

## **On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)<sup>1</sup>**

ANDREJ TÓTH

---

Institute of Central European Studies, Faculty of Public Policies in Opava,  
Silesian University in Opava  
Hradecká 17, 74601, Opava, Czech Republic  
andrej.toth@fvp.slu.cz

After World War II, the citizens of German and Hungarian nationality in Czechoslovakia lost their citizenship and all their property due to so called Beneš Decrees. The members of both those large national minorities were deprived of citizenship based on the Constitutional Decree on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality No. 33/1945 Coll. from 2 August 1945, losing their property particularly based on the Decree of the President of the Republic on confiscation of enemy property and on Funds of National Restoration No. 108/1945 Coll. from 25 October 1945. Czechoslovak citizenship was lost not only by citizens of German and Hungarian nationality who had acquired German or Hungarian citizenship according to regulations of foreign occupational power. In those cases, the decree only stated that such citizens lost their Czechoslovak citizenship by the day of acquisition of other citizenship. By the day of the effect of the Decree, also the other German or Hungarian citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic lost the Czechoslovak citizenship. That decree provision was not to

---

<sup>1</sup> This study has been published within the research project GA13–10279S “Industrial Work Force in the Czech Lands, 1938–1948” funded by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (Grantová agentura České republiky).

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

affect only the Germans and Hungarians who, in the time of increased danger to the Republic, had claimed to be Czechs or Slovaks in an official report, as was stated in the Decree. As for property, all natural persons of German and Hungarian nationality were deprived of it, except for persons who were able to prove to have remained loyal to the Czechoslovak Republic, to have never offended against the Czech and Slovak nation or to have been involved in the fight for liberation of Czechoslovakia or to have suffered under the Nazi or fascist terror.<sup>2</sup>

The number of Germans and Hungarians in Czechoslovakia was not negligible. Based on the last census made in the First Czechoslovak Republic in 1930, 3,2 million Germans, i.e. about 22% of all population, claimed allegiance to German nationality. Almost 700 thousand citizens, i.e. almost 5% of the total number of the population, claimed allegiance to Hungarian minority.<sup>3</sup>

An overwhelming minority of the three-million German minority was to be subject, in connection with the effort of the Czechoslovak government to create as homogeneous national state as possible, to mass displacement from the country, legalized from international legal perspective by the Potsdam Conference in summer 1945 and implemented substantially in 1945 and 1946. The displacement of the Hungarian minority, amounting to more than half a million persons, was not pushed through by the Czechoslovak government

---

<sup>2</sup>For the above stated Decrees of the President of the Republic, compare the Collection of Acts and Decrees of the Czechoslovak Republic (hereinafter referred to only as the CoAaD), Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, Doc. No. 33, Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic from 2 August 1945, on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality, pp. 57–58; ibidem, Is. 48, issued on 30 October 1945, Doc. No. 108, Decree of the President of the Republic from 25 October 1945, on confiscation of enemy property and Funds of National Restoration, pp. 248–254.

<sup>3</sup>In the census made in 1930, 3 231 688 citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic claimed allegiance to German nationality and 619 923, to Hungarian nationality. The total number of population of the Czechoslovak state amounted to 14 479 565 in 1930. Cf. *Československá statistika* – Vol. 98. Sčítání lidu v republice Československé ze dne 1. prosince 1930. Part I., Praha 1934, Tab. 6. Národnost československých státních příslušníků podle volebních krajů a zemí, s. 47\*.

at international level. In case of the Hungarian minority, “only” so called exchange of population between Hungary and Slovakia took place in form of expatriation of almost 77 thousand members of the Hungarian minority from Czechoslovakia, who were substituted by 60 thousand re-emigrants from among the Slovak minority of Hungary in 1947 to 1949. The “national homogenization” of the state was to be performed, in case of Czechoslovak Hungarians, by so called re-slovakization, forcing the remaining Hungarian speaking population to apply for adjudgement of Slovak nationality.<sup>4</sup>

The principle of collective guilt put all members of the German and Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia to the position of enemy population without claim to their civil rights, or to rights to citizenship and property, and to social and national rights, respectively. But their position became markedly aggravated not only from the civil perspective. Markedly aggravated became also the position of German and Hungarian workers who had lost even standard labour-law position pertaining to Czechoslovak citizens. Their general complicated position in post-war Czechoslovakia became, of course, further worsened by the overall atmosphere in the society, that was not only strongly anti-German but defined negatively also against the Hungarian minority, which had not been related to the Nazi regime, but was blamed for involvement in disintegration of the Republic in 1938.

The anti-German and anti-Hungarian mood in the whole society of Czechs and Slovaks spread of course also to businesses and factories. Particularly the legislatively chaotic and turbulent period after the end of the war was critical. In the first days after the revolution, the Central Trade Union Council issued instructions for its organizational components and works councils to perform national cleansing in factories and offices. The instructions were allegedly issued in compliance with the conviction of the workers. In view

---

<sup>4</sup> In order to re-acquire their civil rights, two fifths of Czechoslovak Hungarians, in total 452 thousand persons, asked for adjudgement of Slovak nationality within so called re-slovakization. But the authorities adjudged Slovak nationality only to less than 363 thousand Hungarians. Cf. L. SZARKA (ed.), *A szlovákiai Magyarok kényszertelepítéseinek emlékezete 1945–1948*, Komárom 2003, p. 18.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

