



REPORTS AND ENQUIRIES

The Results of Compulsory Labour Service in Bulgaria from 1925 to 1933

A detailed study of the basic conditions of the law governing compulsory labour service, established in Bulgaria in 1921, and of the general results arrived at during the first five years (1921-1925) has already been published in this *Review*.¹

The general provisions relating to "regular service", the application of which formed the object of the former study, have since undergone only slight modifications of detail, such as variation in the rate of commutation for persons liable to compulsory service. The present study, which also relates only to "regular service", to the exclusion of "temporary service", covers a period of operation of eight years, from 1 April 1925 to 31 March 1933.²

NUMBERS OF WORKERS RENDERING REGULAR COMPULSORY SERVICE

The total number of workers called up for their eight months' compulsory service during the period considered was 140,142. The following table shows the annual contingents and their distribution among the various Ministries and the Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service for carrying out different works.

¹ Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Jan. 1926, pp. 83-92 : "The Results of Compulsory Labour Service in Bulgaria from 1921 to 1925". Cf. also : MAX LAZARD : *Compulsory Labour Service in Bulgaria*; Studies and Reports, Series B (Economic Conditions), No. 12 ; 1922 ; 160 pp.

² *Annuaire statistique du Royaume de Bulgarie*, Sofia, 1932, and GLAVNA DIREKZIA NA TROUDOVATA POVINNOST : *Godichen oichet na Direkziata na troudovata povinnost* (General Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service : Report for the years 1925-26 to 1932-33).

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS, 1925-1933

Allocation of workers	Number of workers							
	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29	1929-30	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
Ministry of Railways : railways and ports	5,200	4,500	3,800	2,400	1,100	1,000	1,400	935
Ministry of Agriculture : forests, State nurseries, and parks	400	490	465	615	340	440	400	1,800
Ministry of Public Works : road making	6,550	5,000	9,050	10,000	11,200	11,050	10,850	11,180
Ministry of War : navying, surveying work, aero- dromes, etc.	—	—	—	600	1,550	1,810	1,880	1,724
Ministry of Commerce : health resorts and mines	—	—	—	—	—	100	—	79
Various	100	1,272	100	100	100	160	100	250
Total for Ministries	12,250	11,262	13,415	13,715	14,290	14,560	14,630	15,968
General Directorate : prov- incial offices, workshops, lands, etc.	3,750	3,250	2,750	2,370	4,400	4,820	4,370	4,332
	16,000	14,512	16,165	16,085	18,690	19,380	19,000	20,300

PRODUCTION

Work for the State

To enumerate the different works carried out for the various Ministries is impossible, and here only the most important, such as the construction of roads and railways, during the eight years under consideration (1925-1933)¹ will be mentioned. The details are shown in the table on the following page.

¹ The fiscal year begins on 1 April and ends on 31 March.

PRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY LABOUR SERVICE, 1925-1933

Nature, duration, and value of the work	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29	1929-30	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
<i>Road construction :</i>								
Navvying on new roads	213,318 m.	152,000 m.	364,600 m.	453,564 m.	453,745 m.	413,672 m.	325,785 m.	375,928 m.
Ballasting on new roads	108,590 "	108,000 "	147,674 "	161,525 "	172,453 "	207,486 "	163,924 "	236,530 "
Widening and mending roads	215,137 "	160,270 "	264,500 "	239,704 "	405,067 "	471,206 "	352,956 "	390,362 "
Embankments built	4,721 "	2,446 "	6,072 "	7,561 "	8,324 "	5,307 "	5,112 "	2,655 "
Embankments repaired	500 "	250 "	3,020 "	292 "	270 "	344 "	63 "	128 "
Correction of rivers and waterways	—	—	1,450 "	5,900 "	5,880 "	2,395 "	2,300 "	4,400 "
Bridges built, stone and wood	36	43	109	51	48	48	66	49
Bridges repaired	—	3	7	24	14	14	19	4
Aqueducts and conduits made	76	69	139	106	181	223	169	210
Aqueducts and conduits repaired	3	25	18	42	67	39	30	54
Fountains	—	2	—	11	14	3	21	5
<i>Number of 8-hour days worked</i>	551,356	376,097	976,690	1,076,016 ¹	1,187,781	1,145,703	1,051,674	1,044,589
<i>Total value of work in leva</i>	40,718,296	31,395,667	94,352,959	111,251,596 ¹	131,907,899	119,072,597	104,293,666	109,813,907
<i>Railway construction :</i>								
Lines completed, widened, and laid	51,000 m.	23,000 m.	11,400 m.	2,014 m.	7,300 m.	—	—	—
Navvying and ballasting	84,758 "	48,000 "	47,377 "	21,600 "	12,230 "	12,950 m.	23,404 m.	6,240 m.
General repairs	9,527 "	4,400 "	6,185 "	2,338 "	—	—	8,274 "	56,700 "
Light railways	—	15,000 "	17,982 "	—	3,100 "	—	—	—
Embankments	80 "	580 "	2,647 "	635 "	—	—	20 "	195 "
Aqueducts and conduits made	43 "	23 "	20 "	12 "	1	—	6 "	1
Aqueducts and conduits repaired	—	12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Buildings	13	7	9	—	1	—	—	—
Bridges built and repaired	7	11	12	—	—	—	—	—
Station platforms (sq. metres)	102,703	130,350	27,826	47,580	1,000	15,750	6,619	3,600
<i>Number of 8-hour days worked</i>	411,005	337,738	360,290	234,162 ¹	112,385	115,656	184,672	115,581
<i>Total value of work in leva</i>	25,533,970	23,621,271	27,030,140	17,662,730 ¹	10,610,563	8,900,697	15,007,599	10,401,369

