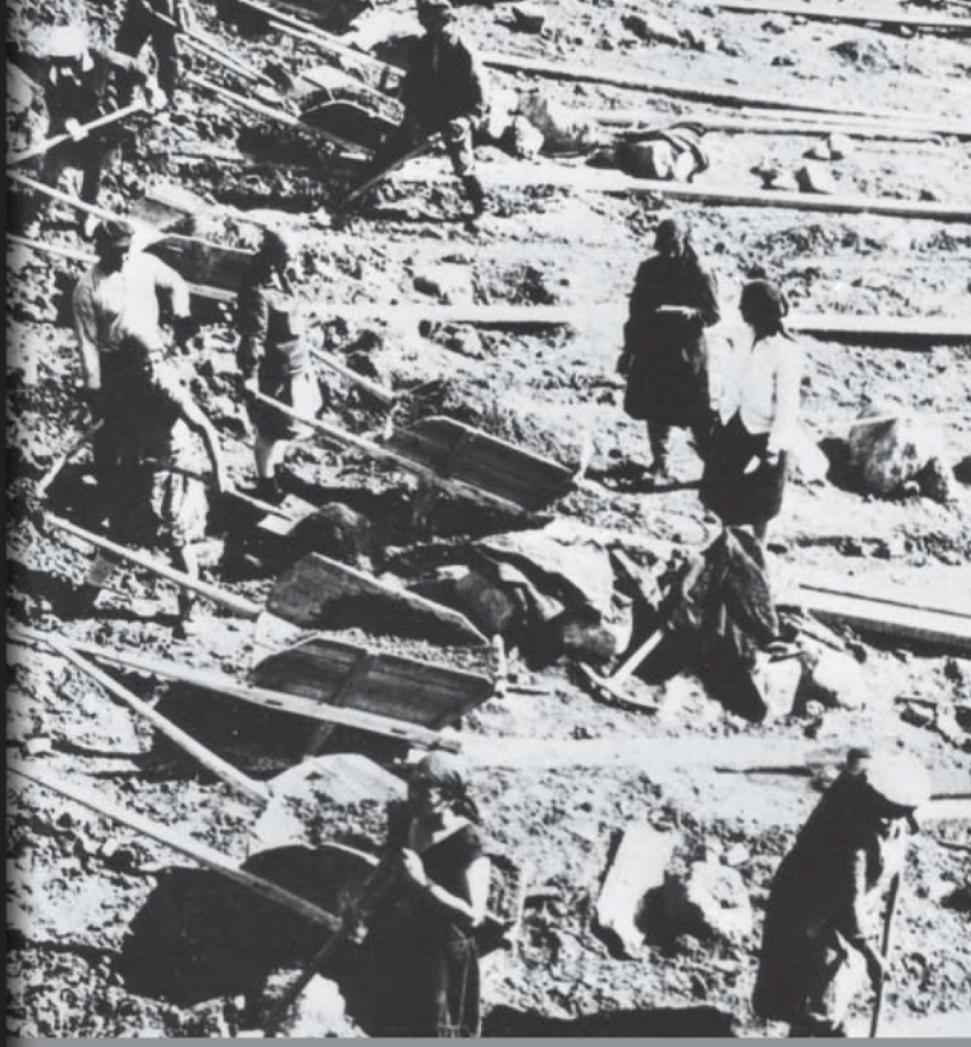
GULAG VOICES



Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile

JEHANNE M GHEITH AND KATHERINE R. JOLLUCK

PALGRAVE *Studies in Oral History*

Series Editors: Linda Shopes and Bruce M. Stave

The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome, by Alessandro Portelli (2003)

Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila, by Sandy Polishuk (2003)

To Wear the Dust of War: From Bialystok to Shanghai to the Promised Land, an Oral History, by Samuel Iwry, edited by L. J. H. Kelley (2004)

Education as My Agenda: Gertrude Williams, Race, and the Baltimore Public Schools, by Jo Ann Robinson (2005)

Remembering: Oral History Performance, edited by Della Pollock (2005)

Postmemories of Terror: A New Generation Copes with the Legacy of the "Dirty War," by Susana Kaiser (2005)

Growing Up in the People's Republic: Conversations between Two Daughters of China's Revolution, by Ye Weili and Ma Xiaodong (2005)

Life and Death in the Delta: African American Narratives of Violence, Resilience, and Social Change, by Kim Lacy Rogers (2006)

Creating Choice: A Community Responds to the Need for Abortion and Birth Control, 1961–1973, by David P. Cline (2006)

Voices from This Long Brown Land: Oral Recollections of Owens Valley Lives and Manzanar Pasts, by Jane Wehrey (2006)

Radicals, Rhetoric, and the War: The University of Nevada in the Wake of Kent State, by Brad E. Lucas (2006)

The Unquiet Nisei: An Oral History of the Life of Sue Kunitomi Embrey, by Diana Meyers Bahr (2007)

Sisters in the Brotherhoods: Working Women Organizing for Equality in New York City, by Jane LaTour (2008)

Iraq's Last Jews: Stories of Daily Life, Upheaval, and Escape from Modern Babylon, edited by Tamar Morad, Dennis Shasha, and Robert Shasha (2008)

Soldiers and Citizens: An Oral History of Operation Iraqi Freedom from the Battlefield to the Pentagon, by Carl Mirra (2008)

Overcoming Katrina: African American Voices from the Crescent City and Beyond, by D'Ann R. Penner and Keith C. Ferdinand (2009)

Bringing Desegregation Home: Memories of the Struggle toward School Integration in Rural North Carolina, by Kate Willink (2009)

I Saw it Coming: Worker Narratives of Plant Closings and Job Loss, by Tracy E. K'Meyer and Joy L. Hart (2010)

Speaking History: Oral Histories of the American Past, 1865–Present, by Sue Armitage and Laurie Mercier (2010)

Surviving Bhopal: Dancing Bodies, Written Texts, and Oral Testimonials of Women in the Wake of an Industrial Disaster, by Suroopa Mukherjee (2010)

Living with Jim Crow: African American Women and Memories of the Segregated South, by Anne Valk and Leslie Brown (2010)

Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile, by Jehanne M Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck (2011)

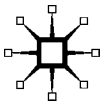
Detained without Cause: Muslims' Stories of Detention and Deportation in America after 9/11, by Irum Shiekh (2011)

Gulag Voices

Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile

Jehanne M Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck

palgrave
macmillan



First published in 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-0-230-61063-7 ISBN 978-0-230-11628-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230116283

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gheith, Jehanne M
Gulag voices : oral histories of Soviet incarceration and exile / Jehanne M Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck.
p. cm.—(Palgrave studies in oral history)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Soviet Union—History—1925–1953—Biography. 2. Political prisoners—Soviet Union—Interviews. 3. Exiles—Soviet Union—Interviews. 4. Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei OGPU—History. 5. Forced labor—Soviet Union—History. 6. Interviews—Russia (Federation) 7. Oral history—Soviet Union. 8. Oral history—Russia (Federation) 9. Memory—Social aspects—Soviet Union—History. 10. Memory—Social aspects—Russia (Federation) I. Jolluck, Katherine R. II. Title.

DK268.A1G63 2010
365'.45092247—dc22 2010019155

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: January 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To those who lived and shared these stories

Contents

Series Editors' Foreword

The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union two years later opened the way for a remarkable efflorescence of oral history in this part of the world. The two events are distinctly related: Communist regimes had promoted a collectivist ethic, inimical to the highly personal accounts of individual experience encouraged by oral history. More importantly, Communism had imposed an official silence about atrocities committed by the state, punishing those who dissented and cultivating a culture of fear among the populace. Liberated from this silence, scholars and citizens have turned to oral history to recover memories, both suppressed and repressed, and to generate new knowledge about life under Communism.

Jehanne Gheith and Katherine Jolluck's thoughtfully conceived and finely edited volume, *Gulag Voices*, is a part of this broader movement and the first published collection of oral history interviews with Soviet Gulag survivors to appear in English. They have defined Gulag—an acronym for *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei* or Main Camp Administration—broadly, to include prisons, forced labor camps, transit camps, and special settlements, as well as psychiatric hospitals and the "climate of fear" pervading Soviet society, and have included here ten interviews with 11 narrators representing a variety of experiences, including children of Gulag prisoners who themselves were not imprisoned but suffered as a result of their parents' removal. The operations of memory, in all its messiness, are palpable in the interviews, inflecting them with a particular poignancy: narrators both condemn and support Stalinism; they recall the past with bitter intensity or uneasy reluctance; they likely misremember elements of what happened to them, incorporating memories that are not their own, even as they communicate the essence of their experiences.

The collaboration between Gheith, a scholar of Russian literature and culture, and Jolluck, a historian of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, has resulted in a refined and sophisticated rendering of these interviews. They have well situated narrators' personal stories within the politics and society of the Soviet era, and carefully delineated the influence of history, culture, and language on the narrative texts. Additionally, they have included in this volume six contemporary documents written by individuals caught within the Gulag,

providing a theoretically interesting assessment of ways these differ from—and supplement—the oral histories.

We are enormously pleased to include *Gulag Voices* in Palgrave Macmillan's *Studies in Oral History* series. The twenty-third book in the series, it joins several recent volumes focusing on the state-sponsored abrogation of human and civil rights, including Suroopa Mukherjee's *Surviving Bhopal: Dancing Bodies, Written Texts, and Oral Testimonials of Women in the Wake of an Industrial Disaster*; Anne Valk and Leslie Brown's *Living with Jim Crow: African American Women and Memories of the Segregated South;* and Irum Shiekh's *Being Muslim in America*. The series aims to bring oral history out of the archives and into the hands of students, educators, scholars, and the reading public. Volumes are deeply grounded in interviews and present those interviews in ways that aid readers to appreciate more fully their historical significance and cultural meaning. The series also includes work that approaches oral history more theoretically, as a point of departure for an exploration of broad questions of cultural production and representation.

Linda Shopes
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Bruce M. Stave
University of Connecticut

Acknowledgments

First, our thanks to those who were interviewed for this volume. It was difficult for them to talk about their Gulag experiences, as they had to review their pasts in an often unfamiliar way. Yet they participated in the interviews and wanted their experiences to be known more widely. Most interviewees felt that they were bearing witness, not only to their own suffering, but to that of others who were also sent to the Gulag.

We also want to thank those who conducted interviews that are included in this volume: Cathy Frierson, Emily D. Johnson, and Robert Latypov. Editing interviews involves a dialogue about points ranging from translation to context. Each of these interviewers made this a lively conversation and cared deeply about the integrity of the interview and those they interviewed. They always responded to our queries quickly, generously, and with great professionalism.

We thank Elizabeth Ransome Stine for her work in translating some of the interviews, and Irena Czernichowska for hers with the Polish documents. Our deep appreciation to Amy J. Blatt, who generously and expertly created the maps in this volume.

We owe special gratitude to Linda Shopes and Bruce Staves, who initiated this project and have been involved from the start. Thanks also to our editor at Palgrave Macmillan, Chris Chappell, for his interest and guidance in this project, as well as his patience.

We also want to thank those who have supported each of us individually.

Jehanne: I want to first thank those I interviewed: Larisa Mikhailovna Lappo-Danilevskaia, Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko, Nina Ivanovna Rodina, and Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova. With gratitude for their grace, humor, and generosity in sharing their experiences even when they weren't sure if those experiences would matter to others.

My deep thanks to Elena Grigor'evna Koshkarova, who has been involved at every stage of the project. Thanks to Kathryn Hendley, Cynthia Ruder, and Katherine Smith, who answered many questions within about three minutes of my sending them and did so with great expertise, honesty, and humor. And to the members of my department who have helped so consistently with this book: Edna Andrews, Beth Holmgren, Lena Maksimova, and Erik Zitser. My deep

gratitude for a Duke University Arts Collaboration Grant and an NCEEER award, which made this research possible.

I am grateful to Marcy Litle for her friendship, art, and wisdom. And to Janice Muse Thomas for reminding me to breathe. My thanks to Katherine Jolluck for our steady and stimulating collaboration: I have learned so much in this process.

My greatest thanks to my husband, David, who gave repeatedly of his time and energy so that I could work on the book or travel to Russia or melt down about the book, or.... And to my cats, especially Topaz, who, on a month-long sojourn with me to the Outer Banks so that I could work on this book, insisted that I take the occasional break.

Katherine: I want to extend special thanks to Vladimir Nest'ev, Anatoly Katsev, and Lora Soroka for their insights and assistance. I am grateful for and enriched by the opportunity to work so closely with Jehanne Gheith, whose knowledge and talents I admire greatly. The Department of History, the Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences, and the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at Stanford University provided financial help for this volume; I thank all involved for their support. And finally, my love and appreciation go to my husband and colleague, Norman Naimark, who shared his expertise, warmth, and good humor, supporting me throughout the process of completing this book, and to my son Benjamin, whose curiosity, energy, and affection inspire and renew me.

Maps and Illustrations

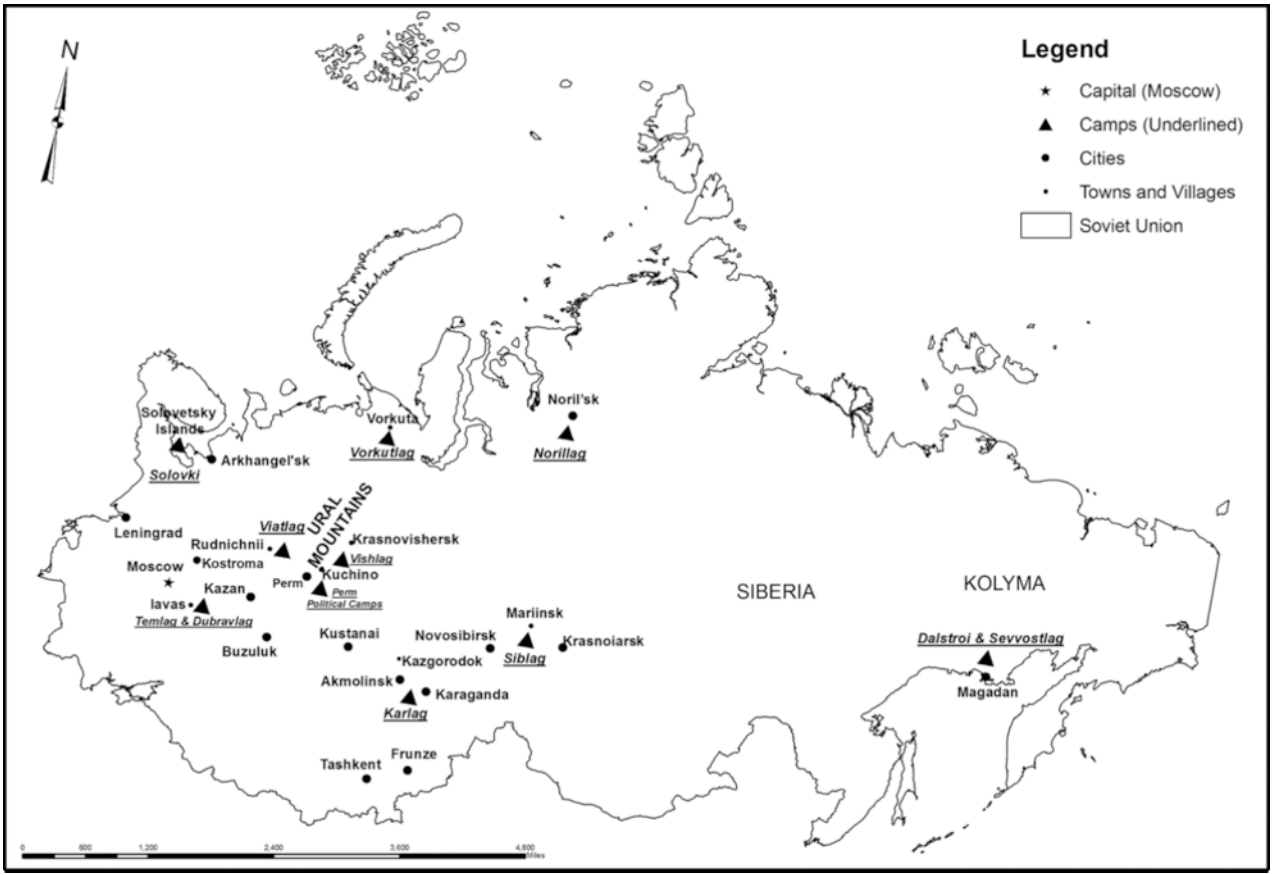
Maps

All maps were created by Amy J. Blatt, TerraFirm International Corporation

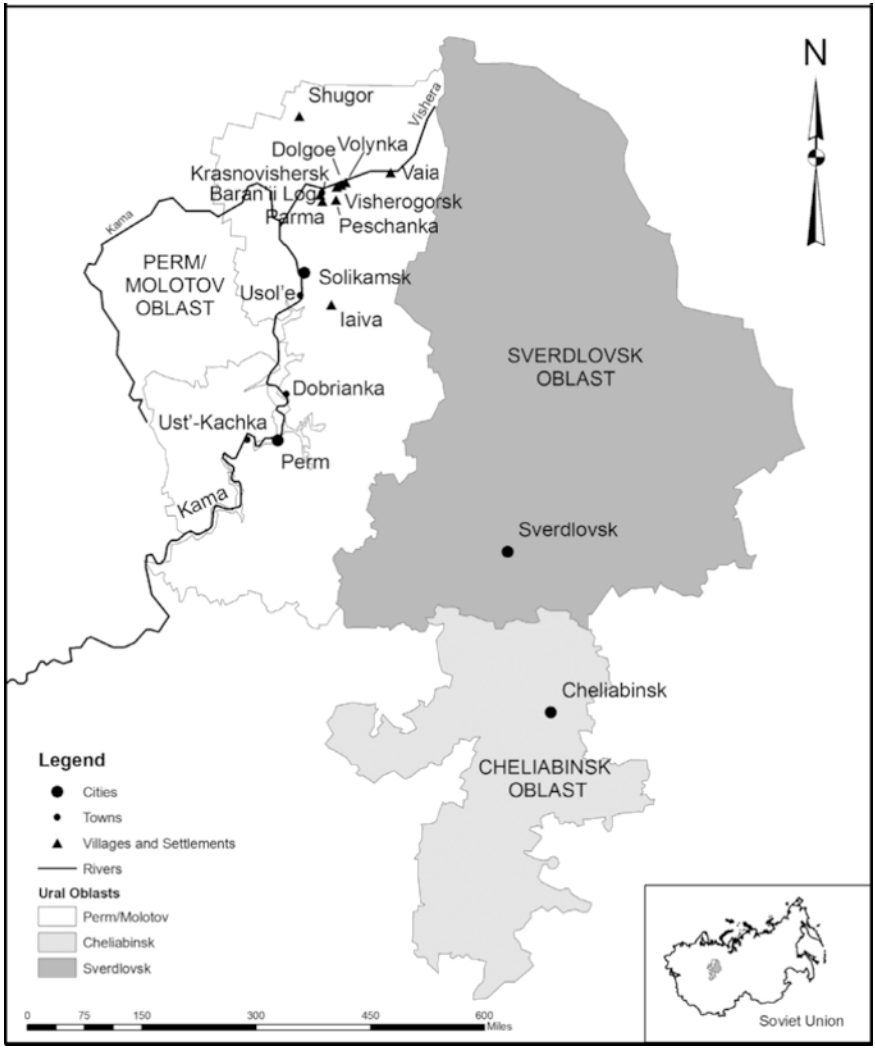
Illustrations

Note on Transliteration

Throughout this volume, we have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration of Russian, with a few modifications. In place names and some terms used commonly, we have omitted the marks for soft signs. In the case of names of individuals or places that have widely recognized spellings in the English language, such as Moscow for *Moskva*, we have gone with the popular English usage. And in cases where place names have changed since the break-up of the USSR, we have retained the version commonly used by the Soviet government at the time of the events (Kharkov, not Kharkiv; Akmolinsk, not Astana).

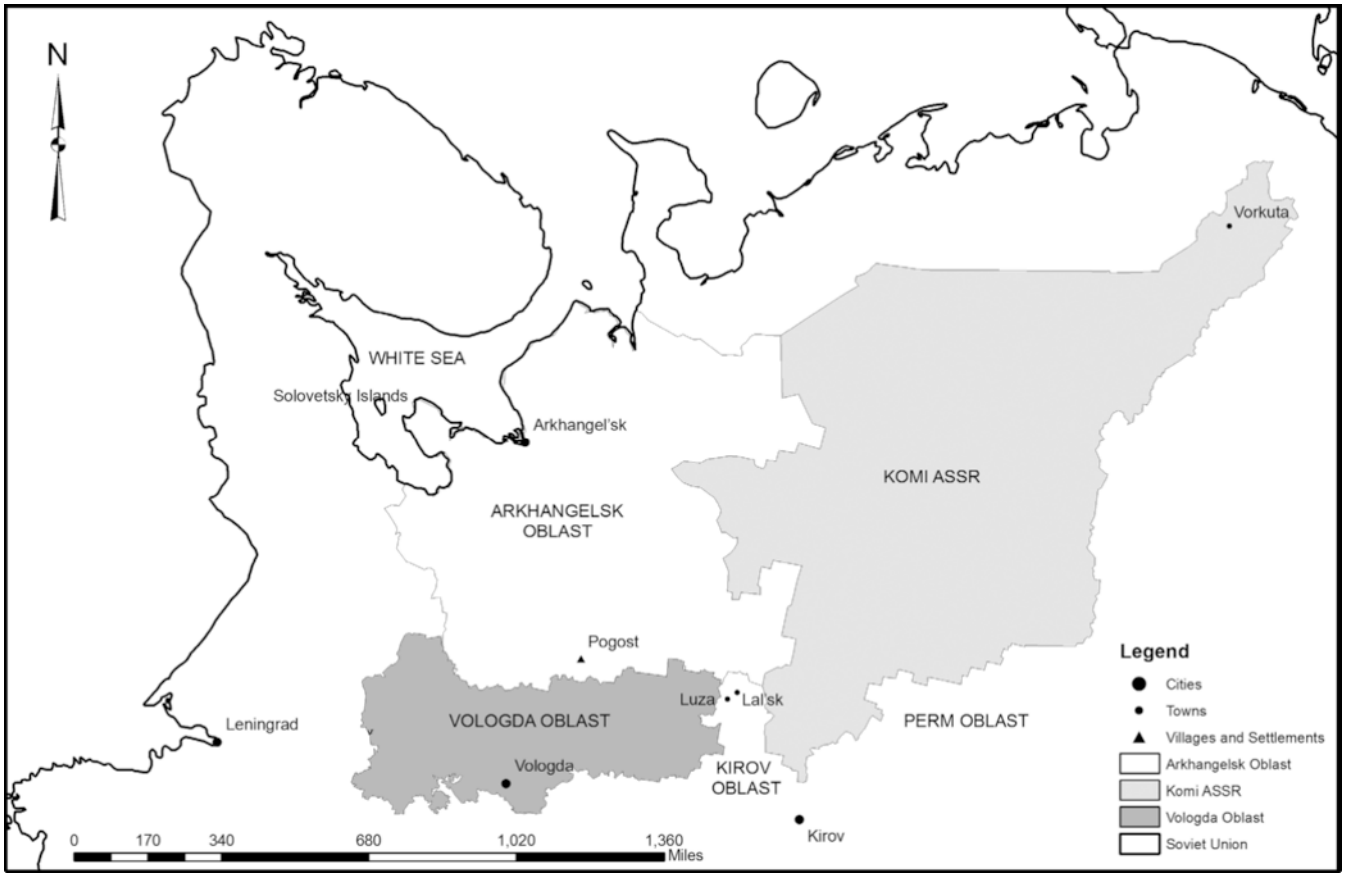


Map 1 Selected Cities and Labor Camps in the USSR



Map 2 Urals Region

Map 3 Ukraine and Crimea



Map 4 European North

Introduction

Jehanne M Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck

> Of the 350 people, 100 died . . . They went around the houses on a horse every day, on a horse they go around, collecting the bodies . . . They couldn't cope with all of them. There was this special, this big barrack, it was called the sickhouse. They put all the people infected with typhus in there, gathered them up. It held 70, and it was full up. Full up. And those bodies, down below, they put them in a stack. And in March, it was already getting warm, they had put them in a stack, they were lying in this big stack, they dragged them all out of the houses and brought them out from that sickhouse. Well, they piled up a hundred people there. And they made us dig—I took part myself—dig a mass grave.
>
> Robert Avgustovich Ianke, commenting on a 1943 typhus epidemic in a forced labor settlement near Perm

> I had felt that I was an awful person since I couldn't tell anyone about being in prison, or prove that I had been there, and also because I signed [the false confessions]. I punished myself, I didn't stand up for myself and then I wondered, why didn't I go abroad [and escape the Gulag]? Then I saw people here from other countries, how they acted. If they are hot, then they take something off . . . but if I was hot, then God forbid anyone should know that I was hot. I would die but I wouldn't tell anyone that I wanted to eat.
>
> Nina Ivanovna Rodina, describing her attitude after her release from prison in 1953, until the late 1980s

The scope of the Gulag—the Soviet system of incarceration and internal exile—is immense yet relatively little known. Millions of people died in the Gulag, and millions more had their lives radically disrupted by arrest, exile, or hard labor in camps or in the labor army. The effects continue to be evident in people's

memories, in fiction and other forms of art, and in many social phenomena, including people's reactions to government.