of the lack of legal norms, the instructions were to become orientational aid and the courts of honour and commissions of inquiry, established on their base, became expression of the revolutionary atmosphere among employees and of assertion of their effort aimed at elimination from labour process of all traitors and collaborators. Given the general revolutionary mood, it can be naturally assumed that, at least at the beginning, even such persons from among the German and Hungarian nationality whose only guilt consisted in their nationality became victims of the instructions. The execution of national cleansing in factories and offices got legal framework only in November 1946, when the Minister of the Interior, based on the empowerment by § 1 para. 3 of the Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 138/1945 Coll., from 27 October 1945 on punishment of some offences against national honour, issued Directive No. B-2220–23/11–45–I/2 for punishment of offences against national honour. According to the Directive, it was possible to report suspicion of crimes according to the relevant Decrees of the President of the Republic, issued in the meantime, to the Safety Commission of Local National Committee. The Safety Commission of District National Committee was authorized with the right of inquiry. The District National Committee also implemented criminal proceedings, through a four-membered Finding commission. At the same time, the National Committees had to implement the criminal proceedings in accelerated manner, as the crimes committed according to the Constitutional Decree No. 138/1945 Coll. on punishment of some offences against national honour had limitation period of six months from the effect of the Decree in December 1945.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Všeodborový archiv Českomoravské konfederace odborových svazů (hereinafter referred to only as VA ČMKOS), f. Sociální oddělení Ústřední rady odborů z let 1945–1950 (hereinafter referred to only as SOÚRO 1945–1950), Card File No. 9, inv. unit 7/22/1a, typed document without detailed identification and dating, titled “O provádění národní očisty”; for the referred Constitutional Decree cf. CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 57, issued on 26 November 1945, Doc. No. 138, Decree of the President of the Republic from 27 October 1945 on punishment of some offences against national honour, p. 338; for the referred Directive of Minister of Interior compare also *Úřední list republiky Československé, I. díl normativní (nařizovací)* (hereinafter referred to only as ÚŘLS I), Is. 157, issued on 20 December 1945, Doc. No. 607, Directive of Minister of Interior from 26 November 1945, No. B-2220–23/11–45–I/2, to implement the

Improper behaviour offending the feelings of the Czech or Slovak people, subject to punishment, was specified in paragraph 10 of the above stated Directive of the Ministry of the Interior. For example the following behaviours were considered punishable: claiming allegiance to German or Hungarian nationality, unless it had led to loss of Czechoslovak citizenship according to § 1 para. 4 of the above stated Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 from August 1945<sup>6</sup> on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality or deliberate support to denationalization efforts of the Germans and Hungarians; political co-operation with Germans or Hungarians and membership in fascist organizations, if the respective person had acted with special eagerness, exceeding the normal framework of their member obligations; approval of, support to or defence of enemy statements or acts of Nazis, fascists and Czech or Slovak traitors; professional co-operation with Germans, Hungarians and Czech or Slovak traitors exceeding the limits of average order of performance (initiative and extra-service proposals, orders for increased work performance, etc.); applications for promotion, decorations, awards, services and other advantages at German or Hungarian authorities or officials or provision of payments and different other advantages to occupiers; social contacts with Germans or Hungarians in an extent exceeding the indispensable level, as well as economic contacts with Germans or Hungarians, exceeding such level and aiming at achieving above-average evaluation and at knowing support to occupiers; abusing, offending or terrorizing of Czechs and Slovaks, committed in the services or in the interest of the occupiers or in the effort to appeal to them, etc. A precondition of punishability consisted in the fact that the act had provoked public nuisance.<sup>7</sup>

---

Decree of the President of the Republic No. 138/1945 Coll., on punishment of some offences against national honour, pp. 1761–1762.

<sup>6</sup> Cases of failure to recognize claiming of German or Hungarian nationality by Czechs or Slovaks, with reference to the fact that it had been done due to pressure or special circumstances. Cf. CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, quot. Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., § 1 para. 4, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> VAČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 9, inv. unit 7/22/1a, quot. typed document without detailed identification and dating, titled “O provádění národní očisty”; ÚŘLS I, Is.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

The situation of the German and Hungarian workers without basic civil rights was markedly complicated also by Act No. 83 Coll. from 11 April 1946 on employment (apprenticeship) of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters<sup>8</sup> that responded to the loss of Czechoslovak citizenship by members of those national groups. Based on provision of § 1 para. 1 of the Act, the members of German and Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia who had lost their citizenship lost also their employment (apprenticeship).<sup>9</sup> The persons of German and Hungarian nationality were to lose their employments and apprenticeships within three months from the day on which the Act had entered into force, unless the persons of the above stated nationalities were able to submit the following documents to the competent District Office of Employment Protection: 1) certificate of Czechoslovak citizenship, issued under the effect of the above stated Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll. on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship from 1945, or a document that they had applied for issue of such certificate and that the application had not been effectively settled without their fault (for the Germans and Hungarians who, according to § 1 para. 3 of the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., had claimed allegiance to Czech or Slovak nationality in the period of increased danger to the Republic);<sup>10</sup> 2) certificate of the competent District National Committee or District Administrative Commission or representative office (for the persons of German and Hungarian nationality who were able to prove that they had remained loyal to the Czechoslovak Republic and never offended against the Czech and Slovak nation, or that they had been actively involved

---

157, issued on 20 December 1945, quot. Doc. No. 607.

<sup>8</sup>The act covered employments or apprenticeships established by contacts of private law. It did not cover employment of public employees, regardless of the character of their employment. Cf. CoAaD, Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, Doc. No. 83, Act from 11 April 1946 on employment (apprenticeship) of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters, § 6, p. 836.

<sup>9</sup>For the above stated article and paragraph of the act cf. *ibidem*, p. 835.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem* § 1, para. 1, and 2a, p. 835; *ibidem*, Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, quot. Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., § 1 para. 3, p. 57.

in the fight for its liberation or suffered under Nazi or fascist terror, so that they, according to § 2 para. and 1 § of Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., did not lose claim to the Czechoslovak citizenship);<sup>11</sup> 3) document of having applied for returning of the Czechoslovak citizenship and that the application had not been effectively settled without their fault yet (only for married women of German or Hungarian nationality who, for the purposes of the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., were assessed together with minor children separately, or for women of German and Hungarian nationality, married to Czechoslovak citizens who did not lose their citizenship; such women were to be considered Czechoslovak citizens until decision of the competent authorities).<sup>12</sup>

But the act defined at the same time that persons of German and Hungarian nationality not preserved or not returned their Czechoslovak citizenship in the subsequent period would lose their employment or apprenticeship by the day of effective decision that those persons did not have claim to Czechoslovak citizenship. However, the act cancelled also employment or apprenticeship of German and Hungarian citizens of German or Hungarian nationality,

