

0. FORCED LABOR CAMPS - Story Preface

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This image depicts a recreated prisoner shack showing how forced-laborers (called “zeks”) lived in very close quarters in the Soviet GULAG system. This reconstruction is located at the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, but information is not provided how many zeks were crammed into these close quarters. Photo by Marcin Szala; online via Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Red Army soldiers, captured by the Germans and detained at places like [Buchenwald concentration camp](#), rejoiced when they heard the war was finally over. They could not have known that once they returned home their leader would [send them](#) - like all other Soviet prisoners of war - to the Gulag.

What was the Gulag? A vast array of Soviet concentration camps in which millions of people performed [slave labor](#) for the government while living in unimaginably atrocious conditions. In Russian, GULAG is an acronym for **Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei** which means Main Camp Administration. That is short for "Main Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Labor Settlements."

The people who were sent (or feared going) to the Gulag had other, more apt names for this huge system of repressive punishment which terrorized untold numbers of people.

Individuals could be sent to far-off concentration camps for the slightest incident - like drawing a caricature of Stalin. Or, in the case of [Janusz Bardach](#) - with whose words we begin this story - they could be sentenced to ten years in a forced labor camp for accidentally rolling a Soviet tank while trying to ford a river.

In his famous novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the Russian writer [Alexandr Solzhenitsyn](#) - a [Nobel Laureate](#) who [died in 2008](#) at the age of eighty-nine - tells [the story of life during the course of a single day in the Siberian Gulag](#).

[Working and living conditions](#) are unbelievably difficult, with [inmates suffering from extreme cold](#) and lack of [proper nourishment](#). Prisoners (called [zeks](#)) privately talk about how one could end up in a camp:

*According to his dossier, Ivan Denisovich Shukhov had been sentenced for high treason. He had testified to it himself. Yes, he'd surrendered to the Germans with the intention of betraying his country and he'd returned from captivity to carry out a mission for German intelligence. What sort of mission neither Shukhov nor the interrogator could say...Shukhov had figured it all out. If he didn't sign he'd be shot. If he signed he'd still get a chance to live. So he signed. (Page 71 of the Ralph Parker translation of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.)*

How long might a sentence be for such trumped-up charges?

*They'd given Kilgas twenty-five years. Earlier there'd been a spell when people were lucky: everyone to a man got ten years. But from '49 onward the standard sentence was twenty-five, irrespective. A man can survive ten years - but twenty-five, who can get through alive? (Page 70, Ralph Parker translation of *One Day*.)*

As it happened, millions did not get out alive.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FORCED-LABOR-CAMPS-I-Am-David>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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## Map Depicting Buchenwald and Nazi Labor Camps

Map image online, courtesy U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Buchenwald-and-Nazi-Labor-Camps>

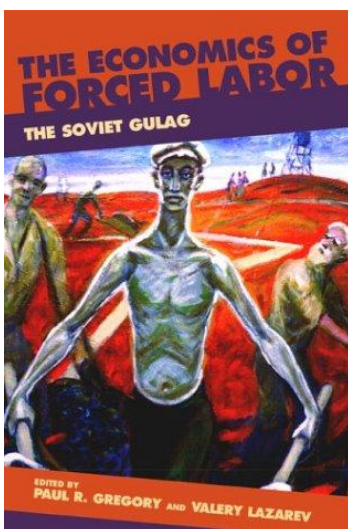


## Soviet POWs at Buchenwald

Image online, courtesy World War II database.

PD

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## The Economics of Forced Labor - by Paul R. Gregory

Image online, courtesy publisher and Google Books.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Economics-of-Forced-Labor-by-Paul-R.-Gregory>



## Janusz Bardach

Image online, courtesy Life in Legacy.

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## FORCED LABOR CAMPS

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### Solzhenitsyn, Alexandr - Nobel Laureate

Video clip online, courtesy Asia Brief.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Solzhenitsyn-Alexandr-Nobel-Laureate>



### Solzhenitsyn - Video Biography

From Russia Today. Online, courtesy Russia Today's Channel at YouTube.

Standard YouTube License applies.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Solzhenitsyn-Video-Biography>



### One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich - Solzhenitsyn

Historical footage, from various sources, to illustrate *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

Online, courtesy zsoft.com.

PD

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/One-Day-in-the-Life-of-Ivan-Denisovich-Solzhenitsyn>

### One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich - Film

Clip from *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1970). The film is a joint British-Norwegian production mostly filmed, in very cold weather, in Norway. Copyright, Norsk Film A/S, all rights reserved. Online, courtesy YouTube. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the film.

#### **Director:**

Caspar Wrede

#### **Screenplay** (based on Solzhenitsyn's book):

Ronald Harwood

#### **Cinematography:**

Sven Nykvist

Hans Nord

#### **Starring:**

Tom Courtenay - Ivan Denisovich Shukov

Espen Skjønberg - Tiurin

Alf Malland - Fetiukov

#### **Production Companies:**

Group W Films LLC

Leontes

Norsk Film

#### **Year of Release - 1970**

**Run time:** 101 minutes

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 2

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### Production Companies:

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Leontes

Norsk Film

### Year of Release - 1970

**Run time:** 101 minutes

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 3

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Leontes

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 4

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Leontes

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 5

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 6

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 7

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 8

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Leontes

Norsk Film

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 9

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## Ivan Denisovich - Part 10

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**Run time:** 101 minutes

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