As the two epigraphs above indicate, the interviews in this book describe a wide range of Gulag experience: from the material details of what life was like in the special settlements and labor camps, to the later legacy of what it meant to live with that experience, on both the psychological and material levels. The interviews show how these memories continue to function in people's lives into the twenty-first century, and create a rich portrait of the Gulag and its long-term effects.

Brief History of the Gulag

"For us the Gulag is a phenomenon," writes historian Oleg Khlevniuk, "but at the time it was just an acronym for an organization."[1] That acronym stands for *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei* [Main Camp Administration], which was formally created in 1929.[2] The Soviet system of penal labor originated earlier in the 1920s.[3] During the years of Joseph Stalin's rule, the system of state repression grew in size, scope, and brutality: it included not only vast networks of prisons, labor camps and colonies, and transit camps, but also places of exile for forced labor—the so-called special settlements.[4]

Stalin's decision, in 1929, to pursue industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture at breakneck speed resulted in a rapid increase in the use of forced labor. Prisoners and *kulaks*, the supposedly wealthy peasants who were considered impediments to the Sovietization of the countryside, were sent to harsh, undeveloped regions of the country in order to extract resources for industrialization. The Gulag functioned, in part, to help industrialize the USSR: prisoners built cities in brutal climes, they mined gold and uranium, built railroads and canals, and worked with peat and timber and in many other industries. The Gulag further expanded during the Great Terror of 1937–1938: according to its own documents, the secret police arrested 1.6 million people in those years.[5] Many were arrested as "counter-revolutionaries" and "enemies of the people," deemed simply to constitute an ideological and political danger to the regime. As Anne Applebaum points out, people were arrested not for anything they had done, but for who they were.[6]

As Stalin's suspicion, paranoia, and fear of war increased, he targeted various national groups for deportation to special settlements. First ethnic Koreans, Poles, Germans, and Finns were cleared from frontier zones (1934–1939). When war broke out, the Soviets deported hundreds of thousands of people from the territories they annexed, including Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, eastern Poland, and northeastern Romania. In 1940–1941, Soviet Germans, and a few smaller groups, were deported *en masse*, on the assumption that they would prove disloyal in the war with Germany. During the war itself, several nations, including the

Chechens and Crimean Tatars, suffered wholesale deportation from their homelands, purportedly for collaboration with the Nazis. And from 1945–1952 several hundred thousand individuals were deported from territories re-conquered from the Nazis: Bessarabia, the Baltic states, and the western parts of Belorussia, Ukraine, and Russia. The Gulag reached its apogee in 1953, with, according to some estimates, more than 5 million persons in the camps and in exile.[7] Orlando Figes estimates that 25 million people circulated through the Gulag system between 1928 and 1953.[8]

Stalin died in March 1953, and his heirs soon sought to dismantle his system of terror and inefficient economic production. They began to downsize the Gulag in the first several years after Stalin's death, amnestying some prisoners and closing some camps. A major turning point occurred in 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev, the new leader of the USSR, delivered his "Secret Speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party. Criticizing Stalin for his "cult of personality," mass deportations, and persecution of "honest comrades," Khrushchev launched what became known as the Thaw: a period of liberalization, felt particularly in the reduction of repression and censorship. During the Thaw hundreds of thousands of inmates were released, and slave labor ceased to be an important part of the Soviet economy. Members of the deported nations were released from the special settlements, and some were even allowed to return home. Full rehabilitation became a possibility for many of Stalin's victims.

Though the department known as the Gulag was dissolved in 1957,[9] the Gulag as a phenomenon, and as a system of detention and degradation, continued. Arrests ceased to be arbitrary, though, and people who were arrested generally knew why. Common criminals continued to populate the remaining camps, and individuals faced political charges for their religious practice, involvement in underground publishing, and human rights activism. The dissidents, as they were called, were largely incarcerated in two political camps, located in the Mordovian and Perm regions of Russia; some were confined in special psychiatric hospitals. This system lasted until the final years of the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, and soon afterward launched a period of reform known as *perestroika*. As part of his reforms, political prisoners were released and pardoned; millions of political prisoners were rehabilitated. For the first time, Soviet citizens could openly talk and write about the Gulag and the devastating effect it had on their lives and their country. Revelations about the crimes perpetrated by the Soviet Communist Party and state helped to undermine the regime, which collapsed in 1991.

The World of the Gulag

As the interviews and documents in this volume demonstrate, the Gulag was an enormously complex entity. It lasted a long time—from the 1920s through the

1980s—and operated across the former USSR: our interviewees describe their confinement in the Urals, Siberia, Central Asia, and Northern Russia. At least initially, the Gulag was viewed by the authorities as a place of both punishment and potential redemption or "reforging" of inmates through labor. Yet it developed into a system of mass terror that included labor camps, prisons, the labor army [*trudarmiia*], exile of various kinds, psychiatric hospitals, and a pervasive climate of fear; we use the term in this broad sense. In all its forms, the Gulag changed the shape of life in the Soviet Union.[10] Furthermore, even though some significant attempts were made to deal with the Gulag experience in the public realm during the late 1950s and early 1960s, open discussion about it was strictly limited for more than 50 years. Former inmates risked re-arrest, or other punishment for themselves or those they loved for talking about their experiences in the Gulag.

The Gulag imprisoned people of many ethnicities and faiths (our volume includes the life stories of Russian, Polish, Tatar, German, Romanian, Jewish, and Muslim individuals), social classes (members of the intelligentsia, peasants, workers), and political affiliations (particularly Communists). People of all ages ended up in the Gulag. The deportations affected entire families, including children, and as of August 1937, relatives of "enemies" could also be arrested and incarcerated. Such children are also represented in this volume.

When people in the West think about concentration camps, they tend to think of the Holocaust. Although the two systems are related (for example, officials shared information on how to torture, and prisoners who had been released from the Nazi camps and returned to Russia were often then put into the Gulag), it is important to examine the distinctions between them. The Gulag camps themselves comprised a different order of cruelty from that of the Nazi death camps. There were no gas chambers in the Gulag and the goal was not efficient, inhuman destruction as it was (often) for the Nazis. As historian Steven Barnes has argued, the corrective labor camps [*ispravitel'no-trudovye lageria*] of the Gulag were set up as part of the larger Soviet social system: if labor was to make the new Soviet man and create socialism on earth, then the hard labor camps were an important part of that project.[11] Many of our interviewees reveal that they, in fact, internalized this value and regarded labor as the center of their lives and as a way to redeem themselves.

Yet the Gulag camps were also unbearably cruel. Prisoners were shot for little or no reason; inmates were often forced to go outside with insufficient clothing in 40-degree frost; food was allotted based on meeting labor goals. The food quota system resulted in slow starvation for many, as once people began to weaken, they could never meet their labor norm, and therefore received less and less food. Torture was common and inventive. As Robert Ianke describes in this volume, prisoners were "presented to the mosquitoes": stripped naked and tied up outside so that the mosquitoes could feast; put into punishment cells such

as *kartser* or the box, both ways of isolating prisoners in a small, uncomfortable, often dark and cold space. In the labor armies and special settlements, inmates likewise faced hard labor, insufficient food, and the arbitrariness of the commandants who now ruled their lives.

The "regime" [*rezhim*] comprised the procedures by which each day was ordered. As interviewees note, there were different regimes in special settlements and in the camps, even within the different camp complexes themselves; they also changed over time. The regime included rules for such privileges as visits from relatives or receiving letters and packages, and punishments, like isolation cells for disobedience. Special [*osobyi*] regimes were stricter, involving more work, greater isolation from other prisoners, fewer walks or privileges, and less food.[12]

The interviewees frequently make a distinction between "criminal" and "political" prisoners. These two groups were typically housed together in the prisons and camps. In theory, criminals were those who had been arrested for non-political crimes: that is, not as "enemies," not for sabotage of the state. This distinction could become blurry, as the interview with Feliks Serebrov indicates, because almost any crime could be interpreted as sabotage at the legal level, and sometimes was. Criminals ranked higher than politicals inside the camps and controlled many aspects of daily life there. Camp officials, who looked with greater favor on the common criminals, tolerated their often cruel domination of the politicals.[13] Many of the accounts in this volume make reference to this internal order (Tsivirko, Ibragimova, Gerlin, Serebrov, Norciszek).

Estimates of how many people died in the Gulag range from several million to 15 million.[14] Lower estimates tend to be based on archival sources and limit their consideration of the Gulag to the years of Stalin's rule, while higher estimates use a combination of oral and documentary sources, with a heavy emphasis on eyewitness accounts, and consider the Gulag to last from the 1920s to the 1980s. It is likely that the true number of deaths will never be known. Mass graves are still being discovered; one with approximately 300 bodies was found on Solovki in the summer of 2005.[15] Even the fact that there are such widely varying estimates of the death toll of the Gulag is evidence of the indifference to human life of these years, and is indicative of the kinds of gaps in basic information that make it difficult to comprehend the Gulag and its effects.

Repression and Rehabilitation

The terms "repression" and "rehabilitation" are commonly used to describe the incarceration of people in the Gulag and their later—at least partial—reintegration into society. *Repressirovannye* or "repressed" refers to those who were punished (usually through incarceration in prison and camps, or exile) for being among the groups that the Soviet state targeted as dangerous. The word is used

regularly in conversation but also has legal and material significance in terms of access to the limited privileges and material compensations that have been available to those who can prove their "repression." The fact that the Latin-based word "repressed" is used to describe those who were sent to the Gulag has profound resonances. In the West, we tend to talk about "the repressed" as a psychological category, while in Russia its most common usage is literal: people have been repressed by the state.

Reintegration was difficult both for returnees and for the society they returned to, as Nanci Adler has shown: "Gulag returnees were not just individuals, they were also living memories that could not be denied. But they often were denied, because people could not find a comfortable way of dealing with them. There was pervasive ambivalence at all levels of the government and society with regard to these survivors."[16] Thus, the repressed were not welcomed back into society; they were a living witness to what had happened and made it more difficult for people to deny the truth of the Gulag.

Rehabilitation [*reabilitatsiia*, also Latin-based] became one of the means by which the Soviet state, often reluctantly, reintegrated its returnees. Rehabilitation put those returnees in a profoundly ambiguous position. The government, which had—often falsely—accused people, now pardoned them and provided a certificate [*spravka*] to that effect. Often rehabilitations were posthumous and many relatives of those killed in the Gulag worked hard to obtain these certificates. The state did not issue them on its own initiative—someone had to initiate and pursue the process of rehabilitation. As many of the interviews show, the process could be long and difficult.

There were many different kinds of rehabilitation. Some rehabilitations simply reassessed the case and offered "the implication of innocence"; some provided financial compensation, while others allowed returnees to be reinstated into the Communist Party.[17] In this volume, Serebrov provides an example of the latter in the case of his father. In theory, the rehabilitation certificate gave returnees the right to work. But, as many of our interviewees describe, even the rehabilitated had trouble finding jobs because employees were afraid to hire people who had been incarcerated.

Two main periods of rehabilitation occurred: the 1950s and the late 1980s to the early 1990s. In the 1950s, people sought rehabilitation for several reasons. On the material level, it allowed returnees to obtain crucial residency and work permits; they could also receive a small amount of monetary compensation (two months' pay).[18] On the psychological level—and this is true of the later period as well—rehabilitation certificates also provided evidence that one (or one's relatives) had been falsely imprisoned. Many people obtained posthumous rehabilitation certificates for their relatives: these pieces of paper provided the only proof of innocence that survivors could have. Not everyone who was released was rehabilitated; many people applied and were denied, sometimes for as long as 40 years

after the original application.[19] This increased the difficulty of finding a job and housing, as Nina Rodina's interview in this volume demonstrates.

From the 1960s until the late 1980s few rehabilitations were made. Their number increased swiftly as a result of Gorbachev's reforms. From 1987–1989, nearly 840,000 people were rehabilitated;[20] this is even before the passing of the 1991 law "On Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression." After this law was passed, it became important to people to prove that they were survivors because they received privileges, discounts, and material compensation. None of these were large amounts, but in the radically changing context of transition from Soviet to post-Soviet society, such compensations mattered.

Issues in Oral History

Issues of memory and of oral history are linked at their root, since oral history's methodology is to gather and interpret people's spoken memories in the context of other known data. In the USSR, both talking and remembering were risky for the 70 years of Soviet rule. Russian historians Daria Khubova, Andrei Ivankiev, and Tonia Sharova underline the fact that not just talking but remembering itself was dangerous: "The Soviet Union is perhaps the most remarkable case of all: a society . . . where remembering has been dangerous at least since the 1920s. The cumulative effect of fear of public remembering, together with the fact that so many families had members who were politically oppressed, and so had bitter memories, is very difficult for Western historians to understand. It is not just the political impact . . . but also the dramatic long-term effect on personal remembering."[21]

The roles of memory and oral transmission in (post)Soviet Russia are complicated and contradictory. Inevitable, if difficult to define, traces are left on a culture in which both remembering and telling were dangerous for at least two generations, and in which many people spoke rarely, if at all, about their experiences in the Gulag. Distortions and overlays enter people's memories over time and in the former USSR, personal memory had to evolve in relation to a cultural narrative that often denied Gulag survivors' experiences. The public narrative presented the Soviet Union as the heroic victor in the Second World War and the most humane society in the world. If one's own experience were of groundless imprisonment or exile (as was true for all the interviewees in this volume, with the possible exception of the dissident Serebrov), then one's memories took place in a context of radical disconnect. As the interviews and documents show, people resolved this dilemma in different ways. Some, such as Valeriia Gerlin, protested against government injustice; others, such as Nina Rodina, developed a profound sense of worthlessness. Boris Faifman and Giuzel Ibragimova searched for documents related to their family's history; still others, such as Sira Balashina and

Larisa Lappo-Danilevskaia, carried on with their lives in different ways, focusing their attention largely on the present.

Oral and document-based histories have different resonances in the West and in the former USSR. In Western contexts, documents are generally considered to be the more reliable, objective source,[22] but in Russia, oral testimony has long been regarded as truer than official history, which was consistently distorted in the Soviet period for ideological and propaganda purposes. Khubova and colleagues put it this way: "It is sometimes said, and is almost true, that 'for us [Russians] the documents are subjective, and the only thing which might be objective are the memories.' "[23]

We do not attempt to resolve the debate on whether oral or document-based history is more reliable. Yet we do want to highlight the cultural context and emphasize that documents, as well as memories, can be compromised and that both kinds of sources must be interpreted. Given the difficulty of finding information about the Gulag, both written and oral sources are necessary in order to (re)construct a fuller picture of the workings and effects of the Gulag.

The issue of incorporating others' memories into one's own has come up with particular force in relation to remembrance of the Gulag. After many years of relative silence, there was an explosion of Gulag-related memoirs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This changed the landscape of memory significantly, and many people now tell the stories of other's memories as if they are their own. Historian Nanci Adler, who has conducted interviews with many Gulag survivors, notes that memory of repression "became so collective after 1988, that one has to diligently and critically explore the individual's own experience."[24] Other scholars deal with the issue of incorporated memory in various ways. Historian Catherine Merridale, who conducted many interviews for her recent work on the Second World War, simply accepts the fact.[25] Vieda Skultans argues that all oral testimony relies on "story-telling conventions" (which would include interpolations) and that this is particularly evident in the narratives of Eastern Europe, where national identity and literature have long been intimately intertwined.[26] Some scholars, such as Khubova and colleagues, and Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch, argue that because of the prevalence of incorporated memories, one must sift through that information extremely carefully.[27]

Still other historians maintain that, in terms of memory, public and private distinctions differed significantly in the Soviet context from the Western one. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Yuri Slezkine, and Lisa Kirschenbaum suggest that due to the mixing of the public and private in the Soviet case, personal memory incorporates the public one more directly.[28] The interviews in this volume show both that public and private are nuanced differently in Russia than elsewhere and that Soviet citizens could and did remember very powerfully and privately.[29] These oral histories also extend and complicate Irina Paperno's recent argument that

personal and historical memories are inextricably intertwined in written memoirs, diaries, and dreams of Soviet experience and especially of the Stalinist terror.[30]

There are many possible reasons for people to incorporate memories. First, because of the culture of fear around remembering and talking, there was, for many survivors, a long gap in speaking about (and perhaps remembering) their Gulag experience. Additionally, life in the Gulag could be monotonous and similar events happened to many people. This makes it likely that one could (perhaps unconsciously) use someone else's words for an event one dimly remembers, or that resembles one's own experience. Khubova and colleagues also make the point that, absent public memory of the Gulag, survivors grasped at any narrative to help make sense of their lives, incorporating others' words as part of that attempt.[31]

We also want to consider the value and function of incorporated memory, as well as a related issue—accuracy of memory. Factual errors can occur in any memory but the issues are more complicated than making distinctions between "false" and "true." Why would a person remember in the way that she or he does? What does that indicate about the person and the larger culture (especially if many people remember something inaccurately but similarly)? Historian Alessandro Portelli demonstrates how factual error in memory gives a different kind of information than can a strictly factually accurate account. The errors, Portelli argues, "allow us to recognize the interests of the tellers, and the dreams and desires beneath them," and that "errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings."[32] What these oral accounts can give us, then, is both difficult-to-discover information about what it was like to work in the timber industry in exile (Balashina) and what that meant to the people who lived through it. In discussions of the testimony of Holocaust survivors, Dori Laub notes that, while some of the details may not be fully accurate (a date or number may be wrong), people's recounting of the experience is itself of historical significance.[33] An example in this volume: regardless of whether Abliaziz Ramazanov's family was deported in the fall of 1944 as he remembers, rather than in May, when most of the Crimean Tatars were exiled and as some of the details of his statement indicate, his memory suggests his sense of his family's fate as being particular, maybe even isolated.

Throughout the book, we handle the possibility of incorporated memory and accuracy in the following way: where we can, we verify information from independent sources; where that is not possible, we leave the question open as to whether this is a personal memory or an incorporated one. There are times when memories cannot be checked for factual accuracy and when that is the case, the most useful thing that we can do is to look for how they operate in the present. Considering how memory works in the present provides information about how the events continue(d) to be experienced and how the memory itself continues to affect lived realities. This in turn provides a sense of the subtle, long-term effects of the Gulag on individuals.[34]

A closely related issue is the timing of the interviews. All of the interviews in this volume were conducted after *perestroika*. This means that interviewees have had many years to think about the issues, and that there was a growing public discourse about the Gulag that may have affected their perspectives on their own experience. Lawrence Langer discusses a similar effect regarding the testimony of Holocaust survivors.[35] The timing of the interviews presents a conundrum: it would have been nearly impossible to conduct such interviews before *perestroika*, and yet perhaps, in the earlier period, those memories would have been less affected by other sources or, at least, would have been affected by different sources.[36] Additionally, an individual's fate after the transition from Communism can affect his or her attitude toward the Soviet system in general, and the Stalinist years in particular. We try to provide readers with the specific contexts in which these interviews are embedded to enable them to interpret the material.

In this volume, we are interested in providing both new and a broad range of information about people's experiences in the Gulag and their evolving understanding of that experience. This is especially important because of the continued difficulty in finding even basic details about people's lives in the camps and exile, even now that archives are more accessible and people can speak more freely. Information about what it was like to live in a special settlement or children's home, or what the actual process of rehabilitation was, is still surprisingly difficult to find. Furthermore, while we have long had access to accounts of the Gulag from the intelligentsia in the form of memoirs, we have not had many descriptions from peasants and workers. Oral history makes it possible to gain access to accounts of those who are unlikely to write or publish a memoir. Balashina, Ianke, Ramazanov, and Faifman give the perspectives of people who were not members of the intelligentsia. They were not used to discussing their experiences in the Gulag—particularly with outsiders—and, therefore, had not crafted a narrative, as members of the intelligentsia often have.

By juxtaposing the interviews with Faifman and Ibragimova in the section on children of enemies, we show something of the range of the ruptures created by the Gulag. Faifman's parents were both arrested and shot because of their Romanian Jewish origins; he was put in a children's home and eventually made a ward of the state. Ibragimova's parents were arrested as Tatars (Muslims); she and her sister were sent to an orphanage for three years. They subsequently lived with their grandparents and then their mother, when she was released after five years; her father died in exile. Both Faifman and Ibragimova experienced powerfully disrupted lives, both later spent a great deal of time reconstructing their pasts, and both had a sense of the injustice done to them. Yet their experiences and their understanding of them also provide important points of contrast.