---

<sup>11</sup> CoAaD, Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, quot. Act No. 83/1946 Coll., §1 para. 2c, p. 835; *ibidem*, Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, quot. Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., § 2 para. 1, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, quot. Act No. 83/1946 Coll., §1 para. 2d, p. 835; *ibidem*, Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, quot. Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., § 4 para. 1 and 2, p. 58. The employment or apprenticeship was lost, according to § 1 para. 2b, automatically also by Czechs and Slovaks and members of other Slavic nations who, in the past period, had claimed to allegiance to German or Hungarian nations due to pressure or to special circumstances, unless they submitted a certificate of national reliability, issued by the District National Committee or by the District Administrative Commission and approved by the Ministry of Interior, or a document stating that they had applied for issue of such certificate and that the application had not been effectively settled without their fault yet. Such persons, according to § 1 para. 4 of the Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33 Coll. on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship from 1945, were not considered Germans and Hungarians, but they had to apply for official examination of the facts under whose pressure they had been forced to claim allegiance to German or Hungarian nations, and such facts were finally confirmed by the Ministry of the Interior. Cf. CoAaD, Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, quot. Act No. 83/1946 Coll., §1 para. 2b, p. 835; *ibidem*, Vol. 1945, Is. 17, issued on 10 August 1945, quot. Constitutional Decree of the President of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., § 1 para. 4, p. 57.



## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

i.e. also to the Germans and Hungarians not concerned by the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll.<sup>13</sup>

The discussed legislation norm on employment (apprenticeship) of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters confirmed at the same time the validity of the formerly factually terminated employment or apprenticeship of persons with withdrawn Czechoslovak citizenship according to Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll. that had been terminated in any manner before the Act had been passed. According to law, such terminated employment or apprenticeship of the concerned persons was considered cancelled lawfully by the day on which it took place.<sup>14</sup>

In case the public interest required it, persons whose employment or apprenticeship was cancelled by the Act had to continue working at their past place of work. In such case, they were covered by the provisions of the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 71/1945 Coll. on work obligation of persons who had lost the Czechoslovak citizenship. Whether the continuation of work was in public interest was to be decided by the District Office of Employment Protection in whose district the relevant factory was situated, after having interviewed the employer, the factory representation of the relevant factory, the relevant interest organization and the relevant body of the Trade Unions.<sup>15</sup>

The Act on employment (apprenticeship) of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters cancelled at the same time also the employment and apprenticeship of persons found guilty of crime according to the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 16/1945 on punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their supporters and on extraordinary people's courts, affecting significantly also persons of German and Hungarian nationality. In case of such persons, the Act confirmed that their employment or apprenticeship had

---

<sup>13</sup> CoAaD, Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, quot. Act No. 83/1946 Coll., §1 para. 3 and 4, p. 835.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, § 3, p. 836.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, § 2, pp. 835–836.



terminated by the day of their effective conviction or by the day such persons were taken into custody.<sup>16</sup> In case the employment or apprenticeship of such persons had been terminated in any manner before, the Act confirmed that the validity of termination of such employment or apprenticeship was considered lawful by the day on which it took place.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, each employee whose employment or apprenticeship had ceased to exist due to the provisions of Act No. 83/1946 Coll. had no claim to payments that otherwise would belonged to such employee according to law or contract for the case of premature termination of employment or apprenticeship. It is obvious that such provision aggravated further the already dramatic social situation of persons of German or Hungarian nationality who became virtually deprived, and often the displacement (in case of the German minority) across the state border constituted the only hope of their full reintegration into the society both from civil and from labour-law perspective. But the act applied only in the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands, which means that it was directed particularly on the German minority that was experiencing the culminating deportation to the territory of Germany. In less extent, it affected the members of the Hungarian minority or, more precisely, it affected them only in the territory of the western half of the Republic. The relation of the state to the Hungarian minority was limited particularly by the fact that its destiny had not been decided yet; it was obvious that it could not

---

<sup>16</sup> But the provision did not affect persons whose prosecution had been abandoned by the court according to § 16 para. 2 of Decree No. 16/1945 Coll. According to that article of the above stated Decree, the person could be exempted from punishment for crimes that could be classified as subversive and supportive to fascist and Nazi movement, if it was commonly known or if it could be demonstrated without delay that the accused person had acted with the purpose to benefit the Czech or Slovak nation or the Czechoslovak Republic or their allies or that the accused person contributed e.g. to the liberation of the Republic with later activities, etc. However, the loss caused by the perpetrator should not exceed disproportionately the public benefit aimed at. Cf. CoAaD, § 4, p. 836; *ibidem*, Is. 9, issued on 9 July 1945, Doc. No. 16, Decree of the President of the Republic from 19 June 1945 on punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their supporters and on extraordinary people's courts, § 16, para. 2, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> CoAaD Vol. 1946, Is. 40, issued on 3 May 1946, quot. Act No. 83/1946 Coll., § 4, p. 836.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

be displaced massively to Hungary like the German minority, as the great powers did not agree to it.<sup>18</sup>

The Act on employment (apprenticeship) of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters was, of course, passed by the Interim National Assembly in its original bill, as it had been approved at the meeting of the Government. For internal information, the bill was sent out by the Central Trade Union Council to all local, district and regional trade union councils, to all central committees and to the national economic commission of the Central Trade Union Council on 23 February 1946, with a note that after being approved by the Chamber, the contents of the Act could be revealed to the public. In view of the general post-war atmosphere in the country, it could be expected that the bill, further complicating the social situation of persons of German and Hungarian nationality, would be approved by the deputies without delay. In compliance with application of collective guilt in the Czechoslovak law, the Central Trade Union Council probably did not have any problem with the bill either.<sup>19</sup>

In general, workers of German and Hungarian nationality were covered, with regard to labour-law conditions, by special regime that was continuously legislatively regulated by acts, decrees and directives. The state had benevolent attitude only towards a narrow group of working Germans and Hungarians. They included particularly the then irreplaceable employees in mining industry or specially qualified employees, or experts and specialists particularly in industry, not covered even by the provision of the directives of the Ministry of the Interior to perform continuous displacement of Germans from the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic in order to provide for the

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, §§ 5 and 7, p. 836.

