classes to the democratic state in the development of political liberalism.

## Forced Labour Camps in Countries Under Communist Domination

*by FRANÇOIS BREGHA, Member of the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute*

In this second study, we shall strive to define the actual reasons for the establishment of the forced labour camps in basing our statements upon what we know and what we have received from various information sources.

The facts cited in the preceding study prove that, beyond all doubt, the FLC's are certainly not a means of instructing the idle, but an illegal

means of inspiring terror, wielded by the group in power against the entire Czechoslovakian population. Their aim is, on the one hand, the suppression of dangerous elements or simply of those who do not demonstrate a positive enough spirit toward the regime; on the other hand, it is the mass intimidation of a population which might some day reveal itself hostile to the regime. Those constitute

the general reasons for the establishment of the FLC's. However, there are more direct and immediate reasons; they are partly political and partly economic.

### Political reasons

The political reasons for sowing terror in the midst of a dictatorial state lies at the very basis of dictatorship. This system sets forth the principle that the will of the political organization in power (or that of the dictator) is stronger than that of the state, which is found in its laws. By the fact, a dictatorship, represented by the group in power, constitutes an illegal state in which the legal order of things is violated by those themselves in control who should compel adherence to the norms they have established.

As a matter of fact, the law does not only represent a means by which the group in power may realize its desires, but sets aside for the citizen a certain sphere of freedom (as restrained as possible) in which he is his own master, acting and spending his time as he will. It is precisely this sphere of free action not under control which the law — even the most severe — cannot bind down completely, and which can form the starting point, as far as the individual is concerned, of an effort to overthrow social and political conditions not favouring him. The dictatorship can do nothing else but attempt to destroy even this small remainder of freedom because it might possibly constitute a threat. It does so by means of an illegal procedure. It is thus that the dictatorship is forced to violate the laws which, from the purely legal standpoint, might endanger its existence.

Consequently, a dictatorship follows a system of force and brutality, as Lenin, the theorist of totalitarianism, expressly points out: "The

scientific conception of dictatorship is nothing more than an idea, without limits and restrained by no laws or regulations, of power which bases itself directly upon force."<sup>1</sup>

Every totalitarian regime charges itself with tasks whose accomplishment is impossible without the co-operation of the entire nation. For the communistic regimes, these tasks consist in establishing communism throughout the whole world.

Needless to say, such a task demands a maximum of effort from each citizen. It also demands that the communistic state punish or threaten not only its adversaries, but also all those who do not demonstrate enough zeal in carrying out the primary duty of a citizen of a communist state. Consequently, the regime obliges itself to isolate and suppress its adversaries, and to bring the other citizens into its flock. Furthermore, every totalitarian regime knows that its program would collapse if the nation opposed it. Deprived of the free expression of their opinion, the partisans of freedom form themselves into non-political organizations. If such organizations are abolished, they form such groups illegally. If these illegal organizations in turn, are crushed, they work individually, each for itself, and become an invisible force, intangible, elusive, against which the state can do nothing. The only thing left for it to do is to resort to terror.

That is the reason why terror and its inevitable by-product, the concentration camps, is inseparable from every dictatorial regime. The FLC's found in communist states are not proper to those countries nor to fixed conditions; they are the necessary result of the establishment of the communistic system and spring from its very essence. Without them it should crumble. Therefore, wherever

(1) Staline, *Les questions du Leninisme*, p. 111 (Czech edition).

a communist government comes into power, its arrival is followed by an outgrowth of such camps.

Such is the why and wherefore, in general, of the concentration camps which contain the actual or supposed enemies of the communistic regime. But in those countries dominated by communism, there is a special reason (even though it be derived from those mentioned above of a more general nature) necessitating such establishments.

The communistic doctrine states as one of the indispensable conditions for world-wide victory, complete oppression of all social groups which might threaten the class in power — or supposedly in power. This statement is naturally addressed to the proletariat in particular. It is the principle of class struggle which forms the basis of all communistic politics. Consequently: ruthless liquidation of small and average-sized business which has not yet been crushed by nationalization; systematic destruction of democratic newspapers and of those in charge; and a pitiless fight against every organization, even the remainders of bodies which are non-communist (such as athletic clubs — Sokol, non-communist young people's clubs, student organizations) if they have not as yet bowed down to the will of the Party. Finally, there is the attack against the most obstinate and best organized enemy: the Church.

This fight cannot be waged within legal principles because of the "blank space" in the law which we discussed earlier. A shoemaker or a tailor cannot be punished — according to the law — simply because they are the owners of a small nationalized business. Nor can anyone be punished because he is not a member of the Party, because he does not take part in the activities of the labour brigades, or because he goes to church. But this blank spot is important

enough to impede the regime in following out its policies of spreading collectivism and class struggle.

This blank space is to be filled by the FLC's. There are found to exist facts for which no law provides punishment or imprisonment. So, it is stated that labour in a FLC is not a form of punishment; it is simply a period of time spent in a school or center of education, permitting the re-educated to go back into life and society as "sincere and convinced socialists".

The reasons of an economic nature are more intricate, but more visible than those of a political nature. They may be classed according to: a) conditions of the labour market; b) the abstentionist movement; c) financial conditions of the government.