Three Tatar interviewees—a population that has been very little studied in the context of the Gulag—are included in this volume: Ramazanov, Ibragimova, and Giuli Tsivirko. Ramazanov describes being deported; Tsivirko, her time in

the camps; and Ibragimova, her life as a daughter of enemies. These three differing experiences allow a broader picture of the fate of Tatars in the Gulag to emerge.

The injustice of groundless incarceration or exile, forced hard labor, or execution is, of course, immense. But there are other long-term effects of the Gulag that are equally painful, though they are more difficult to delineate concisely. The interviewees in this volume vividly describe these consequences. Peasant and ethnic populations who traditionally lived in one place for generations were forcibly exiled—often whole villages were deported—many thousands of miles away, forced to labor in a completely different climate and environment, often in an unfamiliar trade. Even when these people were freed, they often chose to remain in their place of exile. They had built lives where they were, and, even if allowed to go back, they had little to return to in their previous homes. Lappo-Danilevskaia was also exiled, but as a member of the intelligentsia she had different options open to her: rather than laboring in the timber industry as Balashina did, she administered a library. Yet she, too, stayed in exile long past her formal release. Disruptions could come in other ways: for example, children of enemies often found that certain kinds of careers or education were not open to them (Ianke, Gerlin, Faifman, Ibragimova). Sometimes their names were changed, probably inadvertently, which cut them off from their relatives and their pasts.

Some of the interviewees were in the camps or exile for a large portion of their lives; others, like Rodina, for a relatively short time (three years). Yet, as her interview demonstrates, even a three-year imprisonment could have long-lasting effects. Serebrov's experience is different: he was arrested four different times, the first time in 1947 and the last in 1981. That his last incarceration was in the 1980s serves as a powerful reminder of how long the Gulag lasted, and how it continued to devastate peoples' lives, although it had changed from its most virulent days under Stalin. Serebrov's interview shows that children's separation from arrested parents continued to happen and to matter well after Stalin's death. And he further provides a wealth of detail about daily life in the camps, including a discussion of hunger strikes and the revolts that broke out in mid-1953.

Several other themes arise repeatedly in the interviews that may need some explanation. Interviewees often say little or nothing about their personal lives or family matters. This seeming reticence results not only from the long habit of silence that developed around the Gulag, but also, as Svetlana Boym explains, it is common in Russia to reveal little about personal life.[37] Interviewees also articulate different relationships to Stalin: some, such as Ramazanov, are ambivalent or sometimes positive about him, some (Gerlin, Tsivirko) are negative, and others, such as Rodina, evince an evolving understanding of Stalin's role. Some interviewees, such as Ianke, also express nostalgia for the Soviet period. This attitude may surprise some Western readers, but the Soviet Union is where these interviewees grew up and learned to negotiate their lives. Even with all the difficulties of living

in the USSR, there was much that was good there, including, for many, a sense of security and a lively intellectual life. In the face of the radical changes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a longing for the familiar often arises.

In all of these interviews, a rich picture of life in and after the Gulag emerges, a kind of tapestry that includes daily details of life in the camps, special settlements, and *trudarmiia*, as well as people's inner relationship to their Gulag experience.

Information on the Volume

This volume is the first collection of oral histories of Gulag survivors to appear in English. While several recent books draw on and quote extensively from interviews with survivors, they do so in the service of an interpretive work.[38] We present the actual interviews to the reader, with supplementary information and commentary. With the exception of Gerlin and Serebrov, these were the first interviews our subjects had given.

All of the interviews in this volume are excerpted from longer ones. Oral history accounts tend to be rambling and often disorganized. For this reason, we have cut some parts of the interviews and, in a very few cases, reordered passages for greater clarity. We have tried to keep the essence of the interviews and, through commentary, to provide enough information and continuity for interviewees' comments to be clear. The introductions and commentary accompanying each interview are written by the co-editors, unless specified otherwise.[39]

The interviews were chosen to represent a wide range of Gulag experience. The volume begins with three interviews from individuals in the Perm *oblast* [region] of Russia. This region, called by one inhabitant "a land of constraint and exile,"[40] was the site of some of the first forced labor camps, in the 1920s; individuals were incarcerated there throughout the Soviet period, including the era of dissidents. Additionally, "suspect" populations were deported there in large numbers, beginning with *kulaks* in 1930, and national groups targeted by Stalin. As Soviet repression expanded in the 1930s, new groups of targeted people replaced earlier ones, often occupying the same barracks. The Gulag system filled a hitherto unpopulated area with individuals of varied nationality, religion, and social class—a Soviet melting pot. This geographic area has been very little examined in the study of the Gulag, although it is the site of the only Gulag museum that takes visitors through the daily life and work of a former camp. When juxtaposed to one another, the details given by the three interviewees create a powerful picture of forced labor and exile in this region.

The remaining interviews are divided into three groups: (1) individuals who were repressed themselves; (2) children of the repressed, who were not themselves

incarcerated; and (3) those who were both children of enemies and repressed themselves. Within each category, we use a rough chronological order, by year of birth. Our organization aims to highlight the disruptions experienced by those who were arrested or deported, and to show how their experiences extended into the next generation, revealing the long-term effects of the Gulag. None of these divisions are absolute, and they often overlap. Ianke, who was deported to the Perm region, also fits the category of being both the child of a repressed person and repressed himself. Serebrov was the child of an enemy, though that is not the reason he was arrested. And certainly the abuse and restrictions faced by children of enemies could also be considered a kind of repression. The very difficulty of ordering these interviews indicates the immense reach of the Gulag, which drew in people from every possible demographic, for wide-ranging reasons, victimizing them in multiple ways.

The final part of the book contains documents written by survivors of the Gulag's prisons, camps, and special settlements, which we offer in order to compare the types of information we can obtain from written and oral sources. All of these documents were written either while the authors were still in the Gulag or soon after their release. They, therefore, offer more of a snapshot of the authors' experience in the Gulag than do the oral histories—which were taken years, even decades, later—and which are as much about the memory and legacies of being in the Gulag as about what happened there.

The first three documents are crafted as narrative accounts and are completely self-directed; the authors could thus avoid any topics they chose. Just as importantly, their decisions about what to relate from their Gulag experience tell us about their own preoccupations, as they focus on what seems most significant to them. One woman, for example, devotes nearly half of her account of two years in exile to the death of her young son, which unfolded over a period of a few weeks. This self-directedness, combined with the temporal closeness to the experiences, can result in the sharing of more intimate information, more details, and, in some cases, more emotion. In addition, topics too embarrassing to discuss may be addressed more easily on paper; we see subjects discussed in the documents that are not broached in the interviews (with the exception of Ibragimova's), such as sexual abuse and female sexuality.

The letters that follow these documents have a sense of immediacy about them. They also demonstrate the constraints under which they were written, both in terms of writing materials and the restrictions on what could actually be stated. We include these letters to present the concerns and emotions of the writers at the time of their ordeals, as well as the possibilities of communicating from and within the Gulag. Finally, it is clear that context matters as much for documents as for interviews: considering the documents' content and wording in conjunction with the intended audience can tell us about that group's values, norms, and framework for understanding the experiences that are related.

Many Russian names and terms integral to Soviet life and the Gulag appear in the interviews. We have provided a glossary of such terms that appear more than once in the volume. Terms used only once are explained in the commentary or notes. The glossary also includes measurement conversions.

It can be difficult to both make the interviews readable and distinguish the voices of interviewer, interviewee, and other people who may be present. We have put the interviewees' comments in plain text, the interviewer's in italics without initials, and, when others are present, we include their initials and put their comments in italics. The editors' commentary also appears in italics. The interviewers' questions have largely been omitted, unless necessary to follow the narrative.

PART ONE

Forced Laborers in the Perm Region

CHAPTER 1

A Life in the Forest

Interview with Sira Stepanovna Balashina

The interview was conducted by Robert Latypov in June 2004 in the village of Vaia, Krasnovishersk raion*, Perm* oblast.

Translated by Elizabeth Stine

Illustration 1 Sira Stepanovna Balashina (left)

At 92 years of age, Sira Balashina barely remembers Stalin, despite the fact that his policies condemned her to a life of cutting timber in the forests of the Urals. Exiled as a 17-year-old, her overwhelming life memory, one she recalls without rancor, is of laboring in the woods. Balashina's interview is a testimony to one strain of Gulag survivors' memories: that of an almost upbeat acceptance of her time in exile and a much greater focus on her later life, rather than concentrating on a bitter experience of injustice. This attitude often surprises Western researchers who expect such grievous repression to constitute the defining experience of a person's life and identity.

Sira Stepanovna Balashina (née Khlestova) was born in 1912, the eldest of two daughters. The family lived in the village of Kamyshino, in the Lebiazhevskii raion *of the Kurgan* oblast *in southwestern Siberia. She lived there through the revolution and the 1920s, until Stalin decided to remake the countryside. In 1928, Stalin initiated his program for the total transformation of the socio-economic character of the USSR. His plan included fast-paced industrialization, which necessitated, in Stalin's mind, the breaking of the dominant peasantry. In 1929, his regime embarked on the collectivization of agriculture and the dekulakization of the countryside. This latter policy aimed at removing supposedly prosperous—in Soviet parlance capitalist and exploitative—peasants* (kulaks) *from the village. As historian Lynne Viola writes, however, "the (broadly defined) political behavior and actions of a peasant were often equally, if not more, important in determining social status than economic position in the village."[1] Dekulakization amounted to a war against the peasantry, which the regime viewed as counterrevolutionary at its core, and subject, then, to the most brutal and unrelenting treatment. This included dispossession, exile, arrest, and execution.*

Balashina's family, hardly basking in wealth, was dekulakized early in 1930. She explains that they had a five-walled house—a peasant hut divided into two rooms—suggesting that they were better off than some families in the village. Sharing the fate of nearly 2 million other peasants, Balashina and her family were sent into internal exile.[2] From the Kurgan oblast*, which lies just north of Kazakhstan, they were transported northward, first to the Sverdlovsk* oblast *and then to the Molotov* oblast*, where Balashina still resides (Map 2). In 1957 the name of the* oblast *was restored to its original, Perm; in December 2005, the name was changed from the Perm* oblast *to the Perm* krai *[territory]. For the sake of clarity, we use the name Perm, instead of Molotov.*

Like many other "special settlers" [spetspereselentsy]*, as they were officially termed, Balashina was moved around repeatedly during her years in exile, typically to empty places, where the peasants had to build their own barracks before beginning their forced labor. This movement itself was a major departure from the norm of peasant life: peasants tended to stay in one place for generations. Stalin and his inner circle planned to use the exiled* kulaks *as a source of free labor to extract resources from remote and uninhabited territories of the country. The* kulaks *were, thus, predominantly exiled to the Northern Territory, the Urals, Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Far East (Map 1). Balashina, along with more than half a million other peasants, ended*

up in the Urals.[3] The 1929 decision to expand the timber industry into the virtually unpopulated northern parts of the Urals, to feed the increasing needs of industrialization and produce hard-currency exports, created a huge demand for cheap and stable labor. The dekulakized peasants provided a ready, albeit coerced, supply.[4]

The regime began the process of dekulakization with little planning or preparation. As a result, local authorities and economic enterprises improvised, with the peasants bearing the harsh consequences. Many of them died as a result of the lack of food, proper shelter, medicine, or sanitation, combined with exhaustion from hard labor, as Balashina's account attests. The Urals administration, writes James Harris, "was in too great a panic over underfulfillment of the plan in forestry to worry about the well-being of 'kulaks.' "[5]

Despite the punitive nature of her exile and forced labor, Balashina reports working well and proudly. Clearly she, like many other Soviet citizens, repressed and not, internalized Soviet values that lauded hard labor, particularly of the physical sort (see Ramazanov, chapter 3). "Work," Stephen Kotkin writes, "served as both the instrument and measure of normality."[6] Labor, in her case logging—considered one of the heaviest forms of labor—became the central feature of Balashina's life. Details of her personal life are mere footnotes to the story of her work. She demonstrates no resistance to Stalin's plan to turn the exiled kulaks *into subservient subjects, toiling for the state. She talks with satisfaction about her prowess at felling trees, and the medals she earned for her work—indeed it was one of the few sources of satisfaction promoted by the regime, and the only avenue to overcoming the stigma of the* kulak *label. Balashina describes her life and losses with acceptance, expressing neither anger nor resentment. Her emotional response emerges through her laughter, which occurs at the most difficult moments of her story. It is as if the things she has to relate are somehow unreal, out of the question, brutal beyond belief. Still, she places no blame on Stalin, for whom she only recalls feeling sympathy when he died.*

Balashina's story reveals what life was like under the commandant, the ultimate authority in the special settlements, who typically ruled with an iron fist. These bosses, far from Moscow and imbued with a hatred for their subjects, frequently exercised arbitrary and brutal power, sometimes committing egregious abuses.[7] Daily life under their rule entailed forced labor, supervision, restrictions, and losses. Though not imprisoned, the deported peasants could not leave their assigned settlements or change their living quarters without permission. Even though Balashina was freed in 1942, she remained in the area and continued her work in the forest. Officials sought to keep the peasants in their places of exile as a permanent labor force even after rehabilitation. Many exiles did flee, legally and illegally, but not Balashina, who by 1943 had lost her family and young husband. As for so many others, her life did not change substantially after she was granted "freedom."

Often interviews with Gulag survivors are conversations between more than two people. Several relatives and a female friend accompanied Balashina at the interview. The friend, nearly 70 years of age herself, frequently prompted Balashina to

speak, encouraging her to go forward, supplying information that Balashina could not remember. Sometimes the friend indicates Balashina's mood. Her participation shows how hard it can be for elderly survivors to remember their trials without some external aid. We include this information about the assistance of the friend because it is a common feature of oral histories; we leave out the other woman's voice, however, in order to avoid confusion. We have also left most of the interviewer's questions in because of their importance in prompting Balashina's memories.

What is your name? Serafima…
My name is Sira, my real name is Sira. But everyone writes Serafima.
Sira Stepanovna, yes? So why do they call you Serafima then?
[F]or some reason everyone writes that—Serafima, and in my papers sometimes it's Serafima, sometimes Sira. But really my name is Sira. Our village was a big one, and there were only two people with that name.
Did you have a big family, that is, your parents'?
In my parents' household we were [in addition to] my parents, two. Two daughters.
[A]nd how did you end up here, in Vaia?
Ah! Exile! In 1930.
They dekulakized us in the beginning, but our holding wasn't very big. Well, we had four horses, two cows, a five-walled house, two barns. And in the house, just tables and shelves. Tables and shelves, there wasn't anything else. (Laughs.)
Was only your family dekulakized, or was there anybody else?
No. There were a lot of people in the village [who were dekulakized]. Fifteen families, maybe. It was a big village.
And were you all dekulakized together, sent away together?
Yes, into exile. In 1930. Sometime in February.
Was your family not in the kolkhoz*?*
In the beginning we were all in the commune. A year, maybe, we were in the commune. Then they drove everyone out.
Why did they drive them out?
Well, I was young then, I don't know why, they drove them out and that was it. Well, we were already condemned to exile. They dekulakized us.
Did you go to school there, in the village? You must have gone to school in the village, you were 17 years old when you were dekulakized.
No. I didn't even get the first two grades' worth of schooling. Back then everyone went to school that little. In the village there were two or three grades.
I see. And your parents, were your parents literate?
My father was literate, [he completed] four grades, it was good in his time.
Could he read? Read and write?
Well…even I can read and write.

That's great. Do you remember the moment when you were exiled, when they sent you away? When they dekulakized you; do you remember that moment?
How would I not remember, how old was I then? I was born in 1912.
To dekulakize [us], oh, I don't know how many [there were], but they came on horseback. Whatever we had, they took it all and took us away.
Who was this?
It was, how can I say? What to say? I forget everything by now.
Oy! Such people, they were already designated to work. They took every little thing.
What did they let you take with you? What could you take along?
Nothing. What we had on, only that, and that was it.
For food, they let us take a bag or so of flour. So [we went] with just what we had on.
Did they tell you where you would be taken?
No. They didn't say anything.
So, your father, your family, you, in general did you put up any resistance to what was happening? Since they came and took your property?
No, no, of course not. We didn't put up any resistance.
Why not?
I don't even really know, anymore. They said, "Get ready." Get ready how? The carts drew up, and sit down. And they took us away. Lebiazhevskii Station. There. There were a lot of us there in the end, that I do remember. The hall there was jam packed, imagine. (Laughs.)
[They first put us in] some kind of building, a big one, maybe a club or something. Lots and lots of people were brought in, from all over the district, probably. A lot. And then what—then there came this train and they loaded us all in. A goods [train]. (Laughs.)

Discussing the route of her journey into exile, Balashina reports traveling through the Urals region. The locations she names are on the eastern slopes of the Middle Urals, in the Sverdlovsk oblast *of Russia (Map 2).*

We went to Cheliabinsk. From Cheliabinsk, from Cheliabinsk (she reflects) . . . Oy! To Tagil. To the Tagil *oblast.*[8] Sos'vinskii *raion*. We spent a year there. In the summer we built a settlement. They brought us there in February, till spring we lived in apartments in the village, and then later, in the summer, we built the settlement . . . of 50 little houses, they settled a hundred families. And then sometime in 1931 again they picked us up, a family from here, a family from there, and took us away.

Here she indicates that she was next taken further west, to the Perm oblast *of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), located on the western slopes of*

the Middle Urals (Map 2). Even before the Gulag was formally established in 1929, the prison system sent inmates to labor there in the forests, as evidenced by the barracks she recalls seeing upon arrival. Gulag labor was used to fell trees and construct a pulp and paper combine in this remote and unsettled area.[9]

> They brought us to Usol'e, and then they put us on a barge and we went on the Kama [River] . . . upstream, and then on the Vishera and ended up in Baran'ii Log . . . in Krasnovishersk. To Baran'ii Log, and then to a settlement again, in the beginning there was the Parma settlement, there were prisoners, they took them away. That's where I was, there were only barracks.
> *There were barracks left from the prisoners, is that right?*
> Mm-hmm. And then [we] built a settlement at Parma. Then at Peschanka.

Balashina's parents and only sister died in exile, during the mass famine of 1932–1933, which claimed millions of victims in the Soviet countryside. The famine has been directly attributed to the policies of the central Soviet government: dekulakization, collectivization, grain requisitioning, and a campaign of terror against the peasantry.[10] *Eight years after losing her family, Balshina was again moved, ending up in the village of Vaia in the Krasnovishersk* raion *of the Perm* oblast*, where she still resides today. She recalls that many dekulakized peasants from Ukraine, Belorussia, and other parts of Russia ended up there, as well. There, too, prisoners preceded the special settlers.*

> By that time I didn't have any family left. My parents died. Sometime in 1932 [at Parma]. My sister died and my parents, too. And I was left; I was young then.
> *Why did they die?*
> Because there wasn't enough to eat. There wasn't enough for them to eat. They got sick and died.
> *How much bread did they give you then?*
> Not much then, to someone not working, maybe 200 grams. But [if you were] working—probably 500 grams.
> *When you got to Parma, people worked at building the settlement, is that right?*
> They logged and they built the settlement. There were foresters who logged and stripped the moss. People did what they could. First they built, then they got wood for the paper mill. It, the mill, began working in 1931.
> *Tell me, why did they move you around so much?*
> I don't know why. From Parma to Peschanka, and then from Peschanka, in January it was, they ordered [us to leave] the potatoes, you got settled in, at Peschanka, there were potatoes, people had prepared wood for the winter, and hay, they handed it all over. And in the middle of winter [they brought us] here, to Parma, to Vaia . . . in 1940.

What was there here, when they brought you?
Out here in this part there weren't many people. Twenty or so. There weren't many people. There were a handful of people living here, in this part, but over there everything was empty. There weren't any houses to be seen. Bushes, cut wood, stumps… [The settlement was created] to cut down the forest.
So there was virtually no one but exiles here?
Yes. Before us there were camps here. They got rid of them. Everyone was specially resettled. The whole village was filled up. Special settlers were here from 1930 on. All this, these houses, were built by resettled people. Only, you see, they kept moving them around, I don't know why, from one settlement to another.
You must have had some friends among [the other special settlers], right?
Who would that be? We worked in the woods, we never left the woods. (Laughs.) I well remember [being] in the woods, only in the woods.
Please tell me, you were 28 when they brought you here [to Vaia], is that right? In 1940, that is. Were you married?
Yes. My husband died at the front. [We were married] sometime in the 1930s. 1935 or 1936, I don't remember well anymore. He [was] from the Krasnodar *krai*. He was also exiled.
How old was he?
We were born in the same year.
I've been told that all the special settlers were put under the commandant.
There was a commandant. But he wasn't the only commandant. They changed, I don't remember.
What did it mean to be under the commandant? What did it mean you had to do?
Never leave the village.

With a clouded memory, Balashina brings up the issue of release from the jurisdiction of the commandant. Some kulaks *were released as early as 1935, after working for five years in exile. Soon, though, the regime feared that such emancipation would result in full-scale flight from the special settlements. A new stricture was added to the rehabilitation law: freed* kulaks *had to remain in their place of exile and continue to provide labor to the local enterprises.*[11] *However, desperate for soldiers to fight the advancing German army after the war began, in April 1942 the state allowed the mobilization of special settlers into the Red Army, drafting more than 60,000 of them during the next six months. That same year, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) announced the emancipation of the families of such individuals, which included the right to leave the settlement.*[12]

They didn't let you leave the village. It got better later on. Later, the commandants didn't keep such close track. That was during the war, after the war. After the war, they basically let everyone go… sometime around 1940.

After the war, then? In 1946, maybe, 1947?
No, before, I'd say. I don't remember. They let a few go during the war. I was also freed early. My husband was at the front. They took him in 1942 already. And he died in 1943. Someplace, oy, I can't remember the name. He died in 1943. There were funerals, so many funerals in the settlement. And we never came out of the woods. At six in the morning we left the house and some time around eight or nine [at night] we came home. All the time in the woods, in the woods. I spent my whole life in the woods.