<sup>19</sup> VA ČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 13, inv. unit 14/8/3c), Němci, Maďaři a pomahači, Doc. of the Central Social-Political Commission of the Central Trade Union Council with original ref. V–25105–46–Šo/Ku from 23 February 1946, Subject: “Bill on employment of Germans, Hungarians, traitors and their supporters”, the document was sent out to all local, district and regional trade union councils, to all central committees and to the national economic commission of the Central Trade Union Council.

operation of important production branches. The special category of employees included also non-divorced and non-widowed wives of Czech or Slovak nationality from mixed marriages who had kept Czechoslovak citizenship according to the principles of the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., or whose marriage was contracted before 21 May 1938. As for mixed marriage of a German or Hungarian man with a Czech or Slovak woman, the wife remained Czechoslovak citizen provided that both the man and the wife had been Czechoslovak citizens before the occupation. In such situation, the wife of Czech or Slovak origin was not considered German or Hungarian according to § 1 para. 4 or § 5 of the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll. on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality. Such persons had virtually the same status as the Czech and Slovak employees and were subject to standard labour-law regulations and decrees, including for example the standard regulations and decrees on holidays that, in case of other German and Hungarian employees, was normalized separately by a special decree of the Ministry of the Interior, upon accord with the Ministry of Social Care from 26 June 1946.<sup>20</sup>

A different regime covered workers of German and Hungarian nationality, or Germans and Hungarians who had been deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship based on the Constitutional Decree of the president of the Republic No. 33/1945 Coll., also in the area of social insurance. Based on the resolution of the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic on the directives for interim regulation of social insurance, persons deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship were provided with unrestricted allowances only in case of sickness benefits. Instead of benefits from all areas of pension insurance, united allowances were given, only in case of disability, widow

<sup>20</sup> VA ČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, *ibidem*, Doc. of the Ministry of Social Care with original ref. III–4071–18/6 from 23 July 1946, circular No. 201, Subject: “Holiday in 1946 for persons of German nationality”, document directed to all District Offices of Employment Protection. The document was sent to the Provincial Office of Employment Protection in Prague, Brno and to the subsidiary in Moravian Ostrava. The persons that could not be covered by standard regulations on holiday during collective holiday were covered by the decree of the Ministry of the Interior from the above stated day No. 1620–26/46–2–Vb/3. (Cf. *ibidem*).

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

and orphan benefits. Instead of other benefits of pension insurance, persons without Czechoslovak citizenship were not awarded any allowances. However, also persons over 65 years of age who did not work were considered disabled persons. Instead of accident insurance benefits, allowances were provided to the injured person, to the widow and to the children. Instead of other accident insurance benefits, no allowances were provided. According to law, there was no legal claim to such allowances substituting the benefits according to legal regulations of the Act on insurance of employees for the case of illness, disability and all age and according to the Act on accident insurance. Allowances were provided only at request. If conditions for payment of several allowances to the same person were met, only the highest allowance was provided. The above stated allowances were provided, of course, based on the insurance acquired in Czechoslovakia, and only persons with residence on the territory of Czechoslovakia had claim to them.<sup>21</sup>

From the point of view of public and state interest, also the placement of labour was specially normalized from the perspective of their nationality. For placement of labour from the perspective of their nationality, the Czech and Moravian-Silesian territory was divided, for reasons of state safety and public interests, into two areas: the frontier area and the inland area. For the purposes of allocation of workers, a narrow frontier strip corresponding to the customs frontier zone, as specified by the Ministry of Finance in the period of the First Republic, was defined as frontier area. The inland area was understood as

---

<sup>21</sup> VAČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 9, inv. unit 7/22/1e, Bill of government resolution of interim regulation of social insurance of persons deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship, doc. of the Ministry of Employment Protection and Social Care, with original ref. IX–1000–3/6–46 from 6 June 1946, Subject: “Government resolution on directives for interim regulation of social insurance of persons deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship”, see §§ 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11; the document was directed to fourteen recipients or institutions in total, including the Central Trade Union Council. See further also the document of the Ministry of Employment Protection and Social Care with original ref. IX–1000–26/6–1946 from 27 June 1946, Subject: “Government resolution from 27 June 1946 on directives for interim regulation of social insurance of persons deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship. Implementation”, the document was directed to six recipients or organizations, e.g. to Central Social Insurance Company, General Pension Institute, Union of Pension Institutes, etc.

all the remaining territory of the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands situated outside the above stated zone. The border between the zones consisted in so called internal customs border whose line had been defined in detail in 1929. In context with considering the nationality of the workers when placing them into the above stated two zones of the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands from the perspective of state safety and public interests, the District Offices of Labour Protection or their branches through whose area of authority the above stated border of the frontier and inland areas ran were invited to perform in their administrative district, based on the relevant First-Republic regulations, the delimitation of both areas to define which villages and municipalities fell within the frontier area and which into the inland area, and to mark the border in synoptic maps of their districts if possible. The relevant District Offices of Labour Protection were to care that the delimitation was performed correctly, i.e. in unified manner, also by the branches.<sup>22</sup>

The District Offices of Labour Protection were instructed to observe consistently the specific principles when allocating labour to both areas. Exclusively workers of Czech, Slovak or other Slavic nationalities could be allocated to the frontier area, particularly the Bulgarians who were sent to the Sudeten frontier area after the displacement of Germans who had lived there. The District Offices of Labour Protection were explicitly prohibited from placing workers of non-Slavic nationality, i.e. particularly the Hungarians, to the frontier area. Persons of non-Slavic nationality could be allocated as workers only to the inland area. With regard to the fact that there was lack of labour that could be placed to the broader frontier strip lining the actual Czech and Moravian-Silesian frontier area, the District Offices of Labour Protection were consistently instructed that Bulgarian workers should not be allocated