¹ In addition, 194,831 days' work, of a total value of 12,145,016 leva, was done by supplementary workers called up in 1928, for service under the Directorate responsible for dealing with damage caused by the earthquake.

The total value of the whole of this work is estimated at 881,574,926 leva.

The following table shows the total amount of work done on road and railway construction and other work for the State, expressed as the total number of 8-hour days worked and their value.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF DAYS WORKED FROM 1925 TO 1933

Year	Number of days worked			Value of work in leva
	On road and railway construction	On other work for the State	Total	
1925-26	962,361	151,473	1,113,834	75,111,277
1926-27	710,835	201,525	912,360	68,056,877
1927-28	1,336,980	234,820	1,571,800	135,450,983
1928-29	1,310,178	214,299	1,524,477	142,075,936
1929-30	1,310,166	158,553	1,468,719	154,381,307
1930-31	1,261,359	190,317	1,451,676	142,082,059
1931-32	1,236,346	167,893	1,404,239	131,858,836
1932-33	1,159,170	301,848	1,461,018	140,387,606
Total	9,287,395	1,620,728	10,908,123	989,304,881

In addition to these items, a large amount of regular work is done which does not appear in the regular budgets. This "extra-budgetary" work is done by persons assigned to undertakings and works of public utility, and is paid for by the undertakings concerned. It amounted, in the period 1931 to 1933, to 2,519,177 days, of a total value of 144,553,446 leva.

It will be seen from these figures that the regular service is utilised principally for the construction of roads and railways. For the whole of the period under consideration the proportion of days worked for the account of the Ministries of Public Works and of Railways, for the extension of the system of road and rail communications, was 85 per cent. of the total worked for the account of the State.

This utilisation of the "troudovaks" (workers liable to compulsory labour service) has been the subject of special laws, such as the

Act of 19 June 1925 and the amending Acts of 25 February and 29 June 1933, the object of which is to extend the railway system and develop the ports on the Danube and the Black Sea.

Work under the Directorate

In addition to administering the regular service as noted above—temporary service not being dealt with in this article—the Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service controls certain mobile groups of workers and administers certain undertakings directly.

The mobile groups, called “chetas”, consist of skilled workers (butchers, bakers, charcoal-burners, carters, warehousemen, etc.) who are employed on repairs to tools, etc., and the supply and equipment of the troudivaks. These groups, in the period 1925 to 1933, worked 2,274,875 8-hour days; but the results of their work are very difficult to evaluate, owing to the character of the tasks upon which they were engaged. However, the value of their labour is estimated at about 172 million leva.

Four undertakings are directly managed by the Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service. The information given as to their operations during the period 1 April 1924 to 31 March 1933 may be summarised as follows.

The boot and shoe factory at Gornia-Bania, near Sofia, in 159,678 days' work, made 141,766 pairs of shoes—almost all that were needed by the troudivaks—as well as 200,182 pairs of military boots for soldiers, policemen, etc. The clothing factory in the same place, in 309,201 days' work, made 247,446 coats, 71,437 overcoats, 268,414 pairs of trousers, and 267,997 caps, vests, blouses, and other articles of clothing. These two factories have made a profit of 10,385,203 leva.