During the war, men were taken to the front, leaving the women behind to work in the forest. Balashina recalls that the norm (quota) for the day was seven cubic meters of wood for two persons; her friend inserts that this amounted to a truckload's worth, reacting with surprise that she had to produce that much each day. Other deportees, like Ramazanov (chapter 3), similarly note that the norm for one person felling trees was three cubic meters per person per day—the same norm required of a male worker laboring in freedom.[13] *It must be remembered that the women had to fulfill this high norm in bad conditions, using substandard tools and surviving on small food rations and little sleep. Failure to fulfill the norm resulted in reduced rations, forcing many of the exiled peasants to work well into the night, returning early to begin the next day's quota. Balashina reports working hard and well. For her efforts, she was awarded several medals. One of these awards, the Medal for Valiant Labor, was given by the state "for self-sacrificial labor activity while displaying valor." Fifty thousand of these were awarded during the war. She also likely received the Jubilee Medal for the 100th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth, which was given out in 1967. Finally, "for long-term conscientious labor," she received the Medal for a Veteran of Labor, probably at her retirement.*[14] *For someone who began her adult life with the stigma of being an "enemy of the people," as* kulaks *were regarded, the receipt of labor medals probably felt redemptive. It confirmed her identity as a contributing Soviet citizen. Balashina's pride in her medals shows that rather than reject the values of the system that had repressed her, she internalized them.*

They took the men, and we had to cut the timber. We cut down the forest in pairs. Two people. They tried all sorts of things, brigades, everything, but it worked best with production in pairs. We stripped the bark off the trees with a cross-cut saw. Winter and summer. Then we got frame saws. During the war we already ran out of axes. They brought these axes, shaped like hatchets, but they were light. And they gave all the timber-cutters axes like that. I somehow got the hang of that ax, I couldn't with the others, the handles broke, and I was going to cut the wood, [but this one] was sharp and didn't get any notches in it, I don't know how many years I cut timber with it. Later I went to the toolshed,

I was standing there, Ivan Ivanovich Poroshin came up to me and without a word took the ax away from me and threw it in the corner. And he gave me a new ax. I missed it so much later, that ax. It got so worn only the head was left. That ax. And my hands. I kept cutting away . . . The production norm was seven cubic meters for two people.

You were supposed to cut that much, uproot the stumps, haul it out of the forest?

Yes, yes, yes. Cut it all yourself.

And did you manage to do it?

Well, sometimes we didn't quite make the norm, if there was a bad patch in the woods. But with good forest it worked out, with the way we cut. We tried hard. We tried. We got to the forest, and all we ever looked at was the woods, how is it here, how much forest?!

And how long did you work like that? In the woods?

In the woods, more than 20 years.

That's crazy. Did everyone cope with that?

Some did, some didn't . . . I have four medals over there, I hung them on the wall . . . For valiant labor . . . During the war . . . Then later during the Jubilee.

So you're a Veteran of Labor?

A Veteran of Labor.

Tell me, the special settlers, did they all like to work? The ones who were sent here? Did they all work as well as you?

Well, what would I say. There were sick people, they got light work, the doctors gave notes for light work. But whoever was healthy worked in the woods.

Light work was what kind of work? I mean, where else did people work?

What light work? Splitting wood, or something else here.

Hauling wood, maybe? Someone had to haul the wood.

Yes.

What did you haul the wood on?

With horses.

How? You brought it straight to the Vishera [River], and then . . .

From the section of the woods to the river. Then we stacked it. Then when the ice cleared, we pushed it [in] with levers and boat-hooks . . . It floated out, they held it there somewhere, in a harbor someplace for the mill. It was free floating. Now the river gets to rest, everything's taken with trucks. The women used to bring everything using horses. When it was winter, –40 degrees [Fahrenheit and Celsius], you had to hitch the horses and go to the site in the woods.

In this county, what other special settlements were there?

There was Gostinii. There was a big settlement there called Gostinii. Six kilometers along the river. There was the settlement at Mutikha not far away . . . There were special settlers at Garevaia. Garevaia is also closed . . . And then at Vels, the last settlement.

I've heard that there were very many different nationalities here, sent here because of their nationality. There were Crimean Tatars, Germans. Was that so?
There were. There were Crimeans. They lived right here, in this spot. In my neighborhood. [They had] a house with two apartments in it. I don't know, though, how long they lived here. They soon [went away] somewhere. They either were freed, or they left. They lived here.
Tell me, what other nationalities were there?
Germans, they brought them sometime in 1948…There were a lot of them, but now they've also all gone away. There are a few families [left].
Tell me, the people, why did they leave this place? That is, when there was the opportunity, when they were freed? Why did people begin to leave here?
Well, the work, you know, it's hard labor in the woods. Cutting timber is hard work. A lot of people left.
So why didn't you leave?
That's just how it turned out.
Later on you got married again?
Yes. Later on after the war I got married here a second time, we lived together 30 years. [We got married] sometime in 1947 or so, some time around then, after the war.
Do you have any children?
My son's right here. I had two daughters here. One daughter lives in Krasnovishersk. (Smiling.) And I have grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Lots of grandchildren.
Were these children from your first marriage or your second?
From the second. Nothing was left from the first, we didn't spend much time together. We were together a little, and then there was the war…Ah! How old I am already! It's frightening. My 92nd [birthday's] come. I can hardly walk. I can't do anything anymore. How I remember, always only in the forest. I just chopped with my ax. I didn't ever do any other work, just in the forest.
Until what year did you work, roughly?
I can't remember anymore. Just before I got my pension I worked here a little, heating up the *bania* [bathhouse], but otherwise, always in the forest. We had enough to do [at the *bania*], too. How much water we carried in barrels, wood we chopped!

Although the community bathhouse, where she once worked, burned down, Balashina notes happily that she still goes to a private one every week. She then talks about her garden plot, where she still plants and tends to tomatoes and cucumbers, despite her age and weakness. Clearly, it is a source of pride and satisfaction in her old age.

Last year, I had a good crop. That whole bed was planted with cucumbers. I'd walk round it once, and pick off a whole bucketful. And then to carry it,

I couldn't even pick it up. I dragged the bucket along . . . What a harvest. Like heaven! (Laughs.) Oy-yeh. Oy, your own is tasty.

That's right. Tell me, please, in 1940 you came here to Vaia. Was there any kind of settlement here at that time? Was there a cultural club here for the people?

There was a prisoners' barrack, there was something in the barracks, some tiny little thing, they called it [a club]. But there wasn't any time to go there.

So you didn't go to any dances at this club?

No, no. When you come in from the woods at 8 o'clock, then all you want to do is rest a bit.

On the subject of payment for labor, Balashina recalls that at times she received money, at other times bread. While she remembers that food was rationed during the war, she forgets how much bread she received after a day of logging. Her friend, whose mother also cut timber during the war, suggests that the amount was 400 grams—less than one pound. When the talk turns to deaths in the settlement, the friend calms Balashina, who insists that her own death will be coming soon. The friend, who was a child when the Crimean Tatars were exiled to the same region in 1944, remembers that they died in large numbers.

When you worked in the forest, what did they pay you?

Well, you see, they paid us by the cubic meter. That scale was well paid, if you were working by the cubic meter, then they said three rubles per cubic meter. For a sawyer—a ruble and a bit. And for the ones who split wood—80 kopecks.[15] We didn't make much in the woods.

Did they already pay you there just with money, or did they pay with bread, did they give a bread ration there?

We bought bread ourselves. Then it changed, that rate, then again there was free bread, you could take as much as you liked. It changed back and forth.

During the war, were there [ration] cards?

Yes, during the war there were ration cards.

So there you were working in the woods, instead of the men, who had all been taken to the front, how much was on your card, how much bread could you take?

I've forgotten, during the war, I think there was some kind of ration. Some people had a few potatoes; we planted a few potatoes during the war. It was hard in the settlements during those years. There weren't any vegetable plots.

Tell me, please, people must have perished, right? They died. Where were they buried?

Oh, there was a cemetery and everything. The cemetery's from 1940 . . . In 1940 there was one grave in the cemetery. By now, goodness, how many people have been buried . . . The Crimean Tatars. They couldn't cope with the climate, Stalin drove them here, and they couldn't cope with the climate. They exiled [them]. Resettled, we called it, resettled.

How did the local population behave towards you?
In the beginning they were, well, afraid of us, as though we were going to steal, but then they got used to us, everything was fine.

When the interviewer asks about Balashina's feelings toward Stalin, she strains to remember him. Her friend takes offense at the question, commenting: "Why do you ask grandmother a question like that, she doesn't even know who Stalin is?"

Tell me, did you feel any resentment against the Soviet regime? Because you were, forgive the expression, driven from pillar to post, your property was confiscated, and then they still paid you so little. Did you ever feel any resentment towards this regime?
We weren't at all resentful.
How do you feel about Stalin? Now?
About whom?
About Stalin, how do feel about him now, having lived your whole life? Do you remember, there was this man Stalin? Do you remember, in 1953 Stalin died?
I remember.
How did people react? How did they feel about this?
Well, how can I tell you, everyone sympathized, felt sorry.
Do you feel sorry now?
(Hesitatingly.) Nothing, I've forgotten by now.

Sira Stepanovna Balashina died in 2006.

CHAPTER 2

Soviet but German

Interview with Robert Avgustovich Ianke

The interview was conducted by Svetlana Chashchina, Ines Udel'nov and Robert Latypov in June 2004 at the Iaiva settlement, Aleksandrov raion, *Perm* oblast.

Translated by Elizabeth Stine and Katherine R. Jolluck

Illustration 2 Robert Avgustovich Ianke (left)

Robert Ianke suffered governmental repression both because his father was considered an "enemy of the people," and because of his nationality. His story encompasses many of the tragedies of the Stalinist period of Soviet history. The Ianke family escaped dekulakization, but experienced famine, arrest, execution, exile, and labor conscription. His account illustrates the miserable and punitive nature of the labor army.

Born in 1926, Robert Avgustovich Ianke came from a family of ethnic Germans, of the Lutheran faith. Ianke himself felt little connection to his German nationality; he also did not share the religious beliefs of his mother. Like most children growing up in the decades after the Russian Revolution, Ianke was a Soviet patriot. That did not save him, however, from Stalin's suspicions that all Germans in the USSR would prove traitorous.

Ianke's father came from a peasant family near Kiev. During the First World War, the Iankes, like thousands of other ethnic German families living in the Russian Empire's western borderlands, were deported to Siberia by tsarist officials, who also expropriated their property.[1] In 1924, the family received permission to return to Ukraine and was granted a plot of land. They lived in a village near the small city of Novograd-Volynsk in the Zhitomir oblast *of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Map 3). Located west of Kiev, at the time his home lay close to the border with Poland.*

At first Ianke's father worked in agriculture. But he had earlier received an education in construction, so when he understood that collectivization was imminent, he became an industrial worker, and thus escaped the brutal collectivization campaign that Balashina (chapter 1) endured. The family did not, however, escape the famine that resulted from Stalin's merciless policies and decimated the population of Ukraine, a tragedy Ianke describes at length.

After the famine, the population then faced the mass arrests of the Great Terror. Ianke's father was arrested in 1939, when Ianke was 13 years old. He reports this calamity as commonplace, with no special reaction to it. Ianke did not keep any of the correspondence about his father's posthumous rehabilitation. Many people never knew under what pretext their parents were arrested—Ianke included. He does suggest, though, that the arrest came as a result of his German nationality. From the mid-1930s, Stalin targeted "enemy nations," which included ethnic Germans, living in the western border regions of the USSR. In 1936, some 45,000 Germans and Poles were deported from Ukraine to Kazakhstan—including Ianke's aunts.[2] In 1938–1939, as fear of war with Nazi Germany increased, the NKVD arrested many ethnic Germans as anti-Soviet, and then executed them or sent them to the Gulag camps.[3] Ianke's father was probably caught in the dragnet of these "national operations." After the disappearance of her husband, Ianke's mother decided to move the family to Kazakhstan, to join her exiled sisters.

The Second World War, known as the "Great Patriotic War" in the USSR, broke out while Ianke was living in Kazakhstan. The Soviet regime did not trust its German citizens to bear arms during this war. In September 1941, those

already serving were removed from the Red Army. Soon afterwards, the NKVD mobilized more than 100,000 Soviet German civilians. Both groups were sent to labor battalions, the so-called labor army [trudarmiia]*, characterized by harsh conditions, demanding physical labor, and strict discipline. Historian J. Otto Pohl notes that the labor army was part of the Soviet penal system, adding that it "resembled a mobile forced labor camp much more than it did an alternative to military service."*[4] *Late in 1942, Ianke, now 16 years old, received a notice from the enlistment office summoning him to the army of labor, "to work for the front." Given five days to prepare, he then was taken from Kazakhstan to the settlement of Dolgoe,*[5] *in the Perm* oblast*, to work at cutting timber. Upon release from these labor battalions in 1947–1948, members of the labor army were then sent to special settlements—Ianke ended up in Iaiva, where he lived as a special settler, under the rule of a commandant, until August 1954, when the government released the mobilized Germans from the special settlement regime. The release of the larger group of deported Germans followed in late 1955, but they were still prohibited from returning to their homes.*[6]

Like many individuals exiled in the Stalin era, Ianke created a life for himself in his place of exile, and remained in the settlement for the rest of his life. He married in 1949, and even joined the Communist Party in 1955. Still, he did not have the life he had imagined for himself. Ianke recalls with regret that from youth he had always had a thirst for higher education, but was unable to receive it. In 1948 he passed the exams required to enroll in a technical college [tekhnikum]*, but the commandant did not permit him to go. "Later I was enraged by that, and in general," he says. Still, he remained a Soviet patriot and a Communist, despite the repression and tragedy he experienced. Unlike Balashina and Ramazanov (chapters 1, 3), Ianke is extremely critical of Stalin, and blames him for all of the things that went wrong in the Soviet Union. He bears no ill will toward the commandant of his settlement, who later resided in the same apartment building—he puts all the blame on the top of the system. Until his death, Ianke retained his faith in Lenin and Communism, and bemoaned the fall of the USSR.*

Ianke begins the interview by talking about aspects of German culture observed in his family, including language, discipline, and holidays. He notes that he belonged to the Pioneers, a mass organization for children aged 10 to 14. It was an important institution for early social and political indoctrination, to which most children belonged in the Soviet period.

> My mother was religious. That's right. [My parents] always said that, that we were Germans, we had to observe German traditions…You had to obey. That was the kind of discipline we had…We celebrated only German holidays. We celebrated in the old-fashioned ways. Which ones? Easter, Christmas, Whitsunday…We observed them all…[My family was] Lutheran, believers. Even now there are Baptist sects, they're all mixed up with Russian ones today,

they're identical. Either way, I don't recognize any of it. Still, I uphold the Lutheran style. Myself, I'm not a believer, though.

[Were there any] particular stories about German history, German culture, or German writers, artists?

There were, of course, we had those. But somehow I didn't really latch on. You know how it is, it was like that sometimes, before the war . . . Yes, it's all still there in my memory. As it was, I studied in a Russian school . . . I was a Pioneer. [How did I feel] about it? Well, the first thing, and it was the first thing. What was that? It was Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin. He was our father. When I was taken into the labor army, we were going to defend our homeland. We weren't thinking specially that it was Germany [we were fighting] or anything. What was Germany to us? We were told that these were enemies and so forth. That's how we thought about it.

Ianke describes his father, who was arrested in 1939. While he initially claims his father was arrested under Article 56 of the Criminal Code, he clearly means the notorious Article 58. This article, used on a massive scale during the Great Terror of the 1930s, outlined "counterrevolutionary crimes," known as political crimes, and provided for the punishment of the following categories of offenders: traitors, separatists, spies, terrorists, saboteurs, anti-Soviet agitators and propagandists, and members of counterrevolutionary groups.[7] Describing the arrests, Ianke mentions the notorious "Black Ravens"—this, or "Black Marias," is how people referred to the cars used by the security police to take individuals away in the night.

Was your father a party member?

No. My father wasn't. I don't know the circumstances, I don't know the details. My father worked . . . Beginning in 1929, he worked in Novograd-Volynsk; he was a builder, my father. He worked on military construction; they called it the war department. In building, until just before the war. And then he was arrested . . . because he . . . So many people were arrested then. They said the wrong thing . . . He was arrested in 1939.

So, in 1929 your father was working in construction, and in 1939 he was arrested, is that right? Did he disappear, or did they let him go again?

He disappeared.

Did you ever try to write a letter to the archives, to find out [what happened to him]?

Yes, in the end, we wrote. They wrote back that that was it. He was shot, and that was it . . . Under that Article, 56. And then he was rehabilitated.

I see. Robert Avgustovich, these responses, do you have them?

No. I don't have them any more . . . They were somewhere at my mother's. And there they . . . I don't know. I didn't take any of them.

In what month was he arrested?

In what month was he arrested? I don't know… In the autumn. In 1939…
What did you think about it?
What do you mean? What children usually do. My father was gone, that was it, they took him away. They took every third person. Russians and Germans.
So he wasn't the first one they took?
Goodness, no! They went through the streets every day. How big was our village? Four kilometers long. It was a big village. Near the town. Eight kilometers from Novograd-Volynsk. And the car came, the "Black Raven," and we all sat and quaked, whether we were Turks or Germans or Russians, whoever we were. They took everyone by turns… Half the village was left without a father, from the whole population. They made mass arrests.
[H]ow did they treat the relatives afterwards, the wives, the children?
Oooh! Look, I'll give you one example, my friend. Vil'gel'm Petrovich Khul'tsep. That's it. He died last year. He lived here. In 1930, he was exiled. And in 1941, his father was arrested. Here, already, in Iaiva. They picked people up here, too. It was called Article 58. Paragraph 1. The day they arrested his father; he was in the fourth class then. In the morning, the principal came and said, "Khul'tsep," [he] called him out, "sit in the back" (he was sitting in the middle), "sit over there on the back bench." So he got up, took his bag. And he spent the rest of fourth class [at the back], right to the end, and this was sometime in the winter, I think, [so it was] around four months, and he wasn't called on once! He was Estonian by nationality.
Did anything like that happen to you?
To us? No, nothing like that happened, but I was a Fascist just the same.
Was that how you thought about yourself? Or did the other children say that?
All the time. Any kind of conflict, and they called me a Fascist. Any conflict.
Were only men arrested, only fathers, or women, too?
Women, too. And the women. Women less, of course. Mainly men.
You mentioned that in the 1930s your father felt something was coming; of course you were a child then…
I'm coming to that. We were going along, we came from Siberia, we built a house, there was farming, my father farmed. But he was a builder. Although he didn't have a higher education in building, he still went to some kind of technical school. So already then he… in 1930, 1929, he sensed there would be collectivization. That's it. Collectivization would happen in 1930.
So what did he do? Did he join a kolkhoz *himself?*
Nooo. Let me tell you. Everyone had to go into the *kolkhoz*. What does that mean? We're all living separately. Separately. Everyone. Thousands [of us]. A thousand inhabitants we were. Everyone does his own cultivation. Everyone. There was an order: now we're organizing a *kolkhoz*. They bring in a chairman. There it is. They were from the Cheka [original name of Soviet security organ] then. The chairman of the soviet and the *kolkhoz*. Everybody, make a

declaration. They set up a group of leaders, ten people. And work brigades and everything . . . There was an announcement, you all have to join the *kolkhoz*. Give up all your property. There will be collective cultivation, and we'll all live collectively . . . There, I have two cows, I have everything. But here some guy, what they called a farm-laborer [*batrak*]. He's there. Dirt poor all the time. Like that. We had a neighbor like that . . . Khomar Zakhorchuk lived near us. We called him Khom . . . So [Khom] had this horse. He had one horse. He used it on the land. He had two [unclear]. That was it, all they had there. Winter came, and they had nothing to feed [the animals] with. It got so bad that when spring came his wife, and this I witnessed, I was there then, and I understood, they put two sticks under [the horse's] belly and carried her out to grass. It was warm there in March, the grass was already growing, so they carried her out to grass, to save her.

They were dirt poor, all starving. He never had any wood, he needed wood, there was this . . . well, there was the forest right there, it [had] belonged to some Polish noble, the Poles [used to have] the land around there. [He'd] break off one twig, burn it the once, and lie down to sleep. In his *lapti* [bast shoes], in all that stuff. That was how they lived. And he went into the *kolkhoz* . . . those ones gave up everything, what did it matter where that horse of his went, that he couldn't feed? My father said to him, "Khomka, are you not mowing your hay again? What's the matter with you?" He said: "Oy, Avgust, the sun ripens the grain. The mowing can wait." (Laughs.) And so there he waits and waits, the rain comes, and that's it, no more hay. Again.

And [my father], in Novograd-Volynsk there was a big war department . . . he got himself a job there on the construction site as a work superintendent. So that's where he worked. Then came 1930. 1929–30. The *kolkhoz*. That was it, and then eviction for the ones who don't join the *kolkhoz*, to the Urals, Siberia. Expulsion. They take away everything you're cultivating, and then they stick you in a wagon and send you away. That was with the peasants. But if you were a worker, it didn't concern workers. And he was a worker.

Ianke next recalls the famine of 1932–1933, which killed, by some estimates, as many as 7 million people in Ukraine and Russia.[8] *The famine resulted from Stalin's policies of collectivization and dekulakization, which included the confiscation of the peasants' grain, and has been labeled a genocide by many people.*[9] *Describing how his family managed to survive those difficult years, Ianke refers to* torgsiny*—stores officially named "trade with foreigners"* [torgovliia s inostranntsami]. *He mistakenly considers them shops run by foreigners, however, and conjures up traders crossing into the USSR to buy up valuables. However, this trade was completely controlled by the state. Set up by the Soviet government in 1930, these shops originally catered only to foreign tourists. They sold deficit goods and antiques for hard currency, which the regime needed to import machinery for its industrialization drive. Beginning in*

1931, the government decided to use the stores to extract valuables from its citizens. They could purchase much-needed foodstuffs for hard currency, precious metals, jewelry, and artwork. During the famine, the number of torgsin *stores grew from a few dozen to 1,500; they ceased operating in 1936.*[10] *While Ianke believes that foreigners were "taking all the gold," in fact, it was his own government. As historian Elena Osokina explains: "The state capitalized on the famine in order to obtain citizens' savings… Hunger drove people to* Torgsin*."*[11]

[In Ukraine in 1932–1933], if you remember, there was a famine…
A famine, a famine. Oooooh! How could I not remember, if I was there myself? There were bodies lying all over the road, everywhere, and in the town. In 1933. A total famine, nothing anywhere. Well, it spared our family, we were what was called well-to-do. And we had a little gold. But when the famine came, there wasn't anything anywhere. No bread. People stood in lines for bread. They sold cornbread there…They gave one roll, three or four days and nights people stood there. There were such lines…People fell down from hunger, and that was it. And there were *torgsiny* all over the place. From abroad. There were German *torgsiny*, and Austrian ones, and they all were buying up gold. They'd ask: "Have you got a ring?" If you gave it to them, you got a sack of flour in return. That's it. It was permitted. My mother, who had gold, you know, a watch, and all kinds of earrings, and rings, all that stuff, she gave away all her gold, everything. And that's how we survived 1933.
How long did this last, in all?
Ooh, the whole of 1933, and then six months more.
So for a year and a half there was nothing, in general, to eat?
No, of course not.
Why was there a famine? Was there a drought?
I'll tell you why. The *kolkhoz* was organized in 1930. They announced that there would be only collective agriculture, individual [cultivation was]…[t]otally liquidated. Suppose you're an individual farmer—they make you pay such taxes, they bring you one bill, they request the money and you pay. They bring a second. You pay the second. A third. If you don't pay the third, they round you up and send you off to Siberia. That's how it was. And they said to liquidate all the horses there were. They liquidated them all. They blamed it on some illness. Well, they were animals. They shot them. They dug big pits. Put them in…All the horses. Because they had some contagious disease. They shot them. They poured kerosene all over them, so people wouldn't take the meat or anything, and covered them up. Like that.