---

<sup>22</sup> VA ČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 13, inv. unit 14/8/3c), Němci, Maďaři a pomahači, doc. of the Ministry of Social Care with original ref. IV–2111–21/12 from 20 December 1946, circular No. 377, Subject: “Placement of labour from the perspective of their nationality with regard to public and state interests”, the document was sent out to all District Offices of Labour Protection, or to their branches, to all Labour Inspectorates at District Authorities, to the Provincial Office of Labour Protection of Prague and Brno and to the Provincial Office of Labour Protection, subsidiary of Ostrava.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

to inland areas on principle and used only for the frontier area, unless special circumstances required their exceptional allocation to inland. The Ministry of Social Care alerted explicitly the heads of the District Offices of Labour Protection that they were personally responsible for consistent implementation of those principles of allocation of labour in their administrative districts.<sup>23</sup>

The rules of allocation of labour to areas near the state border of the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands, i.e. to broader frontier area corresponding to the customs frontier zone declared in December 1946 applied particularly to persons from among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, used to compensate the loss of labour in Bohemia particularly in the area of agriculture caused by displacement of the German population. The Czech economy felt distinct absence of labour from spring 1945 already, even before the actual end of war, i.e. before the actual displacement of the large German speaking population from the Republic. Many Germans, including a lot of qualified workers, had preferred to leave the territory of Czechoslovakia with advancing front already. Within the subsequent wild displacement and afterwards, within the regular transfer of Germans, a number of qualified workers, who could not be immediately replaced by new labour, left the Republic. In spring 1946, the absence of labour became alarming already, and additionally to industrial production, also production in agriculture was endangered by it. According to official data from February 1946, the labour market of Czechoslovakia was lacking something more than 192 thousand persons. But due to the continuous transfer of Germans to Germany, the figure was increasing and in September 1946, the absence of labour in the national economy exceeded 254 thousand. In agriculture, the absence of labour was intensified by the fact that as compared to 1930, one and a half million hectares more land were to be cultivated in 1946. The continuously increasing loss of labour in the area of agriculture in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia was compensated by the Czechoslovak authorities from 1945 by forced appointment of persons of Hungarian nationality from Slovakia. According to official data from mid-

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

December 1945, 9,247 men and women of Hungarian nationality, including 4,337 agricultural workers and 4,728 self-standing farmers were employed in Czech agriculture in 1945 already. From the total number of minority Hungarians employed forcedly in Czech Agriculture in 1945, only 2%, i.e. 182 persons had gone to Bohemia voluntarily. The others were placed to Bohemia by virtue of office. However, the above stated total number of Hungarians forcedly working as agricultural workers in Bohemia in 1945 includes not only persons who had made their living by agriculture in Slovakia too. Also members of intelligentsia were moved to Bohemia for agricultural work; those persons are probably included in the category of agricultural workers.<sup>24</sup>

In national economy, the Czechoslovak state used as needed not only the Hungarians in Czech agriculture, but also the Germans in other areas of economic life – both the Germans waiting for forced transport to Germany and the Germans waiting for the decision of Czechoslovak authorities with regard to their further staying in the Republic. Forced appointment of persons of enemy nationalities in economic life of the state was enabled by Decree No. 71/1945 Coll. from 19 September 1945 on work obligation of persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship. The Decree was aimed at obtaining cheap labour to eliminate and compensate for the damage caused by war and air bombing, as well as to restore the economic life disturbed by war. According to the Decree, the work obligation bound not only persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship based on the Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., but also persons of Czech, Slovak or other Slavic nationalities who had applied for awarding of German or Hungarian citizenship in the period of increased danger to the Republic, without being forced to do it by pressure or by special circumstances. The work obligation did not apply to the Germans and Hungarians who had claimed to be Czechs or Slovaks in an official report in the period of increased danger to the Republic or who had claimed to be Germans or Hungarians under pressure, according to § 1 para. 3 and 4 of the

---

<sup>24</sup> K. VADKERTY, *Magyar sors Csehszlovákiában 1945–1947*, in: *História*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1997, p. 4.



## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

Constitutional Decree No. 33/1945 Coll., or the Germans and Hungarians who, according to the above stated § 2 para. 3 and § 4 para. 2 of the Constitutional Decree on regulation of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality, were to be considered Czechoslovak citizens until further decision.<sup>25</sup>

According to the provisions of the Decree of the President of the Republic on work obligation of persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship, men aged 14 to 60 years and women aged 15 to 50 years were subject to work obligation.<sup>26</sup> Persons covered by the Decree had to register, at public or personal invitation, personally and in the specified period, with the Local National Committee or with the Local Administrative Commission by their place of residence; those authorities had the power to allocate the persons subject to the work obligation to specific work or, as the case may be, to put together so called working columns or transfers of such labour for the necessary places of the Republic. The persons subject to work obligation due to loss of Czechoslovak citizenship had to perform the assigned works anywhere, and they had to perform even works not belonging to their regular profession. But the Decree of the President of the Republic covered particularly persons of German nationality, as its territorial validity was limited only to the Czech and Moravian-Silesian territory.<sup>27</sup>

The above stated table of the Ministry of Social Care shows the numbers of employed workers of German and Hungarian nationality who were subject to work obligation according to the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 71/1945 Coll. in the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands in June 1946. Statistical data in the table show illustratively only the movements in the

---

<sup>25</sup> CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 32, issued on 27 September 1945, Doc. No. 71, Decree of the President of the republic from 19 September 1945 on work obligation of persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship, § 1 para. 1 and 2, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> Physically or mentally disabled persons, pregnant women from the fourth month of pregnancy, recent mothers during six weeks after birth, women caring for a child under six years of age were exempt from the work obligation. Cf. *ibidem*, § 2 para. 2, p. 121.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, § 2 para. 1, § 3 and § 8 para. 1, pp. 121 and 122.

category of persons with work obligation in the relevant month, stating total numbers of workers of German and Hungarian nationalities by branches at the beginning and at the end of the month by genders as well as total drops and drops caused by continuous transfer of Germans to Germany in the relevant month, also by genders.<sup>28</sup>