Three forest estates (two of which ceased to operate as from the end of 1925) yielded, in 2,759,394 days' work, large quantities of railway sleepers, pit props, telegraph poles, beams, charcoal, barrels, firewood, etc. In addition, the necessary machinery was installed, and 49 kilometres of light railway, and various buildings, roads, etc., were constructed. A few of the figures, given by way of example, are: 608,190 normal sleepers, 338,539 light railway sleepers, 15,267 special sleepers; 351,220 telegraph poles; 381,184 metres of pit props; 8,209,191 kilogrammes of charcoal; 905,813 cubic metres of firewood; 118,147 cubic metres of building materials; 302,630 handles for axes, etc.; 22,134 square metres of wood flooring blocks, etc.; 3,176 wheelbarrows; 1,312 pairs of ski. The undertaking also supplied the stones, bricks, and lime needed for the construction of its own buildings. The net profit amounted to 46,131,987 leva.

The following table shows the output of the brick works near Sofia.

PRODUCTION OF THE BRICK WORKS, 1 APRIL 1924 TO 31 MARCH 1933

Year	Number of days worked			Total production	General expenses	Receipts	Net profit
	Productive work	Other work ¹	Total				
					Leva	Leva	Leva
1924-25	21,957	6,885	28,842	2,911,080	1,266,635	2,802,746	1,536,111
1925-26	27,170	7,386	34,556	3,663,348	2,373,021	3,488,921	1,115,900
1926-27	26,390	3,825	30,215	3,538,900	2,452,282	3,795,097	1,342,815
1927-28	25,208	728	25,936	3,620,649	2,227,410	3,320,679	1,093,269
1928-29	24,931	263	25,194	4,033,548	2,482,693	3,067,656	584,963
1929-30	28,187	1,278	29,465	3,536,001	2,448,542	3,521,834	1,073,292
1930-31	27,184	—	27,184	2,690,293	2,387,324	2,649,050	261,726
1931-32	26,779	—	26,779	3,644,532	2,250,334	2,291,844	41,510
1932-33	31,612	—	31,612	3,061,334	2,411,167	2,513,264	102,097
Total	239,418	20,365	259,783	30,699,685	20,299,408	27,451,091	7,151,683

¹ Days spent on work which is not directly productive, such as roadmaking, work in workshops and offices, and days lost through public holidays, drunkenness, illness, etc.

The general results of the Directorate undertakings are shown in the following table.

RESULTS OF WORK IN DIRECTORATE UNDERTAKINGS, 1925-1933

Year	Number of undertakings	Expenditure	Receipts	Profits
		In thousands of leva		
1925-26	5	60,370	64,583	4,213
1926-27	4	43,971	48,475	4,504
1927-28	4	39,721	41,242	1,521
1928-29	4	44,219	49,445	5,226
1929-30	4	56,528	65,072	8,544
1930-31	4	38,440	48,973	10,533
1931-32	4	36,999	47,973	10,974
1932-33	4	35,285	39,893	4,608
Total		355,533	405,656	50,123

During the eight years under consideration the Directorate undertakings thus made a profit of 50,123,000 leva.

VALUE AND COST OF THE WORK

The table below gives figures based on all the work done under the administration of ten district offices, thus giving an idea of the commercial value of the work done by the troudivaks employed on the construction of roads and railways, and of how it has increased since 1924.

DAILY OUTPUT OF TROUDOVAKS ON ROAD AND RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, 1924, 1931, AND 1932

Kind of work	1924	1931	1932
	Cubic metres		
Embankments (3 categories)	3.27, 2.10, 1.13	4.69, 2.27, 1.67	4.81, 3.37, 1.90
Quarrying stones for breaking	1.47	6.20	5.60
Digging pebbles	2.33	3.77	4.26
Digging sand	2.35	4.06	3.69
Crushing rock	3.47	2.74	6.59
Dry-walling and mortar-walling	1.51, 0.79	1.54, 1.59	1.65, 1.21
	Square metres		
Road beds	32.0	—	43.30
Ballasting (3 categories)	15.0, 18.0, 75.0	16.80, 34.58, 177.30	19.23, 29.21, 179.70

The average cost of a troudivak—including food, salaries of paid staff, amortisation of capital expenditure, forage, general expenses, etc.—fell from 49.45 leva in 1925-26 to 42.39 leva in 1931-32 and 42.20 leva in 1932-33. The receipts per troudivak are estimated at 52.90 leva in 1925-26, 75.77 leva in 1927-28, and 60 leva from 1931-32 onwards. It is therefore calculated that the compulsory labour of a troudivak brings in an average of 18 leva per day over and above what he costs.

BUDGET

The working capital required by the Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service is provided by annual credits. The total of the sums provided for under this heading in the Budgets from 1925-26 to 1932-33 amounted to 2,101,505,661 leva. The statement given below summarises the balance-sheet totals for each financial year. It covers the whole work of the Directorate: the central administration, ten district offices, and the undertakings.