Spring came—it was time to sow. With nothing. They sent these tractors. Farsons. Then [from] KhTZ [Kharkov Tractor Factory]. Our tractors by then. From the Kharkov factory. Farson is American machinery. They brought these tractors with wheels…But they weren't very powerful, that was how they were

built. Nobody was trained, nobody knew anything. They started off—over went the tractor. There wasn't any place there that was level, it was all up and down. It tipped over and the drum filled up with oil. And that was it. The sowing was finished—they didn't sow anything. And there weren't any individual farmers. Everyone was in the *kolkhoz*. That's how they organized it. So there was a famine.

How did you survive the famine?

Different ways. We ate grass. We sold everything we had, all the gold things we had, well, this goes for my family; my mother would give the gold ring from her finger, and get a sack of flour for it. The foreigners collected gold, I guess it was permitted. They were called *torgsiny*. They collected up all the gold. You could buy anything with gold. She gets a bag of flour, of greens, of everything. That's how we survived. Got through. So that's how we got along . . . It made no sense . . . It was all in 1933, 1934 . . . A person, people didn't get enough to eat, they died. If there were children in the family, say, four children or something . . .

Do you remember how many people died in your village?

In ours? Well, how would I remember? There were thousands, thousands.

Did everyone in your family get through?

In our family, yes . . .

Did Khomka have children? That poor guy? The batrak?

Of course he did.

Did they live?

Half of them died. He had four children and two of them, I know, died. [Bodies] were everywhere . . . You're going along. We'd go to town, with my mother, there was bread there, aaah . . . they were selling bread in the shops but people were standing in the lines for four days and nights. The lines were so long . . . you stood there for 300–400 meters. Today you wouldn't get anything, tomorrow? So they gave a bread roll to one person. My mother and I went over there. You look, there's a body lying here, and here, and here . . . They didn't have time to collect them all. They were burying them. But they just couldn't pick them all up fast enough.

We got through to 1938. 1938. By then there was a good harvest. There were trucks in the *kolkhozy*. There were one-and-a-half tonners. It was called a *polutorka.* Then there was the ZIS-5 [Soviet cargo truck]. The most powerful one. From the Stalin factory. (Laughs.) . . . And then the harvest was good. And that was it. And life was a breeze. Even the poorest people, they set themselves up again, so to speak, quickly. And they began to live again. Everything was fine. 1938, 1939. In 1939, disaster struck. Well, for my nationality.

Do you remember when all the arrests began?

They started already in 1936. At the end of 1936. Yes. And in 1937, they were mass, mass, mass.

What groups of people were arrested? Wasn't it different people in 1936 and 1938?
No. Here's what I'd say. It was independent of your nationality. It wasn't that you were a German, so [we'll take] you . . . or you're a Ukrainian . . . or a worker or a peasant—anything . . . It was all the same. Everyone was scared to death. They did it so the people would keep quiet, not say anything.
Did you talk among yourselves, in the family?
Yes. Let me tell you, say that you happened to be my neighbor. I would already have been afraid to talk, I wouldn't have trusted you. Tomorrow you might go and tell . . . We were afraid of each other. Even though before everything there was, well, open . . . Now you and I talk about everything. But then I was afraid. Neighbors didn't talk to each other. That was what it was for.
And your mother, let's say, didn't she have some version of events, who could have done it, why would they? Because your father made this or that much money?
No. No. It wasn't what he made. They knew not to let anything slip anywhere. Not about anything. You had to keep quiet. You didn't even have to say anything against the regime. If you just talked a lot, were too sociable. They'd come and take you away. Because every day, as soon as night came, at midnight the "Black Raven" would come. And they put a lot of people in. They said there was room for 18 people. And the NKVD was working there. There was the chairman, of the *kolkhoz* and the village soviet. People said they had a quota. There was a plan. To put such-and-such a number of people in jail. Everyone off up there to the north.

The conversation turns to the topic of denunciations, which could result in the object's arrest and imprisonment. In the story Ianke tells, the comment that led to the arrest of a family in exile referred snidely to the NKVD. As punishment, the family, he notes, was sent to Kolyma, one of the harshest areas of forced labor camps of the Gulag, located in the Far East of the USSR.

Denunciations. Now, what example can I give you . . . Estonians. A family. Five people. Here, in the Urals. That's it. The whole bunch. Three sons, the father and mother. One was doing time. Well, they were all special settlers. Everyone here was doing time. There wasn't a single person here who wasn't exiled or something . . . Take this river, the Iaiva, up there, on the poster. It's 360 kilometers long. All the way from the Kama [River] to the upper reaches, the little stream . . . there were few people before the war. But during the war they exiled everyone. The ones who were captured, the repatriated, they were marked, they'd been captured . . . Everyone, everyone, everyone was sent here.

This thing happened, to that family. They were sitting and talking. Oh, how bad it is, you don't know how, the regime this, that . . . and one of the brothers was sitting there. Ten people, all of them, out in the woods, and one of them laughs: "Just wait," he says, "the red steamroller [*chesalovka*] will come

and sort you out in a hurry." And in two days they were all arrested. Yes, they came . . . One of the kids was an informer, what they called a "squealer." And they got ten years. They were sent to Kolyma. Here this was also exile, and then from here to Kolyma.

Do you have any idea why it happened?

Let me tell you, those people were under the control of the NKVD. And the NKVD maintained the regime. When I was young I didn't understand this, but now I do, why all this happened, all those years. To keep a hold on power. Stalin did it. To keep an iron grip on power. The people here couldn't coexist with the regime that was in power then—it couldn't possibly have held on. It wouldn't have lasted. It was all coming from above.

On the question of denunciations—it wasn't Stalin who wrote them, the people there wrote them.

People, well, they are subordinate to those above, it comes from above.

And why did they submit? Did they pay them well for it?

They didn't pay them anything.

Or did they think that if they wrote something down, they would shield themselves, they'd be safe?

Yes, that's exactly right. They never wrote anything down, he just came and told them; in every settlement there was someone working for the NKVD. In every settlement. All settlements, everywhere, no matter how big or small, every place had [someone] assigned. The NKVD boss had an assignment, he had to divide the village into classes. Everything was grounded in that, things people don't know now, how to maintain power, [in] these territories. Then it was all easy. Beria did everything.[12] Like iron.

Do you think it was personal control of power over the country?

Yes.

Did you know which of the people in the village were from the NKVD?

How would I not? He went around openly . . . He walked around in a uniform.

Ianke returns to his own story, picking up with the war years. When the war began, he was living in a village in Kazakhstan. He had moved there with his mother after the arrest of his father. Then he was forced into the labor army. From Kazakhstan, in Central Asia, he was taken far north, to the Perm oblast *(Map 2). Ianke notes that many of the 350 men taken into the labor army with him were Germans. Nearly one-third of his group was about 30 years old; age 55 was the upper limit for conscription into the labor army. These men were quartered in small houses that had previously been the homes of the deported* kulaks*, like Balashina (chapter 1).*

You know, in Kazakhstan in 1939, 1940, 1941, it was the war; in November 1942, I turned 16, they took me into the labor army, and they brought us here. To Iaiva. Six hundred people, maybe 650. And they made 350 of us

march, it's 70 kilometers, to Dolgoe [where we lived], that was the name of the settlement . . . To the timber-cutting. And there what? Everyone worked cutting timber. And there, we were 350 people, we were all the same, well, there were different ages, and there were Romanians, and Ukrainians, from western Ukraine. And they were all in the labor army with us, they worked. There were informers. Who listened.

Did you know who they were?

We figured it out, yes. That this one was. Once they came and took people away. Not so many, maybe 20 people from our group, from the 350.

That's not many?

Twenty people, they took them away.

When they took you away from Kazakhstan, into the labor army, how did that happen? Did somebody come from the NKVD and say, "Okay, you, you're in the labor army?"

No, no. There was the registration and enlistment office. There was the office. So it was all civilized . . . You were called, you see, the Motherland needed you.

Did you feel that your comrades were going to the front, and me, I'm going to another type of front?

Yes, I mean, what else? [It was] patriotism.

Did you volunteer for the labor army?

It was obligatory. No, I didn't volunteer.

It was 1942, they brought us, settled us in little houses. They gave us clothes. They gave us a uniform there and everything, they gave us quilted trousers. *Lapti*. You wrapped your feet in bindings, and that's it. You stuff them with hay, you go to the stables and get some hay from somewhere. Hay and bindings. You do it all up and, well, you're warm. Like that. They fed us. So the work schedule was 12 hours, that was considered the workday, but we had to go five kilometers on foot, and that was included.

So you walked for an hour, worked for ten hours, and then walked an hour back?

Yes. In the morning [we went to] the canteen. The morning roll call was at 6 A.M.; in the winter, you can imagine, if the sun doesn't rise until 10 A.M., then it's dark. And you go to the canteen. Everything was all ready [when] we got there. You ate the bread ration we were allotted; the ration was 600 grams of bread, half bread, with potatoes or other things mixed in, or beetroot or rutabaga, you know, baked, a piece like this (indicates size). Six hundred grams per day, and soup, they called it, [and] if you get a little piece of frozen potato in your portion, you're so happy you can't imagine . . . We were supposed to get 75 grams of meat per day. When you came back in the evening. A little piece like this (indicates size). Sometimes there'd be a bone in it, or something else. And butter. There was the bread ration. Though the ration was, it was called third category. Soldiers got first category. It was Mikoyan who set up these three categories . . . the rations.[13] The third category, it was the bottom one . . .

And then in 1943, in the spring, there was a typhus epidemic. I'm not making anything up, everyone knows, that typhus started in the spring, you know, from the diet and everything . . . [People who] went to work, at least there was the *bania* there, they went to the *bania*. But how were we, myself, [with] 18 people in one little house . . . there weren't barracks, there were little wooden houses. And so there we were . . . We had to build two-story platform beds, put them all the way around. In the middle there was a Russian stove, made of clay wattle, no less. It was made with bricks, clay wattle bricks, you've seen the type. A Russian stove, I guess. It was heated with logs, there were logs, straight from the forest we got them. We worked there for a month, all got lice . . . All got skinny . . . You come in from work, take all the clothes off your bottom half, and the first thing you do is fry the lice. A Russian stove, 18 of us . . . so on that stove there'd be this layer of lice, like this, we'd let fall, I'm telling you, it was just heaving there were so many lice. And then, after those lice, after those conditions, typhus . . .

Of the 350 people, 100 died. And how, did they die. They went around these houses on a horse every day, on a horse they go around, collecting the bodies, those that were in the houses, but the common sickhouse was over on the river bank . . . They couldn't cope with all of them. There was this special, this big barrack, it was called the sickhouse. They put all the people infected with typhus in there, gathered them up. It held 70, and it was full up. Full up. And those bodies, down below, they put them in a stack. And in March, it was already getting warm, they had put them in a stack, they were lying in this big stack, they dragged them all out of the houses and brought them out from that sickhouse. Well, they piled up 100 people there. And they made us dig—I took part myself—dig a mass grave . . .

I'll tell you how I dug. So it was . . . well from that settlement there, about a kilometer, they made this mass grave . . . They put 16 of us [to work], in March there were still frosts. The frosts went down to -30 C, the frosts in March. They put [us to work]. Off we go, 18 guys, all of us weak . . . So there we were, gouging away for a month, digging those mass graves . . . After that, all those bodies there began to smell, lying there all stacked up. So then they forced us to haul them. We took a pair of horses. On sledges still. There was still snow, well, it was already melting, in April. Here there was still snow. So we hauled them there. We brought them there and buried them.

About how many were there, would you estimate, in the mass grave?

They said, I don't know, of course, I didn't count, they said 100 people. I didn't do the hauling, I just dug, and . . . and buried [them]. There were two other guys who drove. They go, put some on the sledge, four or five [bodies], tie them up—they brought them, threw them in there. And there we stacked them. And then we buried some more, and what [happened]? Later, in the summer, there was this smell, that was it. Then we went back again, I went myself, and buried it with more earth.

And this was, so to speak, the cemetery for the territory, or what was there?
No, no, no. They just designated it. There was this gully there, and beyond the gully, they told us, it was far. So the supervisor gave the order, he stuck in a stake: "There, that's where you'll dig the grave." And that was it . . . There's no marker there of any kind, there was just this hill, people lived there and everything. After that time, I never went there again, trees have already grown up there by now. That was in 1943. Sixty years have gone by, you know.
If it smelled, then animals must have come there?
Surely they did. There were wolves. At that time there weren't any wolves, but later there were.

Ianke next discusses the men under whose command he lived. The commandant of the special settlement of Iaiva, where Ianke lived after release from the labor army, was named Osipov. He came to the settlement during the war, from the front. Ustin Alekseevich Vasev worked as the supervisor of the corrective-labor colony at Dolgoe, where Ianke first worked. Vasev, who came from a local village, was known for mistreating the men under his command.

The former special commandant of Iaiva is still alive.
Osipov.
Osipov. Do you know where he lives?
I do.
You do?
In my building.
In your building? What, do you think he would agree to it, if we went to talk to him?
Why wouldn't he agree? Yes, go ahead and ask.
He lived outside the perimeter before.
Outside the perimeter. They gave him an apartment in our building.
So, what's it like, do you speak to him?
How would we not speak to each other? We see each other: "Hello."
In general, what sort of relationship do you have nowadays?
No, I don't hold anything against him. He was doing his job. Since we were put under the office of the commandant.
They say that he treated people all right.
All right.
And about Vasev . . .
Aah. About him. The food supplies all used to get stolen, I'll get to that later. In May 1943, there came this commission. That guy, the *prokurator* [prosecutor], Ivan Avgustovich Rynos, stood there and talked. He wrote a complaint to Moscow, that this and that, described it all, and suddenly, in May already, a commission comes to look into everything. How many people, that is, died

of typhus, and under what conditions, they checked this all out. The lice. And so, the commission did its work. And so they removed him from his post. That Vasev. After that. Then we started to get our proper ration in the canteen, the bread that was allotted, it changed. For us it was like night and day. We started getting meat. We were all surprised. They removed [Vasev] from his post and then did a search of the apartment where he lived. And so with horses they carted off 15 boxes of powdered eggs, powdered eggs, because the food supplies were all American. They gave sprats, in place of meat, American sprats. There were also some 15 boxes somewhere. And sugar, and everything, everything, everything. They took everything out and took it to the storeroom, to the cafeteria. And our life changed for the better.

[Vasev's] son worked as a Party Secretary. The son was Pavladii Ustinovich. This was his son. He graduated from the Urals Forest Technology Institute, the Forest Engineering Department (LIF), forest industries. And then he began to work . . . He worked here in the forest industry collective as an engineer, and then they moved him over to be Party Secretary, from the Solikamsk paper mill. He worked there. And there were Germans working there. All those ones from the labor army, it all kept growing, they were about 30 percent in all. But they knew about it, and his father worked on the timber floating, they were working there when he made them strip, he forced those guards to strip bare, with all the mosquitoes.

That was Vasev himself?

Vasev himself, the father. His son . . . I wouldn't say a bad word about him. About the son. I wouldn't say a thing, because I worked with him . . . I worked 20 years as the supervisor of the sector, that was also later. And he worked in the production division here with us. I was always on good terms with him. The son. Now his daughter, Margarita Ustinovna, lives here still. She also worked in the production division. We worked together. I worked in production, and so did she. I can't say a bad word [about her]. And he was such a monster.

Ianke explains that there were no watchtowers or barbed wire in Dolgoe, which was a special settlement. But there were in Iaiva, where an enclosed labor camp had existed. "Zones" refers to guarded areas surrounded by fences or walls and barbed wire—camps, of varying sizes, in the Gulag. This is where individuals charged and convicted served their sentences.

Here, in Iaiva, there was a [penitentiary] zone . . . Where there had been zones, camps, that's where they settled us. There were two [guards]. They were considered policemen. They were veterans from the front, invalids. That's who they were.

And were relations between the workers and these policemen okay?

Okay . . . Well, yes, they were. We got on. Well, there were monsters, like that supervisor . . . [but they were exceptions].

Do you remember how they lived, the guards, did they live with you, or did they have separate barracks?
Why? They had a separate little house there and everything. And they were fed separately in the canteen, [they had] their rations…
Were they better fed?
Of course, what do you think?
Were they there with their families?
No. No.

Explaining that young women from local villages worked in the canteen, Ianke discusses the discrimination he and the other ethnic Germans faced. They were all seen as Fascists—even those who, like Ianke, spoke Russian. Each of his names—Robert Avgustovich Ianke—marked him as a German; his passport also identified him as a German. He could not possibly hide his nationality, nor did he ever try. Ianke felt this discrimination and hostility everywhere he went, and it continued till the end of the USSR.

Were there only men, there weren't any women with you?
There were women, they worked in the canteen, they were all in the canteen. [They] worked as maintenance workers, they cleaned up there, the women. There were probably around 30 women. They were all from the villages, the girls. Their hostels were separate, and their houses were separate. Locals. Locals. They were everyday, simple, village girls. They made us out to be, that you're German Fascists, or something…

Ianke next talked about recreational activities in the settlement, particularly music. He recalled that many people there played instruments: accordion, guitar, balalaika, and flute. Some of these individuals had been musicians in orchestras before their deportation. In the settlement they staged concerts, especially on election day. As for personal life, in 1949, at the age of 22, Ianke married a woman of the same age, whom he met at the settlement. The conversation then turned to his life after release. Though he does not state when that happened, it probably occurred in 1954.

What did you work at, after you were freed?
I worked, you know, I started as a timber receiver. I had already finished the seventh class in 1944, I had some education. And there, you write a notice to the supervisor; the handwriting was good. And he looked me over, and took me to work for him. First I was a timekeeper. And then they put me to receiving timber and so I began my activity. From 1944, and the war was already finished in 1944, in 1945 they brought us here. They set me up here as a forestry worker. I completed a nine-month course, in Sverdlovsk, at the Forest Technology Institute, I finished and everything. I took on this entire job, I

already knew all the technology, at a time when I was just 25. And I [did] everything, I organized the plots of land to be worked, wherever I worked, my plans were always on the honors lists, all the plots where I worked always . . . fulfilled the plans that we were given. And I was chosen as a delegate, from an *oblast* of 130,000 forestry and wood-processing workers. Out of 130,000 people I was chosen as a delegate to the [Communist Party] Congress in 1964.

If you were chosen as a delegate to the Congress, then you must have been a Party member?

Yes. I [was in] the Party. I joined the Party in 1955.

I'm curious about another question. If you joined the Party in 1955, what was your impression of the Twentieth Party Congress?

I'll tell you, there was faith, of course, that things were for the best, we believed things were for the best. Imagine, living such a terrible life. From my youth, let's say, from 16, well, not even 16, but 13, from the time in school when I was still . . . they resettled us in Kazakhstan, out there, that was my fate, to live through all that long [destiny]. Here I got married, they separated us in the hostel with a blanket, that's how our married life was. I lived four months like that. Everyone here was single, but I was with my wife. I wasn't the only one living like that; there were lots [of others]. If you got married, they hung up blankets, they took two blankets, and that was it, we went on living. After a year they gave us a room for two, 18 meters squared, for two families.

Ianke describes how, over the years, living conditions improved. People started to live better. There was gradually a feeling that something was being done for the population. Many people, like him, believed in the Soviet Union, in the country of workers and peasants.

And the Congress? The Twentieth Congress, the debunking of the cult of personality? What was that like? Was it a shock to you?

Well, what else? Of course it was, at first, and then: "That's right! At last!"

Did you have the feeling that finally people . . .

That they'd finally, well, overthrown a tyrant. Yes. Stalin.

Well, but he wasn't overthrown. Or do you mean that it was right what they said, at last?

They said the right thing, yes. That's what [we] thought.

Look, here's [an example], I was already working as a foreman. He died in 1953, right? In March. At that time there were political officers everywhere. All the power was given to them, to the political officers and the secretaries of the Party committees. So a political officer came and held a memorial service for Stalin, [talked about] his death. Two guys, they were there for recruiting . . . in 1953, it was in the [workers'] club. There was this incident. So the political officer speaks. Petia Valovik and Petia Turan, they'd come from the army, they were

demobilized. They worked there with us. So at the club [the political officer] talks, he says that I have called a meeting at Iaiva, he says, we have lost such a leader and everything, and now the whole country will be in mourning. And that Valovik, he was sitting with the other guy: "Well, so what, he died. There'll be another one." And [the political officer] heard. You know what? They put him in prison. I don't even know how long they gave him . . . He sat in prison for a year . . . For having a long tongue. Because he said there'd be another one . . .

And in 1956, already three years had passed since Stalin's death. Was there a feeling that, at last, people started saying the truth? When did faith in Stalin start to disappear? Before 1956? Or did it continue longer?

Belief in Stalin, I don't know how it was for whom . . . For myself—no. I didn't [believe] in Stalin.

You, by the way, when you heard [about his death], in 1953, how did you react?

I didn't react in any way to that. I thought that, finally, probably we were being freed. From such repression.

But before that you couldn't speak to anyone on this subject?

No. I didn't say anything. But I thought about things by myself. I thought about things by myself.

And probably others were thinking by themselves, too, would you say?

Of course. Just about everyone. Only no one said anything. Right till the last days, no one said anything. They're like that, bark-borers. Do you think anything has changed? The NKVD has stayed the same, in Kizel' [regional administrative center], from how it was under Stalin right up to the [19]90s . . .

They say that in 1956, at the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev's speech "On Stalin's Cult of Personality" was secret, that it wasn't distributed. It was [read] in the Party cells.

Yes, in Party meetings.

And you were already in the Party.

Yes, I was in the Party.

Do you remember how they read it out?

How could I not remember? They forced you to learn to say only positive things [about] how it was. It was divulging secrets, [to say] what happened under Stalin, everything that happened.

That wasn't right?

No. About Stalin you should divulge it all, you have to inform the people, all those things that were secret . . .

It was done as if it was all a—as they said then—distortion of the Party line, right? Petty, insignificant distortions?

Yes. Whatever the Party decides, that's how it will be.

And how do you now feel about the Communist Party?