### Economic reasons

#### a) Conditions of the labour market

A planned economy brings about profound changes on the labour market, especially when the former is destined to achieve the industrialization of the country and the preparation of a gigantic war machine together with the following important consequences: amalgamation of enterprise, decrease in the number of middle-men (especially in commerce). But a planned economy is impossible in a changing labour market. Consequently, there arises the need of measures which are capable of altering the market by force.

The communistic regime in Czechoslovakia tried to solve this problem by the allocation of labour but completely failed because of the passive resistance of the people who refused to obey the commands of the Communist Party, considering this system as a dictatorial regime which is hostile to the people and which is imposed on them by a foreign power. The results of the communist Government in Czechoslovakia were

tragic for the former. They read as follows for the year 1948:

med up in the saying, "go slowly", leaves its mark on the rate of pro-

	<i>Number of persons hired by official measures</i>	<i>Number of persons who remained in this new work</i>
Mines	54,167	0 (plus 3,880 walk-outs by old employees)
Blast furnaces	18,953	3,400
Metallurgy	121,644	22,500
Chemistry	21,915	2,800
Ceramics	34,205	3,100

Faced with such a situation, the communistic regime has no choice and is obliged to resort to force. Instead of objectively allocating labour, it uses force against its political enemies, actual or imagined, by closing them up in the FLC's. Thus, an army of workers is created which the regime can use as it sees fit, and which is made to perform the most painful and dangerous tasks in mines, quarries, blast furnaces, etc.

#### **b) Abstentionist movement**

This movement is taking on more and more dangerous proportions in the Czechoslovakian mines.

The president of the Czechoslovakian government, Mr. Zapotocky, has divulged the following figures in this connection: "One of the greatest difficulties is caused by abstentionism. Hours of non-attendance, paid or not, are constantly increasing. Last year, the number of working hours increased by 2.7%, and that of absences, by 21%. During the first three months of 1947, there were 55,000,000 hours of non-attendance; for the same period of 1948, there were already 69,300,000 and for 1949, 73,500,000. In comparison with 1947, absences increased in 1948 by 26% and in 1949 by 37.3%."

Absenteeism is not the only thing at fault; other occurrences slow up production considerably. Above all, the movement which may be sum-

duction — a rate constantly decreasing — even though it may not appear in the statistics of attendance.

And so, just as communist efforts concerning the allocation of labor were blocked by the passive resistance of the people, so also its attempts in regard to an increase in production were checked by the inimical feelings of the people, or at least by their lack of interest in the aims of communist politics. All this stems from the nature of a system which seeks to solve these two problems by the same "ultima ratio" — terror, and its realization: the Forced Labour Camps.

#### **c) Financial conditions**

The third reason of an economic nature which hinders the plans of the communist regime, is the tendency for the number of civil servants and state employees to increase. The necessity of continually suppressing the opinions and the will of a major portion of the population inevitably brings about a continuing and notable increase in all sorts of secret police and armed detectives. The bureaucracy, enlarged by the installation of departmental instead of provincial administration, assumes more important, but more cumbersome, proportions. In this way, it increases not only the state of confusion already reigning in the administration, but also, and especially, the financial

weight pressing down on the state treasury. But, this contrast of constantly increasing expenditures and decreasing revenues can only terminate in the form of a financial crisis for the regime.

The regime is therefore obliged to seek a remedy for such a crisis. Having entirely lost the confidence of its citizens, even of its citizens who formerly consented to a communist politic and who now show a passive and tacit resistance, the regime turns to its last resort: force. By force, it obtains the lacking man-power by imposing forced labour on every person who is unable to prove his loyalty to the regime. Consequently, the choice is easy.

### **Conclusion**

The establishment in Czechoslovakia of the FLC's — or more exactly, of concentration camps — is therefore not a chance happening nor a transitory measure; this terrible practice is closely united to the regime's functioning and cannot be separated

from it. The political and economic reasons which compel the regime to resort to such extreme measures, demonstrate quite clearly that the FLC's are concomitant to every communist system and spring from its very essence.

A dictatorship for which an intelligent, cultured and politically developed people is unwilling to work — i.e., unwilling to assist in the attainment of ends which are inimical to democracy and to a democratic world — possesses no means to maintain itself in power other than force.

And, the cause which citizens of communist countries uphold today by their stubborn resistance and by suffering brutal treatment, is not only their cause, but that of the entire civilized world. The FLC's threaten not only the unfortunate citizens of those countries, but also — though in a different manner — those of the democratic countries as well. The FLC's are material evidence of the decided obstinacy of the communists in their final end of subjugating the whole world to their system.

## **Comparative Study of the Legislation on Conciliation and Arbitration**

### **II—UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

In the national sphere, the settlement of labour disputes is governed by the Labour-Management Relations Act of June 23, 1947.

Besides determining accrediting requirements for labour union representatives, requiring employers to negotiate in good faith with recognized labour unions, and setting forth a number of unfair labour practices, the act also covers the conciliation of labour disputes in industries affecting commerce (Title II of the Act).

#### **A — Scope of the Act**

The term "commerce" means trade, traffic, commerce, transportation, or communication among the several States, or between the District of Columbia or any Territory of the United States and any State or other Territory, or between any foreign country and any State, Territory, or the District of Columbia, or within the District of Columbia or any Territory, or between points in the same State but through any other State or