Profession groups (by work performed)	Number at the beginning of month	Decrease					Number at the end of month	
		Total		from that amount, due to displacement				
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Agricultural professions, animal breeders, gardeners	85.908	155.163	8.721	14.722	6.575	10.889	81.139	149.164
Forester, hunter and fisher professions	15.326	13.422	909	1.231	578	707	15.122	13.079
Miners and related professions	19.423	490	1.262	62	566	22	19.051	495
Stone processing workers, ceramicists, glassmakers	10.972	6.998	657	581	411	300	10.745	6.861
Metal processing workers and related professions	24.277	7.390	2.363	550	1.498	276	22.859	6.958
Makers of musical instruments and toys	2.226	486	429	24	429	24	1.326	482

<sup>28</sup> VAČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 15, inv. unit 21/7, Number of employed persons (Germans and Hungarians) subject to work obligation according to Decree No. 71/1945 Coll., table annex to document of Ministry of Social Care with original ref. ??–1836–6/8–46 from 6 August 1946, Subject: “Statistics of persons subject to work obligation according to Decree No. 71/1945 Coll.”.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

Chemical workers	845	349	53	27	33	25	814	335
Rubber processing workers and related professions	257	139	24	10	13	4	242	130
Textile workers	14.643	29.377	834	2.500	581	2.022	14.424	29.064
Paper processing workers	3.174	2.554	159	203	106	118	3.073	2.429
Leather processing workers and related professions	1.233	455	86	41	71	29	1.181	419
Wood processing workers and related professions	9.442	1.343	1.005	97	770	60	8.736	1.279
Workers for foodstuffs and eatables	5.349	2.475	580	308	448	167	4.971	2.306
Clothing industry workers	5.848	18.244	762	1.367	627	1.014	5.262	17.479
Hairdressers and other professions for body care	1.045	1.727	170	184	145	147	912	1.604
Building workers	13.469	784	1.277	211	831	97	13.031	617
Graphical professions	1.056	303	55	24	36	14	1.032	292
Cleaning and disinfection workers	614	917	87	200	29	17	538	793
Theatre and film workers	17	10	1	–	–	–	16	10
Restaurant employees	1.209	6.377	233	742	150	446	1.015	5.889
Transport workers	10.111	1.906	670	183	531	145	9.735	1.776

Domestic workers and related professions	1.108	34.407	175	4.861	150	3.426	954	30.886
Casual workers of all kind	63.000	69.993	7.120	7.615	4.677	4.813	60.749	68.028
Machinists and boiler operators, except for mining and shipping industry	1.738	31	83	4	51	4	1.731	27
Commercial, office and administrative professions	6.176	8.774	1.075	1.373	925	1.206	5.281	7.572
Technicians	1.246	92	163	15	147	15	1.105	83
Other professions in higher services	1.185	1.805	262	205	221	166	960	1.657
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300.897</b>	<b>366.011</b>	<b>29.215</b>	<b>37.340</b>	<b>20.599</b>	<b>26.153</b>	<b>286.504</b>	<b>349.714</b>
	<b>666.908</b>		<b>66.555</b>		<b>46.752</b>		<b>636.2181*</b>	

The mandatory placement of persons of Hungarian nationality in Czech agriculture as agricultural workers was implemented based on the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 88/1945 Coll. from 1 October 1945 on general work obligation. According to the provisions of the Decree, all men in Czechoslovakia, aged from 16 to 55 years, and women aged from 18 to 45 years, could be allocated to perform works whose urgent execution was required by important public interests. Unlike Decree No. 71/1945 Coll., the Decree on general work obligation specified that when allocating persons for work, their personal, economic and social situation was to be considered. The professional qualification and past job of the allocated persons was to be considered as well. It was also specified that women were to be allocated only to works usually performed by women. It was further specified that married persons were to be allocated only in case of lack of

\* The total increase in new persons of German and Hungarian nationality who were employed based on the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 71/1945 Coll. on work obligation of persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship amounted to 35,065 in June.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

adequate single persons. People could be allocated to work according to Decree No. 88/1945 Coll. for a maximal period of one year. The period could be extended only for urgent reasons, by six months at the maximum.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly to the latter specific practical provisions of the Decree, also further partial provisions of that legislative document were much more “elaborate” and consistent, which shows that they applied first of all to persons with Czechoslovak citizenship. While Decree No. 71/1945 Coll. had only 11 articles, Decree No. 88/1945 Coll. had 27 articles in total. So Decree No. 88/1945 Coll. was, legally, much more comprehensive, as it applied particularly to persons with all civil rights. There was also essential difference in the stated lower age limit. While persons without Czechoslovak citizenship were subject, according to Decree No. 71/1945 Coll., to work obligation from 14 or 15 years of age, respectively, persons covered by general work duty were subject to it from 16 or 18 years of age, respectively. There was also marked difference in the maximal age limit that was five years lower both for men and for women in case of general work obligation.<sup>30</sup>

Although the placement of workers of Hungarian nationality in Czech lands for agricultural works took place based on the Decree of the President of the Republic on general work obligation, persons of Hungarian nationality were treated as persons who had lost Czechoslovak citizenship. The first wave of forced

---

<sup>29</sup> CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 40, issued on 17 October 1945, Doc. No. 88, Decree of the President of the Republic from 1 October 1945 on general work obligation, Part I, § 1, § 3 para. 1 and 2 and § 4 para. 2, pp. 157 and 158.

<sup>30</sup> Cf *ibidem*, pp. 157–161 and CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 32, issued on 27 September 1945, *quot.* Decree of the President of the Republic No. 71/1945 Coll., pp. 121–122. The following persons were exempt from general work obligation: military persons in active duty, persons whose staying in the existing activity or in the existing job was indispensable from the perspective of public interest, university students who were continuing their studies or preparing for exams and pupils of public secondary and professional schools or persons in regular apprenticeship, respectively. Further, the provisions of general work obligation did not apply to women from the beginning of the third month of pregnancy, as well as to women caring at least for one child under 15 years and to women caring themselves for household and caring for one member of such household. It was explicitly defined that general work obligation did not apply to members of foreign representative bodies and members of their families. Cf. CoAaD, Vol. 1945, Is. 40, issued on 17 October 1945, *quot.* Decree of the President of the Republic No. 88/1945 Coll., § 2, p. 157.