You know how I feel about it? If I were to tell you truly, in my heart of hearts? That I don't like capitalism. I don't like it, and no one has been able to convince

me otherwise up to now. And that's the whole story. I call upon the Communist Party, never mind that they say that Lenin this, and [Lenin] that, that he was such-and-such, that he did . . . He didn't do very much, but he wanted to do things for people . . . He wanted to do the right thing. [But] . . . he died early. If he'd lived longer, this chaos wouldn't have happened. Stalin permitted all that, so to speak, dumping on people. And then later, all those agricultural collectives, all that poverty, well, in the end, it's disappeared from Russia. What I've lived through, what they went through there, under the tsar they gave us, there we were plowing the fields in Ukraine with wooden plowshares, just scratching the soil with the plow. And we've lived to see large-scale technology.

Here in Iaiva, they built this settlement, this big settlement and well-built apartments, even mine is well built, everyone who came could see it. I've been living in this apartment since 1973. And they built this whole settlement. There [used to be] watchtowers everywhere. And they gave everything to the workers. Whether you're poor or rich, whatever. So, you'll get an apartment, everything was fulfilled. The union also had some power, they plan that you'll get one, then you'll get one, then you. They gave authorization.

. . . And then came 1990. Yeltsin's year.[14] Everything was destroyed, they didn't build a single apartment. Not even wooden ones, but for themselves they built mansions. Those who didn't have anything, they didn't want to work back then either, now they're all driving around in Mercedes, they have everything. They stole everything. They plundered such an enterprise, the timber enterprise that was here in Iaiva, which prepared 800,000 cubic meters of timber a year. They destroyed everything right down to the foundations . . . I don't like the capitalist order, capitalism. I am categorically against it. Till death.

Robert Avgustovich Ianke died in 2008.

CHAPTER 3

Under Two Dictators

Interview with Abliaziz Umerovich Ramazanov

The interview was conducted by Robert Latypov in June 2004 in the village of Visherogorsk in the Perm oblast.

Translated by Elizabeth Stine

Illustration 3 Abliaziz Umerovich Ramazanov

Abliaziz Umerovich Ramazanov was born in 1928 in the village of Arpat, located in the Sudakskii raion*, Krym* oblast *(Map 3). Like one-quarter of the inhabitants of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, as it was called from 1921 to 1941, Ramazanov was of Crimean Tatar origin. This constituted the sole reason for his persecution by Soviet authorities. His nationality alone rendered him an enemy in the regime's eyes, just as Ianke's did (chapter 2).*

Early in the Second World War, the German army conquered the Crimea and set up an occupation regime, which lasted from October 1941 till April 1944. Immediately after the Red Army liberation of the territory, Stalin and Lavrentii Beria, the head of the secret police, ordered the deportation of the entire Crimean Tatar nation from its homeland. The Kremlin justified this punitive measure by alleging widespread collaboration of the Tatars with the Nazis. There is evidence that some Tatars collaborated, joining Nazi administrative and military organs in the Crimea, but the Tatars did not collaborate as a nation.[1] Indeed, a 1967 Soviet decree cleared the Crimean Tatars of the charge of treason.[2] Many Tatars, including Ramazanov and his father, had been forced to perform labor for the Nazis, while others were forcibly conscripted into military units, and still others were executed.[3] Nevertheless, Soviet authorities deported every member of the Tatar nation—approximately 190,000 individuals—men, women and children.[4] The operation began on the night of May 17, 1944; the vast majority of Tatars were deported over a three-day period, though the process was not completed until the end of the year.

Loaded into sealed train cars, the Tatars were mostly taken to Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, as well as the Urals region. There they began their new lives in "special settlements," many of which housed the so-called kulaks*, like Balashina (chapter 1), who had been deported from their homes nearly 15 years earlier. In the settlements, the Crimean deportees also lived under the rule of commandants of the NKVD. Denied their civil rights, their movement was restricted, and they had to report regularly to local state security officers. They typically engaged in hard physical labor and lived in difficult material conditions. Hunger and disease ravaged the deported population, particularly in the first two years of exile.[5]*

Like other so-called Punished Peoples—national minorities deported at the war's end on the basis of purported collaboration with the Nazis—the Tatars' banishment from their homeland was deemed permanent. They had no right to return to their homes; attempted escape could result in a 20-year term in a forced labor camp.[6] Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956 included condemnation of the deportation of entire nationalities. While some of them, like the Chechens, were eventually allowed to return to their homelands, the Tatars never received this permission from the Soviet government. Neither Ramazanov nor his family ever returned to Crimea.

In some ways, Ramazanov represents an unusual case. Unlike most of his co-nationals, Ramazanov reports that he and his family were deported in the fall of 1944, later than most. It is unclear if this is accurate, and if so, why they were not included in the mass operation in May. They were in the minority taken to the Urals region of Russia, rather than Central Asia. Also departing from the norm, his family

did not suffer the tragedy of losing any of its members during the deportation process or the early years of adjustment to the new locale. According to some estimates, within five years somewhere between 33 and 50 percent of the Tatars had perished.[7] In addition, Ramazanov asserts that the authorities provided the deportees with sufficient food and water on the transports, something few other Tatar exiles report. More commonly, survivors and witnesses tell of starvation and illness, and of large numbers of corpses being thrown off the trains.[8] He also reports receiving material support from the authorities in the settlement—another unusual claim. One wonders if the ensuing 60 years have blunted Ramazanov's memories of the trauma of the deportation. Or perhaps he simply had better fortune than the majority. It might also be the case that survivor's guilt led Ramazanov to "forget" actions or compromises that enabled him to fare better in exile, attributing his apparent better luck to his own hard work and the assistance of the authorities instead.

In other respects, though, Ramazanov's story bears similarities to those of other forced exiles. The brunt of Soviet retribution against the Tatars fell on women and children, as adult males were off fighting at the front, had been taken prisoner, or had been executed by the Nazis.[9] Ramazanov's father died under the German occupation, leaving behind a wife and six children, all of whom were deported. As the eldest, Ramazanov, just a teenager, thus became the major breadwinner for his family in exile—a common occurrence. Much of his account revolves around the hard labor he was forced to perform, which became the focal point of his life. Details of his personal life seem incidental to his account—a common trait of firsthand accounts of Soviet citizens. He voices his indignation at the arbitrariness with which he was treated, beginning with his deportation as a "child" of 16, without just cause. Refraining from denouncing the Soviet system outright, he nonetheless expresses disgust, particularly through his use of irony, at the disregard his people faced and the abusive exercise of power by the local commandant. He swears frequently when recalling the commandant, as well as when discussing the poor health and material condition to which he and his wife had been reduced. One senses his anger and disgust about the life he was forced to live, the pointlessness of the suffering. For the most part, he is unable to find words to express these feelings. One also feels his resignation about his fate, and ambivalence toward Stalin, whom he feared, but does not hold to account for the crimes he committed against the Crimean Tatars and other Soviet people. Ramazanov often uses a bitter dark humor in his portrayal of camp life. This can make his words confusing, but this humor is common among Gulag survivors. In the words of the interviewer, Ramazanov exhibited the attitude that "it's better to laugh at all this awfulness than to cry."

Without providing much detail, Ramazanov gives evidence that Stalin and other Soviet leaders aimed "to force [the exiled nations] to forget their homelands and their cultures."[10] He notes that the officers in charge of the deportation did not allow them to bring any items representative of their culture. The Crimean Tatars, a traditionally Muslim people, were unable to practice their religion or attend schools in their own language. A native Tatar speaker, Ramazanov not only was forced by Soviet authorities to speak Russian, but had his surname changed by them. Instead of using his

proper surname, Edrisov, the authorities, inadvertently or not, created a different one, using his father's first name, Ramazan. His use of Russian became more imperative after he married a woman of German origin. She, too, had been punitively exiled by Stalin's regime on the basis of her nationality. The dumping grounds for exiles became melting pots of a multitude of ethnic groups, as the stories of Ramazanov, Ianke, and Balashina demonstrate. Despite many years of acclimation, Ramazanov's Russian remains non-standard. We have reproduced this to a limited extent, particularly in showing how he confuses tenses and pronouns.

Robert Latypov, the interviewer, works for the Perm branch of the organization Memorial, which formed in the period of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the late 1980s to uncover and preserve the memories and artifacts of Soviet repression. It is in the dialogue between Latypov and Ramazanov that much of the information about life in the special settlements comes through.

After stating that his parents were born in Crimea, Ramazanov begins:

> We were repressed. We were repressed for 12 years, under the commandant's office.
>
> And the whole time we had to speak Russian. From 1944 to 1956. That makes 12 years, under repression.
>
> *May I ask what your parents were called?*
>
> Why not? Well, my father, for example, was called Ramazan Edrisov, that's how he was called, my father. Edrisov was his last name, Umerovich, too, see? Ramazan Umerovich Edrisov.
>
> *So why is your last name Ramazanov?*
>
> They mixed it all up here. You understand? They brought us here. My father didn't end up here, in the Urals. During the war it was, my father died under the Germans.

As he remembers the war, Ramazanov recalls that the Germans took his father to perform labor at Novorossiisk, a port on the coast of the Black Sea, to the southeast of Crimea (Map 3).

> [My] father died there. Because the Germans . . . at that time, you see, they started building . . . a railroad. And they didn't manage to get it done. The war stopped them—our guys, the Russians didn't let them. [The Russians] bombed there. In the beginning [the forced laborers] brought supplies, they were building. But they didn't make it, and they drowned, with rocks in the sea. And so they weren't found. Well, the Germans [had] picked him up. We were under the Germans, then, three years. Crimea was occupied. At that time they wanted to take me. I was 16, just 17. And he said, my father, "You," he said, "you're young, you've no business there. Look," he said, "it's better if I go myself." He went away and never came back . . .

Next Ramazanov refers to the draft of men into the Red Army. Since the military age in the USSR was 18, he missed the draft by more than one year, as he claims. Depending on how early in the war he sought to enlist, the cut-off birth year would have been between 1923 and 1926.

There I was, young, you know. I also wanted to go . . . I was [born in] 1928, but they already took the last ones for the front, you see, from 1927 . . . They didn't take [anyone] from 1928, because they were too young.

You wanted to volunteer to fight at the front?

I really wanted to. I really wanted to serve [in the Red Army], you understand. We all did, see. And then, well, what happens, my father died and the six of us children were left, with my mother, seven. The village, in a Tatar village. So I put on whatever clothes I could, we had to feed the kids . . . I was the oldest.

So I took a box of dried fruit, you know, about like that, and went to town . . . I traded any way I could, but I exchanged it, see, for corn or wheat, or whatever. Just something, I had to bring back some kind of grain. Do that, grind it up, we had to feed the children.

[W]e were under the Germans. So I went to town. Thirty-five kilometers. It was called "Karasa-bazar." Now it's Belogorskii . . . I got there, I did all that, spent the night, [and] in the morning it was time to go home. So, see, I go out onto the road, and there's a barrier. The Germans had closed the road. There wasn't anywhere to go . . . They closed the road and they arrested me, and everyone. The German cars came, the Germans stood there with machine guns and took the whole town away, they did a round-up. You know, they took so many people . . . Young, old, everyone. Men, only men. In one place there was this big house. Well, big, it was a big fancy place before . . . it was a house with a walled garden. And they put everyone in there . . .

Ramazanov does not recall how many men were included in the round-up, but thinks the number was high. While nine men came from his own region, they hailed from many different villages, and he did not know them previously. He reports initially being taken to Simferopol, a city on the southern Crimean peninsula.

The Germans took [everyone], they did a round-up, they took [everyone]. I don't know where they wanted [to go]. And then, they put us in cars and took us to Simferopol. In Simferopol, then, there were these old, old, they were cells before, and they put us in there. We were maybe a month or two in there under the Germans. Like that. (Pause.) Another order. They chased a middle-aged man out into the street, a second, a third . . . Young men, middle-aged, old, really old. And then again, they loaded us into a train and took us, you know, to the Black Sea coast. There was a port there . . . that town . . . In the Crimea it was. They wanted to begin loading up, and ship [us] to Germany.

> *So they wanted to—in German it's called* Ostarbeiter*, people who had to work in Germany…*
> [But] they didn't have time. And then, "hup," another order: "Unload the shipment, send [them] away. We need the boat here." And then around this region, you know, there were these little villages, there were Tatar villages, and Russian villages, they put them there. In this village ten people, there ten people, and the Germans gave an order to feed us in that village, see how it was?
> We didn't do anything [while we were there]. We waited, we just waited for an order, where to go next…

In the following section, Ramazanov explains where the Germans next transported him. The "other side of Perekop" refers to a village on the north of the Crimean peninsula, at the beginning of the Perekop Isthmus, which connects Crimea to the Ukrainian mainland (Map 3). The Sivash is a large system of shallow bays and sandbars along the northeastern Crimean coast. There Ramazanov and his fellow prisoners were held in a camp by day, and forced to dig trenches at night.

> [A]bout a month went by, another order, German Command, an order to go guess where, to the other side of Perekop, to the front line, they pushed us up there…To dig trenches…Yes. Sivash, it's a boggy place. On the far side, our guys, the Russians, and on this side, well, the Germans. So I was there almost a year…He takes you there—there's nowhere to go all day, [you're] four or five hours in the trenches…At night, in the evening…And they take us there under machine guns, a German, two, they take a few people, you know, and take them there. They escort them. 1.8 meters deep, trenches that deep we dug. And then we dug these trenches, anti-tank trenches…

Ramazanov discusses life in German captivity. He spoke only Tatar, so the Germans had to show him how deep to dig. Significantly, he never gives a name or any other information about the person who was overseeing the work, thus making "him" a kind of omnipresent, anonymous threat. He also conveys the confusion that reigned in the spring of 1944, as the Russians approached and the German army, including the guards of the makeshift camp where Ramazanov and his fellow prisoners were kept, ran away. Suddenly free, he began walking back to his village, and saw soldiers of the Red Army kill German soldiers in the rear, as they fled. Note Ramazanov's ambivalence at the Russian liberation. He identified neither with the Germans nor the Russians.

> And there he [a guard] is, standing over you, standing there. Whether you dig till morning, whether you dig for an hour. Whoever had been digging before, he takes him, and escorts him back to the camp under the machine gun. He takes him to the camp, and that's it. No stove, not a thing. It was this wooden shack

camp, all slapped together with a few nails. And all around . . . there was barbed wire and so forth, that's how it was . . .

They gave us blankets to cover ourselves, no stoves, there wasn't a thing, just to cover up a little bit. They brought back—listen, there were escapes, I'll tell you about that. They crawled out through the barbed wire, they tried to run away . . . [Some prisoners] got out. But [the Germans] still nabbed them. They bring them back, just the same, they bring them back. They form up the ranks in the street, can you believe it? They strip them naked, [take] a rubber hose, you know, and then in that camp, in front of the formation, they beat them half-dead. There's this dug-out pit, lined with cement, with a cover on it. And they lift the lid, and throw you in there. You're still alive. And in there, there are these rats, like this (indicates size). And it's a pit. They can't run away anywhere, it's lined with cement, nowhere. Hup, they open it, they throw you in, and they gnaw on you. (Pause.) That's how it was.

It was a demonstration, right, so no one else would run away?

Of course. The formation stands there, sees how they beat you up, open up, and throw you in. Like that. And then, the 26th, or maybe, no, April 3rd, when the Russians made another push, you know, [the Germans] couldn't hold the front line. They couldn't hold on. [This was] in Perekop. And off they ran. Time went by, it was already time to go send people out to dig the trenches—there wasn't anyone. And so we went out into the street . . . How they gave it to them—thermonuclear stuff, like *Katiusha* [multiple rocket launcher] you know, there were *Katiushas* there. And they couldn't hold on. Not one German, there wasn't [one] left. They left everything behind. All their ammunition stores, all the food and so on and so on. They didn't take anything with them. They all ran off. We went out. Where were we supposed to go, what were we supposed to do . . .

[The guards] all left . . . And then what were we supposed to do? So, let's go out into the street, okay, we went out, there was a depot with food, we each took a couple cans and set out walking. They were running up ahead, and we came along behind . . . Through Dzhankoi, they burned Dzhankoi, you know, it's burning, they're running. We go into the town, everything's smoking, it's impossible, you can't see a thing. Such smoke. We started to go across the town through that . . . A woman's shouting: "Guys, please, wait!" A woman. We stopped, those nine of us that were together. And so she dragged out bread from there, well, she had baked bread, and she broke us each off a hunk, she gave us these hunks [of bread], and we set out further. And then we got out of the town, and there were Romanians and Germans, left in the rear. The Russian planes came over, tanks, motorcycles. As they caught up to them they killed them, they're all lying there, the Germans. And then they went away. And so I got home. The boys were all still alive at home, and my late mother. And we hadn't been living there a month when they arrested us and sent us here.

What do you mean, who came to arrest you?
The Russians came . . . We're living in the village . . . They liberated the Crimea, see . . .
You were waiting for liberation, right?
Well, what, if . . . (pause) the Germans couldn't hold on, they left and so the Russians came . . .
So, that's it. There was this school, there in [our] village, a big one, we had one in the village. They drove us all there . . . into the school. And they had it all worked out before, and so they loaded us up and shipped us off. [This was] in 1944. In the autumn.

Ramazanov's claim that he had only been back at home a month when he was deported suggests that he may actually have been included in the mass deportation of May. His description leaves the impression of a large action, rather than a clean-up operation. He also conveys, sometimes with sarcasm, the arbitrariness of the punitive deportations—no one was told of what they were guilty, what law they had broken.

How did they explain why they were sending you away? What was it like, in general?
What do you mean, explain? What did it have to do with us? We were children, who the hell knows?
Children? You were already 16 or 17.
How would I know, which law, whose fault, who did what? And then they brought us here, we got settled with work. See? We started working. And whoever was to blame, they found them, and brought them here. What were they up to? What were they guilty of? They just took them all. Period. They didn't go into anything else.
Yes, but it still interests me, what did they say to you when you were deported, it was a deportation, after all, about why you were being deported? Did someone in fact ask, "Why are you rounding us up?"
Well, there wasn't any time to ask questions like that. They had already brought us here, and immediately we were under the commandant's office. When they first brought us, not far from here, it's called Zabatskii.
Further upstream along the Vishera [River]?
Yes, not far, about four kilometers.

Ramazanov recalls his long journey, first by train, then by barge. The places he refers to are all in the Upper Kama River region, in the northern part of the Perm oblast *(Map 2). When describing his first place of resettlement, Zabatskii, Ramazanov refers to earlier inhabitants, the so-called* kulaks *(like Balashina, chapter 1). Prisoners preceded the* kulaks *there, and many more prisoners and exiles followed. A local inhabitant*

described the Vishera valley, where Balashina, Ianke, and Ramazanov were resettled, as "a land of constraint and exile which was brought to life by force."[11]

> [By train t]o Solikamsk. And from Solikamsk on barges to Vishera [Krasnovishersk].[12] And at Vishera then they held us, they kept us there for about half a month. In the school. In the school, it was summer[13]…Then they loaded us back on the barge, sat us down and brought us up here. They brought us, unloaded us, and then they started registering us for work. There were old [barracks here], there were some specially resettled people earlier, before us. The ones who were *kulaks*…Dekulakized. There were people before us, they lived there. But when they brought us, it was already empty, there was nothing left.
>
> *How many families did they settle in Zabatskii?*
>
> Ten families, 20, maybe, in all…And then they registered us for work…logging…They registered us, took us to the forest, showed us [what to do], we got tools, saws and stuff like that. And they showed [us what to do], we started working. Then I worked there for a few days, you know, sawing, and then the forester in charge says to me, "Hey, buddy, I'll give you a horse, and you can haul the wood with the horse." I hauled [the wood] here almost a year. We wintered over, and then already in 1945, in the spring, they moved us to Volynka. So, here in Volynka, we lived in Volynka ever since.
>
> *Tell me, if you would, when they transported you, did they feed you at all? Was there any bread ration?*
>
> How else? They gave us a bread ration, they gave us everything…Fish, flour, yeah, groats, they gave us everything.
>
> *So you didn't starve?*
>
> No…At that time they gave us everything, flour, everything.
>
> *And when you got here, you lived a month in Krasnovishersk, you said?*
>
> Yes.
>
> *They gave everything then, too?*
>
> Everything.

Ramazanov then moves on to the topic of labor. Like Balashina, he notes the high norm required of persons felling trees.

> We just got in pairs with a partner, and worked. We sawed, felled trees, split them up, and that's it. The work quota was three cubic meters.
>
> *Three? Per person?*
>
> Yes…They split the wood and hauled it with horses to the bank of the Vishera and put it in a stack, stacked it, and that's it.
>
> *And you floated it out when there was high water, is that right?*
>
> Of course, whenever we wanted to then, any time, you could float it out.

And that was all for the Vishersk paper mill, yeah?
Of course…
Now this village, Zabatskii, what exactly was it like? How many barracks were there?
One big barrack, there was a little shop, and a little dining hall…You know, there were people there before us. They worked there before us…
If you would, please tell me about something else. In the beginning did you work as a logger in the forest, or something else?
First I worked as a logger, yeah, but not for long, maybe not even a week…And then they gave me a horse…So, I hauled wood with the horse…
Here something that interests me, you're a Crimean Tatar, but in Crimea, so far as I know, there aren't any forests.
No.
There's the steppe, some mountains. But they brought you to the heart of the wilderness in the taiga. How did you adjust, how did people cope with this?
Fine, Tatars are tough. (Laughs.) [People] got used to it. In the beginning, yeah, it was a hard climate here before. There were so many gnats, ah! People couldn't stand it, you know? They were so bug-bitten. This swarm flies up…gnats, damn. They bite you, ah! You know, your face, or someplace else…We got used to it. It was hard to get used to.

In the next section, Ramazanov shows how difficult it was to know exactly how many people died. He is also slightly evasive about what got his family through—a common phenomenon. Sometimes this occurs because people felt guilty about surviving or had had to do things they were not proud of in order to survive. He also describes in elliptical terms the difficulty of being separated from one's family, and the confusion at being arbitrarily punished—experiences many people shared.

A lot [of people died]. A lot, how would I know [how many]? A lot, I know. The old people [died] right away…the climate got to them.
This happened in the first year, would you say?
Yes. Yes. It was hard…
And when did your mother die?
My mother [lived] a long time, she [died] in 1973…
Tell me, did they bring your entire family here?
Everyone here. Six of us, we were six children.
And what became of you all? Where are your brothers and sisters now?
Here. Two are in Krasnovishersk, two in Volynka. I'm here. There we are.
How did that happen? Many people have told me how when they were deported, when they were dekulakized and sent here, to this taiga, in the forest, also under the commandant's office, to live, that a lot of people died. How did your family enjoy such a happy fate, that you all survived, how were you so lucky? What would you say?