**BALANCE-SHEET TOTALS OF THE DIRECTORATE OF COMPULSORY LABOUR
SERVICE, 1925-26 TO 1932-33**
(*in leva*)¹

Financial year	Expenditure	Receipts	Profit
1925-26	182,944,747	194,535,786	11,591,039
1926-27	146,548,629	162,292,360	15,743,731
1927-28	154,388,922	233,259,382	78,870,460
1928-29	164,482,237	310,365,684	145,883,447
1929-30	188,061,303	370,338,271	182,276,968
1930-31	199,413,223	316,881,174	117,467,951
1931-32	173,334,375	276,532,562	103,198,187
1932-33	152,856,464	237,300,442	84,443,978
Total ²	1,362,029,900	2,101,505,661	739,475,761

¹ Here, as elsewhere in this article, the figures ignore fractions of a lev. To make the totals agree with the partial figures, some figures have been slightly changed, but not by more than 1 lev.

² This total does not include the Fund for temporary service, which, during the four years from 1925-1926 to 1928-1929, showed receipts amounting to 2,962,427 leva and expenditure of 2,048,452 leva.

It will be seen that receipts rose steadily up to 1929-30, the year in which they reached their highest point, 370,338,271 leva, with a profit of 182,276,968 leva. From 1930-31 onwards there has been a gradual decrease.

In the absence of an accurate computation of the workers' output and its cost on a purely commercial basis, the following table indicates the sources of the total receipts of 2,101,505,661 leva.

DISTRIBUTION OF RECEIPTS, BY ORIGIN
(*in leva*)

Year	Commutation fees, payments by Ministries, etc.	Receipts from production	Miscellaneous receipts
1925-26	117,685,136	66,158,120	10,692,529
1926-27	109,864,048	51,208,024	1,220,288
1927-28	189,294,618	41,430,855	2,534,910
1928-29	251,447,196	50,574,311	8,334,177
1929-30	297,436,108	65,853,521	7,048,642
1930-31	258,013,955	48,699,040	10,168,179
1931-32	220,108,792	46,481,683	9,942,087
1932-33	188,892,820	40,458,511	7,949,111
Total	1,632,742,673	410,873,065	57,889,923

It will be seen that the receipts from production are about one-fifth of the total receipts of the Compulsory Labour Service for the eight years under consideration.

CONCLUSION

The above summary, as already observed, takes account only of regular service, and is in no sense a review of all the results obtained by compulsory labour in Bulgaria. However, a comparison with the article published in a previous number of the *Review*, concerning the early period of application of the system¹, will give an idea of the importance of the work accomplished by the General Directorate from 1921 to 1933.

The total number of workers employed during these twelve years was 223,736. This number, however, is not quite accurate, since—especially during the early years—one worker might be registered two or three times if he performed his eight months' service in several instalments. Work done for the State from 1922 to 1933 accounted for 16,207,536 8-hour days of labour, of a total value of 1,227,115,141 leva.

The principal work undertaken was, and still is, the construction and repair of roads, which accounted for about 54 per cent. of the whole of the labour called up. Work done on the railway system and in ports gave employment to 14 per cent., the General Directorate, with the undertakings operated by it, 21 per cent.; agriculture, 3 per cent.; miscellaneous, 8 per cent.

The thirteen annual balance sheets² of the Directorate of Compulsory Labour Service show total receipts 2,551,436,802 leva against total expenditure of 1,924,810,402 leva, or an excess of receipts over expenditure of 626,626,400 leva. Only the first four years showed a deficit, totalling 122,931,580 leva. All other years have shown an excess of receipts, steadily increasing up to 1929-30. This was a record year, as regards both the results in road construction and production properly so called, and excess of receipts over expenditure. A slowing-down occurred subsequently, due partly to a decrease in the value of the work done but much more to budgetary restrictions.

It may therefore be expected that when the present restrictions are abolished the value of the compulsory labour service output will once more increase. The opinion has however been expressed that, if this service is to become a real instrument of State constructive policy, it would first of all be necessary to draw up a national economic plan³ covering a period of five to ten years, and then to abolish the present tendency for commutation of compulsory service to become an ordinary tax, and to improve the equipment which, it would appear, is both unsatisfactory and inadequate.

¹ The year 1921 was only an experimental period. Cf. on this subject: Max LAZARD : *op. cit.*

² Including a sum of 59,083,364 leva derived from the Fund for temporary labour (cf. note² to the table on p. 372), and sums not included in the balance-sheets of 1921-22 and 1922-23.

³ Cf. *La Bulgarie*, 18 Aug. 1933.