appointment of persons of Hungarian nationality in agriculture in the Czech and Moravian-Silesian lands took place from October 1945 to mid-February 1946. Such persons were placed to Prague, Kolín, Pardubice, Jičín, Plzeň, Benešov, Tábor, Milevsko, České Budějovice, Ostrava and Zlín and came exclusively from Western Slovakian districts. But their obligatory work appointment in the western half of the Republic was limited to only three month then. In 1946, the government first tried to recruit the Slovak Hungarians for agricultural works in Bohemia based on voluntary recruitment; but there was only marginal interest of members of the Slovak Hungarian minority to work in the Czech lands. During summer 1946, a plan of mandatory placement of Hungarian labour from Slovakia to agriculture in Bohemia was gradually elaborated. Gradually, all municipalities from which all persons of Hungarian nationality could be placed to obligatory works in Bohemia were specified. In contradiction with the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 88/1945 Coll., in case of persons of Hungarian nationality, obligatory relocation for forced works to the Czech lands was planned not only for the relevant individuals but for all members of their families. The then Prime Minister, communist Klement Gottwald, expected that up to 150 thousand Slovakian Hungarians would be obligatorily relocated to Bohemia within general work obligation.<sup>31</sup>

The first transport of persons of Hungarian nationality from Slovakia to Bohemia within their obligatory work appointment in Czech agriculture was dispatched on 19 November 1946 and the last, on 27 February 1947. Transports of Hungarians to Bohemia within the implemented general work obligation in the interest of the needs of the state took place virtually under the same conditions as transports of Germans to Germany, in self-contained goods trains. While the main wave of organized displacement of Germans that was implemented mostly in 1946 was terminated in November, the transports of Hungarians for forced works to Bohemia, organized under strict supervision of Czech and Slovak police, were performed during winter months; in winter 1946/47, in the period from December to February, the lowest temperatures of the decade were measured in Czechoslovakia. During the day, the temperatures

<sup>31</sup> VADKERTY, pp. 4–5.

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

rose to mere minus 10–12 degrees and at night, the temperatures dropped to minus 20–26 degrees. Thus the transports of the Slovakian Hungarians and their families to Bohemia, which took place under very inhumane conditions, were multiplied by long lasting adverse weather.<sup>32</sup>

In total, up to almost 44 thousand persons of Hungarian nationality were transported for obligatory works in Bohemia within the general work obligation; overwhelming majority of them was deported to the western half of the Republic based on official decision. Only less than 2 and a half thousand members of the Hungarian minority went to Bohemia voluntarily within recruitment of labour from Slovakia. The persons forcedly appointed to work in Bohemia were deported from 17 majority-Hungarian-speaking districts from the whole territory of Southern Slovakia, lining the border to Hungary, or from 394 municipalities in total. More than 5 and a half thousand from the above stated number of Hungarians deported from Slovakia to Bohemia were children. Such persons were bound to a specific place of work appointment and their freedom of movement was markedly restricted. Although, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic No. 88/1945 Coll. on general work obligation, the maximal period of work appointment was set at one year, persons of Hungarian nation appointed to Bohemia as agricultural workers could return to Slovakia only in spring 1949, usually under relatively dramatic conditions, as their property had usually been assigned to Slovak immigrants within the effort of the state to increase the proportion of Slovak speaking population in majority-Hungarian-speaking regions of Southern Slovakia. Additional settlement of Slovaks in Hungarian regions of Southern Slovakia had been connected with the obligatory placement of Hungarians to Bohemia within the first obligatory employment of Hungarians from Slovakia in Bohemia in the period from October 1945 to January 1946 already.<sup>33</sup>

To complete the picture, let's add that the Czechoslovak government tried to solve the post-war lack of workers not only by introduction of work obligation

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, pp. 4, 6–7.



for persons deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship, by general work obligation for all persons regardless of nationality and by the plan of re-emigration of Czechs and Slovaks from abroad, particularly from Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union. The lack of labour was to be compensated also by recruitment of workers from abroad. On 1 January 1946 already, when the first wave of forced work appointment of persons of Hungarian nationality in Bohemia was under way, the Czechoslovak government decided that the Ministry of Labour Protection and Social Care should initiate negotiations of placement of large number of workers from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Italy in the Czech labour market. Based on the decision, negotiations with the Italian Embassy in Prague were initiated virtually at once. But the negotiations between Prague and Rome about appointment of Italian workers in the Czechoslovak labour market finally came to a deadlock. Based on a deal with the commercial secretary of the Italian legation in Prague, the Czechoslovak side promised to submit a draft of bilateral agreement as base for further negotiations. But during the negotiations on the conditions of recruitment of Italian workers for the Czechoslovak labour market, Czechoslovakia permanently faced difficulties, so that by the end of summer, the negotiations with Italy were stopped.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> At the top level, Italy collaborated in the negotiations on appointment of Italian workers in the Czechoslovak labour market; in summer 1946, the director of the Provincial Labour Office of Udine (Ufficio Provinciale del Lavoro) expressed interest in placing Italian workers to Czechoslovakia and on 30 July, he arrived to the Czechoslovak Embassy in Rome asking that the relevant Czechoslovak circles should be informed that the Ladino District had about 55 thousand unemployed persons who could go to work to Czechoslovakia. The interest of the director of the Provincial Labour office of Udine to place the Ladino unemployed persons in Czechoslovakia was enormous as he submitted even a rough draft of work contract for Italian workers to be recruited in Udine for Czechoslovakia. Although the subject draft of working conditions of employment of Italian workers in Czechoslovakia was found, except for minor deviations, identical to the claims following from employment of Czechoslovak employees and recommended, under the condition of execution of minor changes, as base for elaboration of a specific contract, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally decided, with regard to general disinterest of Rome in sending Italian workers to Czechoslovakia, not to respond to that specific proposal of employment of Italian unemployed persons from Northern Italy. Compare VA ČMKOS, f. SOURO 1945–1950, Card File No. 13, inv. unit 14/8/3a), Italští dělníci, doc. of Ministry of Foreign Affairs with original ref. 6.357/V–2/46 from 1 February 1946, Subject: “Contract with Italy of recruitment of labour for Czechoslovak Republic, draft”, information of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Central Trade Union Council; doc. of