I was lucky . . . I just kept on going. (Laughs.) I kept going. I worked the whole time. The ones who, you know, they got bug-bitten, they didn't want [to go on], the work doesn't go well. No one pays any attention to them and so on and so on. But me, I kept working, the bosses respected me. They saw, a big family—a big family. They gave me some support. For example, they plant vegetables in plots . . . Potatoes, carrots, cabbage, [they] cooked it all. The *kotlopunkt* [mess station] was always working, see. And they helped me a little, too. The kids all stayed alive . . . They fed us.

Did it happen, as well, that when you were working in the forest, you hauled the wood, and then you had to go work somewhere else, too?

No. That didn't happen. Because, what for? We were under the commandant's office. He didn't give an inch, nowhere, not a step, yeah. Around Volynka, you know, by the village, there were *kolkhozy*, there were lots of them, before, along the Vishera, and they planted everything, you know, everything. And they didn't let [us] work [there]. Even when they were harvesting potatoes, it would have been a help . . . for the young guys to go help dig the potatoes, see? . . . The commandant wouldn't allow it.

Do you remember what he was called, the commandant?

Samil' . . . Samirikov . . . Sibiriakov!

Was he Russian?

Yes . . . Semiriakov, Evgenii Ivanovich.

And why do you remember him, his last name, first name, and patronymic?

He was around a long time . . . Till the day he died. And he wanted to put me in jail, the [expletive]!

Why?

Who the hell knows? I worked, you can't imagine!

Ramazanov's descriptions of the settlement's administrators underlines the huge gulf between the victimized and the authorities. The differing ethnicities of the opposing sides may also come into play here. While Ramazanov was a Muslim Tatar, the commandant and other settlement officials were ethnic Russians. Historically, the two peoples have had a complicated relationship. The Russian empire annexed the Crimea and its Tatar population in the late eighteenth century, and then colonized the area. Though many Tatars became loyal Russian, then Soviet subjects, conflicts between the Tatars and the authorities continued throughout the twentieth century.[14] *Ramazanov reports that the commandant, who periodically checked that all was in order in the settlement, apparently approved of his hard work. Nevertheless, Ramazanov got into trouble with him. As he explains below, Ramazanov received permission from one official to bring his family, which was living in a different place, to the logging station where he resided. However, the commandant, the highest authority in the special settlements, sought to jail Ramazanov for doing so without obtaining his permission. This is one example of the arbitrary use of power by commandants that many*

in the settlements experienced. When discussing this figure, Ramazanov switches to the plural pronoun, oni *[they], to indicate, with irony, the commandant's powerful status. In this case, nothing came of the attempt, as Ramazanov's labor was needed and valued.*

When he [the commandant] comes to Volynka, they were already big shots, I guess they distinguished themselves in the war or something, see. But there wasn't anywhere to stick them, so they put them here as commandant, there as some kind of director, there some kind of foreman . . .

[The commandant] comes on a horse, checks some stuff and that's it. Everyone at home? At home. Aha. So he sees how I work. The log raft is floating along, and I'm in the river keeping it clear, free of blocks, see. He sits on the horse and watches, see. O-ho-ho, he laughs. Well done, he says. Like that.

So what did he want to put you in jail for, if you worked so well, then? Or did something happen?

The director of the logging station was this officer, from some other place; they must've sent him to Volynka. The logging station director. I'm working with the horse in the forest, I work every day. So, my clothes ripped, my sleeves, my pants ripped or something else. But I was by myself, because I wasn't in Volynka, my family was in Volynka, but they sent me to another place to work. So I come back in the evening, all wet, everything ripped. I say to him, to this director, "Comrade Director," I say, just like this, "give me permission to bring my family here, I've got five guys, and my mother six, we're seven people. Give me permission to live together with my mother and the other guys."

Why weren't you living together, though?

They didn't give permission, you know? . . . My family, they were in Volynka, and I was in a different place. I was living in a barrack. And then, one time, the commandant calls from over there . . . it's called Shugor. He lived there.

Was there a phone line there?

Yes, of course, the phone was there all the time. So he calls . . . he was calling the forestry supervisor. "Have Ramazanov," he says, "have Ramazanov come here to the commandant's office, to Shugor." So the forester says to me, "you," he says, "take the horse, and you can bring back bread from the oven in the store." I say, "Okay." I took the horse, went over there, went over to where he lives, the commandant, that guy Semiriakov. I got over there, I look around, there's no one to be seen. Then he comes out of the house, and he tells me, "Aha, so you made it." I say, "Yes, I made it, Evgenii Ivanovich." We went to the office, we went in and he gives me this, "Who gave you permission [to move your family] without the permission of the commandant . . . Who gave you permission?" I say, "I got permission from the director, he said he would get you to sign off on it, and don't worry, he says, bring [them] over." I, [expletive], took the horse, brought the guys, all together, my mother, everyone, all of us together. And [Semiriakov]

calls, and I go over there. And so he writes me up! A pile of papers, yeah! He tied it up with a string. (Laughs.) And he sends me from there to Vishera on foot to the regional office, he sends me off. Because I committed some, you know . . . crime, without the commandant's permission . . .

He wrote it up and sent me off. I went to Vishera, turned it in at the regional office, they read it and off I go . . . And I worked well, I got an award, see, so how . . . A medal. What's it called, wait a minute . . . "For valiant labor," that's it . . . in 1947 . . . So that's it. I was in my tunic, it was pinned on to my tunic. The guy at the regional office, he saw it, and he laughed. And he goes and writes up a pile of papers, and sends me back . . . To that commandant. (Pause.) I got to Shugor, where he hadn't been able to break up the blockages, the logs, and all the time, he kept me all the time it took to clear it all out, he wouldn't let me go back home. Yup. That was Evgenii Ivanovich Semiriakov for you.

Did Allah punish him for things like that?

He did. When he died, he died here . . . In Visherogorsk. Not even one relative came to bury him . . . He was that kind of commandant. So, my friend, that's what happened to me. (Pause.) Then, I worked well, then the director of the logging station . . . Shavilev . . . He sent me to train as a chauffeur in Krasnovishersk. A three-month course, and I became a chauffeur. That was . . . in 1950–[19]51. I finished the three-month course and began to work—32 years with my hands to the wheel I worked as a chauffeur . . . And that's all, see, I worked. Thirty-two years I drove.

In the next section, he describes his family's current situation. Two years before the interview, after living in Volynka for several decades, he moved to the village of Visherogorsk.

Listen, we got sick. My old lady, her vision's gone, she can't see a thing, she's sick. Me [expletive], too. We've got a big holding. I kept two cows, I kept sheep, I kept piglets. It was really hard. Alone. Both my daughters are here, they're married . . . In Visherogorsk. One of them lives right here. So, that's it, see. It got hard for me. My [expletive] hernia ruptured, you know? I had to look after the stock, fetch a lot of water . . . I came to the hospital, they brought me to the hospital in Vishera. The surgeon took a look, he says, there isn't much I can see. And then the next day there it [expletive] goes. Now I don't have anything, not a thing. Just a dog.

Ramazanov returns to the topic of forced resettlement. Besides Zabatskii and Volynka, where he himself lived, he names five other villages in the area populated by exiles: Mutikha, Vaia, Zolotanka, Vels, and Kolchim. These resettlement areas contained a mixture of nationalities, including, he notes, Jews, Tatars, Germans, Ukrainians, and Belorussians. He then describes how the postwar period saw an influx of voluntary

migrants to the area. Striving to spur reconstruction and economic growth, and to reestablish its firm political control over the population after the war, the Soviet regime organized industrial recruitment [orgnabor], *both free and coerced. On average, 700–800,000 individuals were recruited per year from 1946 through 1954.*[15] *According to one historian, though technically free workers, they were best described as indentured laborers, due to the severe restrictions placed on their freedom of movement, as well as the fraud and deception often involved in their recruitment.*[16] *Significantly, Ramazanov tends not to include Russians among the repressed population, though certainly many were.*

In 1952 some people came for industrial resettlement . . . Industrial resettlers. They came here from Belorussia. During those years. They brought all their stuff here with them from over there. They even brought their cattle.

[They were] recruited.

So they weren't like you, deported? They weren't repressed?

No. They weren't repressed. They came by their own choice. Industrial resettlers.

How did [people] behave towards those in power? Were they afraid of the government?

Who? Us? . . . What's not to be afraid of, I mean? You can't go against the government . . . Just look what! . . . The Russians weren't afraid, yeah, a Russian is a Russian. They didn't have anything to do with the commandant. But we were under him. And if you say one word against [him] . . . He takes you and sends you away, and he writes that you opposed [him], and he can even send you to prison. All kinds of garbage.

How else could he punish you? Let's suppose you did something. Why were you afraid of him? How could he use his power? Could he draw up some kind of legal order, say? He could imprison you. And what else?

First you had to check, was it true or not. Did I really oppose him, or not? And if it happened that you got angry, somehow, struck out, or something—then that's going against the government, too, [expletive], the commandant. And so he gets you . . .

Could he take away food, pay?

No. He doesn't have the right. We worked, we worked in the forest like everyone. Russians and everyone, all the same. We got our pay, you worked—you get it.

Did he keep track of, well, I don't know, whether there was ideological propaganda, political information. Was there any of that?

There was, of course. There was the radio. They set up the radio while we were there. There wasn't the radio before.

How did they tell you about what was going on in the country? Did you know something about that?

Well, later there was the radio. The radio says [stuff], see . . . There were newspapers . . . You subscribe and you read the paper.

In resettlement, the conditions were strict, but it was possible, as Ramazanov shows, to have a limited freedom, including leaving the area temporarily—with special permission. Ust'-Kachka, the sanatorium to which he refers, lies southwest of the Vishera valley (Map 2). Located on the banks of the Kama River, close to the city of Perm, it opened in 1936 after the discovery of sulphide springs. He also reports going to Dobrianka, a town on the bank of the Kama Resevoir, about 40 miles north of Perm.

How did you spend your free time? There's work, sure, and household chores. I understand that you have to do your household chores, make food . . .
Well, yeah! Food. You make hay, whoever can—go on a vacation someplace or other.
What "someplace or other?" You were under the commandant's office.
(Laughs.) We were, but . . . If they let you . . . you go. If they give you a card to go to a sanatorium, you go . . .
Did you go anywhere?
To Ust'-Kachka . . . A sanatorium is a sanatorium. [Until we got there] we didn't see a damn thing! After that, yeah, back to the forest, the forest, the forest . . . you work, work, work. The whole time. You don't go anywhere, no distractions, there isn't a thing. Why wouldn't you want to go?
We got to Ust'-Kachka, oh, damn . . . we were free, it was beautiful.
Did the resettled people have passports, by the way?
They did.
Did you have passports? Did they put any stamp in it or anything? In your passport, that you had been forcibly resettled, or anything?
You know, we had to get the commandant's permission again, so he'd know, where you were going and why. Once I went to Dobrianka, I went to study, I went to get a car.

The conversation next turns to the subject of penal labor camps. The first penal labor colony in the northern Perm oblast*, called Vishlag or Visherlag, was established in 1929. Though Ramazanov does not mention encountering prisoners during his early years of exile, the prisoner population in the region continually expanded throughout the Stalin years. After Khrushchev launched his de-Stalinization campaign in 1956, many camps were closed, including Vishlag, and, as Ramazanov comments, amnestied prisoners left the area, just as released* kulaks *had a decade before. Though the numbers of prisoners in the region declined, the Perm* oblast *continued to serve as a site of confinement. Camps there for political prisoners held many dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s (Map 1 and chapter 10). In 1982, a new labor camp, Institution*

V-300, began operation in the Vishera valley; the places to which Ramazanov refers in the following discussion were compounds of V-300.[17] *This institution closed in 1990. Nevertheless, even today, the Perm* krai*, as it is now called, continues to have a large prison population.*[18]

Another thing I wanted to ask, zones, if there are [penitentiary] zones here, were there prisoners, where did they go, around here?
There were zones. There was one in Vels, one in Vaia . . . In Zolotanka there was one, in Mutikha . . . There were [zones] in Sukuchi. There was one in Miasnaia, there was one here.
Now this was in the [19]80s, yeah?
Yes. Yes.
When you arrived here, there were only resettled people here, right?
Besides us there were those people earlier, the *kulaks*, see?
Yes, of course. They were here before you.
And they were here later on. When we came, they started living in Volynka, that's where they were. We worked with them.
I've heard that in 1946–[194]7 they started being released, and they began leaving.
They all left . . . And then, in 1956, they lifted the order on us. There you are. Twelve years we were under [that order].
So what happened? Did people also start leaving?
Everybody left.
Why did they leave?
Well, what is there to do here?

When the interviewer raises the issue of freedom, which supposedly had been granted to the prisoners and special settlers with the amnesties and lifting of the deportation orders, Ramazanov responds with irony. Should they be grateful for being offered freedom when they were not guilty of anything? And how free were they, even after their release? In his circumstances, the Soviet rhetoric of freedom seemed like a powerful insult.

I've spoken with a lot of people, and I get the impression that people were driven here, to the forest, the depths of the taiga, to cut timber, in completely unsuitable conditions. It's a completely different homeland, a different world. And all this is built on the most basic sort of violence. Violence towards the individual. And so when people seemed to get a whiff of freedom, they still didn't really feel free.
No.
They wanted, if they had had the chance, they would probably have just left this place.
They would have left.

So they wouldn't even have to remember any of it. Would you say that's right?
Yes. Of course. They gave us that word [freedom], for the people to appreciate. It was all to mock us.
You think they were deliberately mocking you?
What else could it have been? Well, why, what was I there for? The boys [his brothers], what did it have to do with them? They called them dependents. What did it have to with them? Ah! I don't even want to . . . How could they not have been mocking us? You couldn't study at all, see, visit anyone's garden . . . Oh, God! Damn it . . . (Pause.)
I have the impression that most of the people who live here in the Krasnovishersk area, maybe half the people, if not more than half, are people who were forcibly resettled here.
Yes.
Deported, specially resettled, labor conscripts [trudarmeitsy] *all of these [people].*
That's it, yes, yes.

Again, Ramazanov responds ironically to the interviewer's questions, here of the "necessity" of Stalin's deportations and the guilt of the victims. Of course none of the kulaks *were guilty, he stresses; but, in the Soviet system of "justice," each individual received "according to his labor"—as the early Communists promised.*

Was there any feeling, in general, that maybe Stalin, and some of the others, that they did the right thing, when they brought you here? That, well, that someone needed to cut timber from the forest, that kind of thing?
That the taiga had to be cut down? (Laughs.)
Do you think it was the right thing to do?
Well, I guess it was the right thing. They were building those [paper] mills then, and they let those guys go, those ones who were *kulaks*, before us. They let them go, and they began leaving.
But, my God, they weren't guilty [of anything] either?
Not them either, of course [not]. Each person got a bit what they deserved. And then . . . what did they call them, [expletive], parasites . . . Yes.

Though many prisoners and deportees left the region upon their release, others, such as Balashina, Ianke, and Ramazanov, did not. The latter's comments suggest some of the reasons why individuals often did not choose to leave, even after their sentences were fulfilled or the charges against them rescinded. In some cases, official coercion ensured their continued existence in the place of exile. The Crimean Tatars, though cleared as a people of the charge of collaboration in 1967, were never permitted to return home. Though technically free, they typically had nowhere else to go. Many people married and began families in exile, adapting to their new existence and finding a new normality in a completely different physical and cultural environment.

Forced resettlement and imprisonment thus completely reshaped the country, resulting in mixes of various ethnic groups, as well as of free and forced laborers.

Discussing his later life, Ramazanov demonstrates both the resilience of Gulag survivors, and the tragedies many continued to experience. He married and created his own family and his son prospered, but he also lost his first-born as a small child. The substandard living conditions, poor nutrition, and lack of access to good medical care made this a common experience in the USSR at the time.

Were there a lot of different kinds of people here, in general?
All sorts. And then they all went off somewhere, what the hell…
So why did you stay? The others left, and you stayed. Did something happen to keep you here, maybe?
No one kept us here.
Well, you had a family, right?
Of course…My daughter was born in 1950, my older one. And then…My wife and I worked in the forest. Somehow she got sick. She caught cold…Our first daughter died before she was even four. She wasn't even four. And then [my wife] got better, and we had a son, he's in Solikamsk now. He's 48 now; yesterday was his birthday. My son's alive. He used to live in Ust'-Kachka, and then…He built a brick house in Ust'-Kachka, and he lived in Ust'-Kachka. Two kids. Married. He got married here in Volynka and then went there, to Ust'-Kachka. He worked in the sanatorium. He finished the technical school, the Cherdynskii, here. And then he went there. First he worked on the *sovkhoz* [state farm] over there, as a mechanic on the *sovkhoz*, and then he moved to Ust'-Kachka to the sanatorium and worked in the sanatorium. He worked and worked, you know, and decided to build a house. He brought in all the supplies, the bricks, everything, and built the house, moved, everything, and lived there. He and his wife got divorced. Divorced, and there were the two kids, a girl and a boy. The boy is doing his military service somewhere near Vladivostok.

In the following discussion, the interviewer asks about one of the gravest labels that could be applied to persons in the USSR: "enemy of the people." Among the most serious political accusations, this charge was leveled at anyone deemed to oppose Stalin's rule, who then faced imprisonment or execution. Even the relatives of such persons fell under suspicion, and lost many of the rights of citizens; many of them endured the confiscation of their property and even arrest or forced resettlement. "Enemy of the people," as Anne Applebaum explains, also became a term of abuse, as ordinary citizens as well as Soviet authorities viewed individuals thus charged as inferior, even subhuman.[19] After the devastating experience of the Second World War, calling someone a Fascist also constituted a serious affront, as Ianke described (chapter 2). Ramazanov married a woman of German nationality, originally from a village in the

Odessa oblast *in Ukraine. His sketchy description of her fate is confusing. The Nazis resettled in Germany hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans* [Volksdeutsche] *from the territories they occupied, which seems to have been her fate.*[20] *Why and how Ramazanov's wife "came right back" is unclear. Perhaps the Germans resettled her in the lands they annexed to the Reich from western Poland; when the Red Army liberated the territory, she may have been repatriated to the USSR, and then punished by the Soviet government with deportation to the Urals.*

Tell me, if you would, please, when you were living here in the special settlement, did anyone ever call you "enemies of the people"?

It happened, some of them. Nobody laid a finger on me . . . So long as I've been around—no one has ever laid a finger on me, and I've never laid a finger on anyone else.

And they never called you [anything]?

Well, it happened . . . Well, and what of it?

Did it happen that your wife, she's a German by nationality, that she was called a Fascist, or anything else?

Yeah, it happened. All kinds of things happen when people get drunk.

The war [broke out]. In the beginning they took people from my wife's village to Germany. They took her to Germany, and brought her right back. They came right back, came back from there, straight here, to the Urals. They [the Soviets] didn't free her. They were all put under the commandant's office right away. So together, we all worked together in the forest . . . in Volynka . . . We got to know each other. We worked in the forest, they cut the timber, and I hauled it out with the horse, to the collection point by the river. Well, so we got married, and had the children . . .

Were mixed marriages common, generally, at that time?

Yes. You got registered and that was it. Like everyone else. You find a wife, a husband, you know, but you keep some of your own ways just the same . . .

When they took you away, were you able to bring any Tatar things with you?

They didn't let us bring a thing . . . You got to bring food for three days, whatever you could carry, and that was it . . . They didn't let us bring anything, they drove us out empty-handed and that was it. Like I said, they drove us all into that school and that was it. They didn't let us [take anything]. They put a guard all around and didn't let us go anywhere. Just you try to run home again, get something else and bring it back! They didn't let us.

Tell me, please, how did you feel about Stalin at the time?

Who? Us? . . . What do you mean? Like everyone else . . . Well, how did we feel, what are you going to say to him? (Laughs.) See, if you spoke one word against Stalin, they punished you on the spot, you know. How could we feel? We were afraid, of course . . . You weren't allowed to say anything bad about Stalin, it was very strict.

Ramazanov concludes the interview by talking about the end of the Second World War and Stalin's death in 1953. There was greater freedom of movement for special settlers after Stalin's death, especially after 1956, when they were released from the special settlement regime. But both physical and psychological habits were deeply ingrained by this time and so neither the end of the war nor the end of Stalin's rule brought the kind of change that people may have hoped for. This holds true for the mindset of many victims of repression, as well, who often cannot to this day bring themselves to denounce Stalin or the Soviet regime. Ramazanov evades the interviewer's questions about his feelings at the death of Stalin, turning instead to the end of the war—a more unambiguous moment.

Do you remember how people reacted, at the beginning of March 1953, when he died, how you reacted? Stalin had just died. Do you remember that moment?
I remember. You felt sorry, all the same [that he had died]. We were here, in Volynka, that's right. The war finished on May 9, 1945, we came to work. Not far from Volynka, five kilometers, maybe. We went along the bank, on horseback. We hadn't harnessed the horses yet to go into the forest, and someone shouted, you could hear it a long way off. We listened and listened, and there it was . . . They sent a guy, the war was over, it was Victory Day, see? . . . And he came and he says, "I've been sent," he says, "I've been sent to tell you all to go home. The war," he says, "is finished, we've won." And we turn around and went home.
Do you also remember the day Stalin died?
Yes . . . By then we had the radio. They announced—Stalin was dead . . . Well, the war was over. And that we won. And Stalin, what about that? That Stalin was dead, and it would get better, or cheaper, or something, or what?
I ask because under Stalin you were all driven here, a lot of people, yeah? And everything was pretty . . .
There wasn't any change, none.
You weren't expecting anything, right?
No. That was in 1953. And in 1956 . . . they freed us. And that was it. See what happened?

PART TWO

Exiled and Arrested

CHAPTER 4

A Mother in Exile

Interview with Larisa Mikhailovna Lappo-Danilevskaia

The interview was conducted by Jehanne M Gheith in August 2000 in St. Petersburg.

Translated by Elizabeth Stine

Larisa Mikhailovna Lappo-Danilevskaia (née Zhezhelenko) was born in 1906. Married in 1934 or 1935, she was sent into exile in 1937 to Frunze, Kirghiziia,[1] as the wife of an "enemy of the people" (Map 1). She returned to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1957.[2] Her story demonstrates the importance of intelligence, spirit, and relationships—to her son and her mother—in surviving 20 years of exile.

Lappo-Danilevskaia came from a family of clergymen who lived in Rostov-on-Don. Her father broke with the family tradition of joining the clergy and, instead, became a civil servant and veterinarian, moving the family to St. Petersburg. Her husband, Konstantin Iurevich, came from a family of aristocrats and spent part of his childhood living in Switzerland. Konstantin Iurevich returned to Russia to fight for the Bolsheviks in the Polish campaign in 1919.[3] After the war, he taught horseback riding for the Izmailovskii regiment;[4] he also worked with the animals at the Leningrad Film Studio [Lenfil'm]. *He met Larisa Mikhailovna in 1934 when she took riding lessons from him. They were married shortly thereafter, and their son, Iurii Konstantinovich, was born in 1935.*

Konstantin Iurevich was arrested in October 1935 for counterrevolutionary activity (Article 58). He was sent to the Dolinka camp in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, and died there in the early 1940s. The charges were false and he was rehabilitated posthumously in 1957.