## Andrej Tóth

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

The referred legislation documents from 1945 and 1946 and the selected archive sources from the General Archive of the Czech Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions illustrate the burdensome impacts of application of the principle of collective guilt at national base even in the labour-law area. It is obvious that the above stated provisions aggravated further the already dramatic social situation of persons of German or Hungarian nationality who became virtually deprived due to loss of all their civil rights, and often the displacement – in case of the German minority – across the state border constituted the only hope of their full reintegration into the society both from civil and from labour-law perspective, although the Germans had to leave virtually all their property in Czechoslovakia. Additionally, the influx of forcedly displaced Germans to Germany did not cause any big difficulties even in the German labour market, rather the contrary. For example in the second quarter of 1946, the increase of the number of persons employed in Germany was due to the influx of displaced Germans and due to the return of prisoners of war. While in the French and Soviet occupation zone where the number of displaced persons did not rise in the second quarter of 1946, the number of employed persons increased by 3.2–3.8%, in the occupation zone of the United States of America and of Great Britain where considerable number of displaced persons arrived, the employment rate increased by 9.1%. Nevertheless, the unemployment dropped markedly in Germany in the four great power occupation zones in the second quarter of 1946, and the number of persons employed by 30 June amounted to 23.8 million, while the number of unemployed

---

Ministry of Foreign Affairs with original ref. 151.201/V–2A–46 from 29 August 1946, Subject: “Recruitment of Italian workers for work in Czechoslovakia”, the information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was sent out to ten recipients in total, i.e. to institutions including selected ministries, to the Czech National Bank, to the Settlement Office, to the Central Trade Union Council and to the State Planning Office; doc. of Central Social-Political Commission of the Central Trade Union Council with original ref. V/1–121.372/46–Fk/v from 17 October 1946, Subject: “Recruitment of Italian workers for work in Czechoslovakia”, the information of the Central Social-Political Commission of the Central Trade Union Council was addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See in re also the document of the Ministry of Social Care with original ref. IV–2352/14–10/9–46 from 1 November 1946, Subject: “Recruitment of Italian workers for work in Czechoslovakia”, comments of the Ministry of Social Care to the draft work contract for Italian workers from the surrounding of Udine; the document was addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, in copy, to other nine recipients, or institutions, including Central Trade Union Council.

persons to 1.4 million. So the total number of unemployed persons all over Germany amounted to less than 6%.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the referred measures had greater impact on the Czechoslovak Hungarians. Their destiny had not been decided in 1945 and 1946 yet, while most Germans affected by the restricting measures were gradually displaced in 1945 and particularly in 1946, so that they had to cope with the burden of the labour-law restrictions only temporarily. Almost fifty thousand persons of Hungarian nationality were forced to leave their properties in Southern Slovakia and to undergo mass transports in freight trains to places several hundred or up to thousand kilometres away, designed for their obligatory work appointment, with almost no labour-law protection. The destiny of forcedly appointed agricultural workers affected not only persons who had made their living by agriculture in their original place of residence, but also for example the members of intelligentsia. The persons of Hungarian nation, including their families, forcedly transported from Slovakia to Bohemia, left behind about up to 6 and a half thousand empty houses and more than 14 thousand cadastral morgens of empty land that were to be occupied by re-emigrants of Slovak nationality. The total value of the property amounted to almost 236 million crowns. Nevertheless, the application of national selection within the implemented general work obligation beyond the framework of legislative provisions and the transports to forced work, performed on their base on whole families deprived of their property, did not last long, thanks to the negative international response to those practice of the Czechoslovak government. In case of persons of Hungarian nationality, it was only a temporary period, although even such period did considerable wrong to the affected persons and their families. The forcedly transported persons and their families even received partial financial compensation from the state. From approximately 9 and a half thousand families who had been forcedly

---

<sup>35</sup> VA ČMKOS, f. SOÚRO 1945–1950, Card File No. 13, inv. unit 14/8/3 b), Jugoslávští dělníci, Doc. of Ministry of Social Care with original ref. I–4386/29 from 18 November 1946, Subject: “Labour, trade unions and working conditions in Germany”, the document was addressed to the Central Trade Union Council with request to handle the information confidentially.

## **Andrej Tóth**

On the Situation of Workers of German and Hungarian Nationality in Czechoslovakia in the Period Immediate after World War II on the Background of Restrictive Legislative Measures (1945–1946)

transported to Bohemia, something more than 7 thousand families received partial compensation, being paid almost 32 million crowns in total.<sup>36</sup>

### **Abstract**

The goal of the study is to summarize shortly the complicated situation of persons of German and Hungarian nationality in Czechoslovakia after World War II on the background of their legislatively set general work obligation. An overwhelming majority of Czechoslovak Germans and Hungarians lost their citizenship due to government measures, losing all their civil, property, social and national rights by it. The study summarizes the basic legislative measures of the Czechoslovak government from 1945 and 1946 concerning persons without citizenship, in this case members of the German and Hungarian minorities who were markedly restricted also in labour-law area. It outlines the issue of forced work obligation of such persons, paying attention particularly to the mass transfer of Hungarians from Slovakia to Bohemia in the capacity as farm workers. The source base of the study consists of legislative documents from the Collection of Acts and Decrees and selected documents from the General Archive of the Czech and Moravian Confederation Trade Unions. The restrictive measures in labour-law area had stronger impact on the Czechoslovak Hungarians whose destiny had not been decided in 1945 and 1946 yet, while most Germans concerned by the restrictive measures in labour-law area were gradually displaced in 1945 and particularly in 1946, so that the Germans had to deal with the burden of the labour-law restriction and forced labour according to the needs of the state only temporarily. In connection with the transfer of the Germans, Czechoslovakia had to deal with growing absence of labour in the labour market, trying to solve it also by acquiring labour from abroad, for example by unsuccessful recruitment of Italian workers.

### **Keywords**

Czechoslovakia; Hungarians; Germans; Decrees of the President of the Republic; Laws; Forced Work Obligation; Labour Market

---

<sup>36</sup> VADKERTY, pp. 6–7.