Lappo-Danilevskaia brought her mother and her son into exile with her, because, she said, "I needed them there." Her father, who was ill, remained in Leningrad, where he died in the late 1930s. Lappo-Danilevskaia survived and supported her mother and son, first by donating blood, then by sewing, and eventually, by becoming the head of the State Medical Library in Frunze. This was a position of great trust for an exile: she was responsible for the collection and dissemination of foreign reading materials, a position that would normally be reserved for someone whose ideological loyalty to the Soviet system could not be questioned.

Western readers often express surprise that people once defined as enemies, many of whom had difficulty getting work at all, could sometimes hold important jobs, and even posts that had significant ideological implications. Yet this kind of slippage happened on a regular basis in the USSR (see chapter 8) for many reasons, including: in locales far from the center, the shortage of qualified personnel could lead a supervisor to overlook an applicant's past; some individuals sympathized with the victims of repression and quietly tried to help them. In addition, the Soviet system had many inefficiencies, and sometimes this worked in favor of inmates because official procedures were not always rigorously followed.

Technically, Lappo-Danilevskaia's exile was lifted in 1941, but like many of those exiled, she could not legally return to a major city until she was rehabilitated. In effect, the exile continued until 1957, when she was rehabilitated and returned to Leningrad with her son, Iurii. He lost a leg while they were in exile, something Lappo-Danilevskaia never explained. He lived with his mother for the rest of her life and continues to live in the apartment they shared. His son, Konstantin Iurevich, a noted academic, received his doctorate in Germany, and now also lives in St. Petersburg.

Several themes emerge from Lappo-Danilevskaia's story. First, she often used her ability to surprise members of the NKVD and other Gulag officials as a way to survive. Her spunky responses took them off guard and she was able to use this to her advantage in a number of situations. Second, the fact that she was a mother proved very important: often this gave her a reason to ask for better conditions or simply not to despair. The theme of motherhood in the Gulag has received very little attention and yet it is an important one, as shown in this book in several interviews (chapters 5,6) and archival documents (chapter 11). Lappo-Danilevskaia was also a daughter and, although she does not talk about it much in the interview, her relationship with her mother was strong: in fact, it was her mother's gift of a Singer sewing machine that helped Lappo-Danilevskaia to survive in exile. A third theme that emerges is that Lappo-Danilevskaia often talked about the people in the security police and governmental structures who were kind to her, at some risk to themselves. Exiled as the wife of an enemy, living in Frunze for 20 years, she clearly understood what was wrong with the system and how awful people could be, yet she thought often about people's

goodness, including that of her captors and guards. She worried—for the rest of her life—about what had happened to Gulag and NKVD officials who had helped others, as she knew that the system could be cruel to such individuals. Her complicated worldview is typical of many Gulag survivors.

It is also important to note that Lappo-Danilevskaia's narrative was moved by psychological associations rather than by linear logic. Her speech is often fragmentary and has a kind of immediacy to it, sometimes expressed in her usage of the present tense. Her memory proceeds by a kind of emotional logic, and she makes intuitive, sometimes atemporal associations. Another point about her style: throughout the interview, she refers to the secret police as the KGB. While this is quite common in everyday usage, it is important to note that, historically, this is inaccurate, as in the period she is discussing, the name of the secret police was the NKVD.

Iurii was present at the interview and eager to participate. He often interrupted, and both the interviewer and his mother found this frustrating at times. Yet it became clear that he also had a story to tell and that he often filled in information for her in their conversations. In the interview below, Iurii's comments are indicated by "Iu" and italicized; Lappo-Danilevskaia's are in plain text with her initials "L-D" when necessary to distinguish her speech from his. Lappo-Danilevskaia sometimes refers to her son with the Russian diminutives of his name that indicate affection (Iurochka, Iura).

Individuals who were sent into exile were usually required to leave 24 hours after they received the order. Lappo-Danilevskaia was given extra time to pack and leave, which was unusual.

> My husband was imprisoned in 1935. I… (sighs), I did what I could, I found things out, I protested. I did everything I wanted to. I was lucky, incidentally. In the KGB, they did good things for me. I was supposed to leave 24 hours [after they told me I'd been exiled]. They gave me 11 days instead. I mean, they themselves went to the trouble—people I had never met!! But they met me halfway. That one—the guy who got me the ten days—he was an ordinary young fellow; he shouted to me: "Lappo, I've got [you extra time]!" Like that. Of course, I also came across people who said, "Shooting's too good for you!" I think those people who helped me—and probably not only me—I think later they were shot. Because those were "not the right sort" of people, certainly not, of course.

At this point, Lappo-Danilevskaia explains how her husband, whose family had been living in Switzerland, worked to get back to Russia to help fight against tsarist power. This made his eventual imprisonment by the Bolsheviks even more unjust.

> Well, [he returned] via Greece, via Turkey… he got to Russia, in order to help Russia!!! To help because tsarist power was bad. Though he, of course, had never seen anything bad about tsarist power [because he was living in Switzerland]. But tsarist power was bad. Well, at 19 years of age he was a, what is it, a regimental commander, no less—in the Red Army.

Iu: He fought with the Poles. He participated in the Polish campaign.
L-D: He fought with the Poles and then he stayed in the army. He was completely disappointed, of course. That is, while he was fighting, at first he believed, but while he was fighting, he became something of a different person, and then a completely different person. So, I met him, he was still in the army, but not in the active duty troops as such; he was teaching riding. Then he went to *Lenfil'm*, riding, working with horses.

Lappo-Danilevskaia places her story against the history of the Bolshevik Revolution and understands the directions that Soviet life took—including the later creation of the Gulag—as a particularly terrible tragedy because of the initial enthusiasm of the intelligentsia for the revolution. In the next section, she discusses the February and October revolutions of 1917.[5] *Current events also play into her thinking. At the time of the interview, in 2000, the remains of the Romanov family members who were shot by the Bolsheviks in 1918 had been recently found and brought to St. Petersburg. A service had been held and there was a great deal of media attention honoring the Romanovs, turning them into "saints," as Lappo-Danilevskaia notes. She views this kind of pendulum swing as dangerous—similar to the hero worship of Lenin, to which she quickly moves.*

It was the first revolution—in February. Father was terribly pleased. The intelligentsia was very pleased with the first revolution. Because they didn't like Nikolai [Nicholas II].[6] And now when they make a saint out of him—you know, I feel very sorry for them [the Romanovs]. It was a vile thing, what they [the Bolsheviks] did to them. But what kind of a saint is he [Nicholas II]! [If he is a saint] then everyone, incidentally, everyone whom the Bolsheviks imprisoned, then everyone should be made a saint! They are really saints!

Lappo-Danilevskaia then goes on to describe seeing Lenin deliver a speech. Her comments show her instinctive distance from more common public reactions to political dynamics of the time. The following interchange also shows the ways that Iurii can be both helpful in the conversation and obstructive.

Then there came a terrible time…
Iu: October.
L-D: I saw Lenin, by the way. I was ten, Father and I were walking in St. Petersburg…
Iu: *As it happens [Lenin] was speaking at the Kshesinskaia palace.*[7]
L-D: That's right, he was speaking from the balcony. At ten—I was a, I was a well-brought up girl, I was accustomed to how well-educated people speak. So that [speech] made an appalling impression on me. Father was outraged, because he wasn't interested in the second revolution; he didn't like it, of course.
Iu: But the speech made a completely different impression on his listeners, the people who had gathered. He was speaking to them just as one should!

L-D: Precisely!

In response to the question to Lappo-Danilevskaia: "And your reaction?" Iurii answered, "Negative!!!" Lappo-Danilevskaia said sharply:

> Iura, will you please stop! Well, what was my reaction—my ten-year-old reaction? Very unpleasant, of course. I wasn't accustomed to that. Yes. As a child I probably wasn't frightened enough. Rather, I didn't understand, how that [all the changes under Communism] could happen. Like that, you see? *That* I did feel. [I wondered,] How can this be? In general, everything was coming apart. It was incomprehensible, what was happening. And then there was the famine—a very serious famine.[8]

Lappo-Danilevskaia then described meeting her husband in 1934 when he was with the Izmailovskii regiment. He became her riding instructor. In this section, Lappo-Danilevskaia moved quickly from meeting her husband to the memory of the NKVD search of her apartment after his arrest. By this juxtaposition, she connects meeting her husband with the shape her life later took. Having weapons in the home was a punishable offense for any Soviet citizen—and especially for the wife of an "enemy of the people." Here, Lappo-Danilevskaia reproduces the dialogue between herself and the NKVD official (Potapov) as he conducted the search. Toward the end of their conversation, Potapov gave Lappo-Danilevskaia a chance to limit the damage by saying that the knives he found were actually crystal; she comments on his surprising mercy, a trait that soon disappeared among officials of the security services. Toward the end of this description of the search, Lappo-Danilevskaia demonstrates how she surprised Potapov, a strategy she later used with other officials.

> On my writing desk there was a shell casing. On top of it was a lamp. I liked putting them together, because it was convenient and attractive. A large-caliber casing, brass. A dagger was hanging on the wall, which [I wanted to sell] since things were tight with money at that time, and the Hermitage was buying up any Iranian pieces. And it was Iranian. Yes, and there it was, as it was when my husband was with us, it hadn't changed a bit. The belt…
> *Iu*: *The belt from an Oerlikon [cannon], with the cartridges.*[9]
> *L-D:* Cartridges. The ink stand, and then all around it, cartridges. And suddenly that [man] looked and said, "What's that?" I [said,] "Cartridges, as you can see." [He asked, pointing to the belt,] "And what's this?" [I answered,] "That is something I want to sell. Yes, and I also have a small dagger." He gave me a look and said, "Why are you keeping this?" I said, "I'm not keeping [it]. My husband was arrested, and there was a search. This was all left behind. It might as well stay as it was." Then he went out. Then my friend came around, I told her everything, she said, "Listen, hide [it] immediately." She helped me to hide [it] herself. Towards evening I thought, no, certainly not, I should put everything

back where it was. On the following day, the doorbell rang. This Potapov [and other officials] came in, they were in artillery uniforms. In their uniforms. He said, "You probably think this is about your husband, who has been imprisoned." I said, "I don't think anything." [He said,] "But it's not about that." Another amazing person! I was lucky with amazing people, I can honestly tell you. Maybe everyone was lucky, though, it was still that time when there were still humans [among the officials]. He asked, "Do you possess [any] weapons?" I said, "Please, be my guest! Come see for yourself." And I laughed. He looked. My father was sitting and reading. [Potapov] says, "Well let's have a look." I said, "What—a search?" "Yes." I was cheerful and calm, absolutely calm! It all hit me later; I let go, or rather, I admitted [my feelings] later. We went into the little room. He asked, "Tell me, do you possess [any] weapons, firearms and sharp weapons?" I said, "No, we don't have any, no firearms and no sharp weapons. Other than what you have seen." [He said,] "If, after this declaration, there turn out to be firearms or sharp weapons, I shall be obliged to arrest you." I said, "As you please." [He asked,] "What's [in] here?" It was a sideboard, this small sideboard. I opened it, "Please, look inside." [He asked,] "And what is in there?" I said, "Look inside yourself!" Father is still sitting and reading…We go out into the big room, there was this little table there. [He asked,] "What's in here?" I said, "There's money! In the small case." He said, "Well, that's not important." I said, "No, take a look!" And I showed [him]. And suddenly [I had] a terrible thought: two Finns!!! Two Finnish knives. What's more, they didn't take them [when they arrested my husband]!!! They just didn't take them!!! They took the gun, they took some other things, but they left [the knives]. I remembered that I had said to Mother that we should throw them away, and Mother said we should throw them away, but whether she threw them away or not, [I didn't know]. [I thought to myself,] if I said that they were there, then they'd have my head. You know, I was completely terrified, utterly terrified.

There was this woman with him, a witness, a simple woman, from our building. She was sitting on a chair, half-dead, half-alive.[10] [We went into] the next room, the third one—Mother's and Father's room. He asked, "What is in here?" I said, "Knives…" [He repeated,] "I am asking you, what is in here?!!!" I said, "Crystal." [He answered,] "Aha." After that he should have arrested me [but he didn't]. Then he opened up the wardrobe; we crawled in there, me too. Well, I knew perfectly well what was in there [the knives were in a box in the wardrobe]. We crawled in there, [and] I said, "Tell me honestly, which of us is a bastard—you or I? What do you think?" He says, "All right, shut the wardrobe!" I'll tell you, I wouldn't risk talking like that now! If it had been another person, it would have ended badly—if it had been someone else. But that one was a human being…

In response to the interviewer's comment, "But I don't think you could have done otherwise," Lappo-Danilevskaia responded:

Yes—but it could have been someone else. Or maybe I felt that that was the way to talk, that that was precisely it!!!

Iurii then explains that, according to the Russian criminal code, possession of these knives was punishable by a minimum of two years in prison. For a wife of an "enemy of the people," the sentence would have been even longer. Potapov was responsible for arranging the details of Lappo-Danilevskaia's exile. She received a sentence of "only" two-and-a-half years because he accused her of having the two daggers and the cartridge belt, but did not include the Finnish knives in the original accusation. She was nervous about this information coming out later, making it appear that she had tried to hide something, so she requested that it be included in the inventory of what was taken from her apartment. The fact that she did this probably counted in her favor and encouraged Potapov to keep the sentence to a minimum.

Yes, but I got only two-and-a-half years, in all. All right, so we go out again into the big room, where the weapons [were]. And [Potapov] said, "Don't go anywhere, nowhere any distance away. I will call you." And all sorts of nonsense. That's what he said. And he took his leave of me terribly nicely. You see, he was more upset than I was, it seems to me. But evidently, the way I behaved myself, he understood that I wasn't an enemy, that I wasn't afraid. Evidently that was it. I understood that only later. The way I behaved saved me. But I only came to that later. He went away. After a day, two days, three, I don't remember now, after some time, the phone rings! He was summoning me to appear before him. Well, I set out. To the "Big House" *[Bol'shoi dom]*. I go in. I go up the stairs. People are sitting there—as I found out—for a long time. They're just hanging around, they don't know what to do. I thought, "My God, how horrible, how horrible." And here I have to sit, for who knows how long. I went up to the doors, I knocked, I opened [them]. [Potapov said,] "You? One moment. Go outside." He came right out. Everyone looked at me in surprise. I went in, I didn't wait even a minute. Another one [NKVD officer] was sitting there. Terribly sure of himself. "You're here for possession [of weapons]." I said, "Well, well, it might be." And so he laughed. He laughed about the fact that they found [weapons] at my house. He laughed about it. And he went out, all happy. He said, "Take [the information] down."

Iu: *To whom?*

L-D: [T]o Potapov. So [Potapov] began to write: what, where . . . He was writing. I said, "Listen!" He was writing down what was removed [from the apartment and] I said, "Listen, what about the knives?" He said, "Gosh, yes!" I said, "What should I do with them?" [He answered,] "We'll write it down. There." Everything was fine, I didn't have to be afraid, everything was done. But again [Potapov] said to me: "Such rubbish, and so horrible [that this happened to you]." Well, that person [Potapov] is, of course, no longer living. So. I went

away. Later they called me from the *raion* [regional] bureau to tell me to come in. I went. In the *raion* [bureau], they started questioning me, they were trainees, what's more. It was a practicum for them. "The weapons, where, where did you hide them?!!" I said, "What, the cannon? Under the bed, of course! The shell." Well, to sum it up, I shouted at them and went peacefully away. Upset, but not in the least afraid. It all [feelings of shock and fear] came to me later . . .

Although Lappo-Danilevskaia's tone is strong here, she asks her son to pour her a little wine; these stories are hard for her to tell. Then she and Iurii talk about her gradually evolving understanding of the problematic nature of the Stalinist regime and of Communism. Lappo-Danilevskaia evinces a complex understanding of Communists and does not present them as either wholly evil or wholly good.

Iurochka, pour me a little [wine]—for bravery. Generally, of course, I felt a kind of wild indignation. That there was nothing worse in life than Soviet power, or rather, Communism. Communists, not Communism—I didn't feel that way about Communism yet.

Iu: *It's just that Communism is a beautiful idea, but absolutely impracticable.*

L-D: Precisely! And so I didn't feel hostile towards Communism. Later, I lumped it all together. But Communists—they're horrible. Stalin . . .

Iu: There were also different types of Communists.

L-D: Well, and it was Communists, if you please, they saved me, in every sense of the word. If Potapov had been a different person, they would have sent me to a concentration camp, that's absolutely clear.

Iu: Or deported you under guard.

L-D: No, they would have sent me to a camp. The wife . . .

Iu: . . . of a counterrevolutionary.

L-D: And in possession of weapons, what's more. And later, begging your pardon, there would have been the knives. The knives would have been discovered.

Iu: A member of the family of an "enemy of the people." That was enough to get ten years in a camp.

L-D: Yes, and then that Pashin, an ordinary fellow, who got me [extra time]. So he says, "Lappo, there's nothing I can do. Go to the *Bol'shoi dom* yourself, there, in some place or other, and talk [to them] there about it." Yes, and they'd already called me, saying that in 24 hours I had to [leave town]. I went. There they told me being shot would be too good for me. That I was such a bastard, and things like that. Then I reached a turning point, and I understood that I could roar, that I knew how to roar. And I went back to Pashin in a dreadful state. What should I do, I had a child, what was I to do? I go in, and suddenly there's this cry: "Lappo!!!" And he got me 11 days. He went to the trouble himself. There he was, a real human being. How he did it, I don't know. The most important thing is that, heavens, he was an ordinary fellow, an absolutely ordinary fellow.

> An ordinary young fellow, who talked to me like a fellow human being, treated me humanely.

Asked whether she knew what happened to Pashin and Potapov later, Lappo-Danilevskaia answered:

> The thing is, I couldn't have known that. It has always tortured me, incidentally. He was from the *Bol'shoi dom*, that Potapov, and so I was everlastingly [grateful] to him—really, I am grateful to him to this day, I can't forget him.

Lappo-Danilevskaia then describes how she spent the 11 days getting ready to go into exile, and the difficulty of getting rid of her possessions that quickly. She also tried one last time to defend herself and to get out of being exiled by going to the office of the prokurator. *There, she discovered the slippery nature of Soviet "justice," in which terms of incarceration were regularly lengthened.*

> First of all, I could sell what was still left to me. But all the consignment stores were shut, and everyone was being exiled at that time [which meant that everything was being sold at what Iurii called "rock-bottom prices."] Yes, and then I took myself off to that—to the office of the *prokurator*. To find out how many years my husband had been given. Because he was supposed to be coming out already. [He had been sentenced to] three years, and he was already supposed to be coming out soon. So, I went to the *prokurator's* office, the office on Liteinyi Prospect, and there I said, "I'm being exiled, on what grounds?" And I said, "My husband's term is ending." "Yes?" They inquired [and came back to say], "He's got six years!" Six! Since when? Since when!!! I said, "That can't be true!"

But it was true that her husband's sentence had been extended. Lappo-Danilevskaia then goes on to talk about visiting her husband, who was incarcerated in the camp at Dolinka, near Karaganda (Map 1). She visited him in late 1936 or early 1937, before she herself was exiled. Prisoners who were well regarded by the authorities often ended up with posts of some responsibility and this was the case with Konstantin Iurevich. Holding these positions could in turn result in increased privileges, such as visits from family and more freedom of movement. Demonstrating the paradoxical nature of the Gulag system once again, Lappo-Danilevskaia describes a threatening situation in which she and her husband could have been harmed but were saved by the camp director's son. In this brief section, Lappo-Danilevskaia captures the difficulty of life in exile: people were dependent for their physical and psychological well-being on camp officials.

> That was another cheery affair. So I go out there, I arrive. He [Konstantin Iurevich] meets me. He was the head of transportation. In excellent standing. Well so, we two met. I had an acquaintance in Karaganda, whose husband was

in prison, and I'd known her in Rostov. The two of us corresponded, and I had already arranged to visit her, and then, on to my husband. And we met there, my husband and I, and something very interesting came to light. This car was coming along, from the camp. We were spending the night with my acquaintance. The car comes. The son of the camp director was sitting in that car, the camp we were going to. He [my husband] introduces me, everything's fine. We drive, drive and drive, drive and drive, somewhere out into the steppe. I look, there are people on horses. They stop the car. A mounted patrol. They stop the car: "Who's this, who's this, and who is—this?" "This is the head of transportation's wife," said the director's son. That was it, they didn't touch me. Once it's put like that, I mean, the head of transportation. Well, there were workers in the car, arrested of course, with some vodka. Those [police officers] took that vodka, in front of us, opened it, and drank it all, right in front of us. Well, we got going. We got there [her husband's quarters]. They had divided him off a room, about this big [she demonstrates a small corner]. Like so. A stable. The kitchen in a stable. They divided [it] off because I was coming. And what did we discover? That on the day I arrived, visits [from family members to prisoners] had been stopped. And when I was traveling, I was already traveling illegally!!!

Lappo-Danilevskaia considered the possibility of moving near the Dolinka camp to join her husband, for what she then thought would be one year. She abandoned the plan when her husband was denounced, understanding that he would probably be transferred as a result.

A day later my husband was summoned. Yes, [before that] I had gone over [to see] the camp director, we talked for quite a long time, and he said that in a year—even less—my husband would be released. And that it made perfect sense for me to go there as a voluntary worker. He had to work another year, and then he would be able to return. That was what we agreed on. But that other fellow [a camp official] was wagging his tail, that bastard, and suddenly he seized on my husband. The director said [to my husband], "You know, there's a denunciation against you." Well, it was clear to us who had made the denunciation. So there it was. I spent five days there. There were people like that, you see? But that one [Dolinka] was considered an excellent camp. Later, when I had already been exiled, [Konstantin Iurevich] wrote me a letter. He was transferred [as a result of the denunciation], and I found out that it was a terrible camp. He wrote his last letter, a postcard—and that was the end of everything. That's it…

Iu: Either he died in a mine, or they shot him.

L-D: They shot him, of course.

Iu: It could have been one or the other. Because there weren't any safety regulations at all.

L-D: He was very tough, and so it could only have been [that he was shot]. It would have been the same for me.

Lappo-Danilevskaia believes her husband was too tough to die in a mining accident—he would not have made it easy for the regime to kill him. Nor, she intimates, would she. In the next section, she seems to contradict this, hinting that if she had gone into exile alone, she might have considered suicide or gotten into some kind of trouble. The Gulag system had multiple, contradictory effects on people and it is important to consider what this going back and forth, this holding of different extreme feelings, meant for the people who lived through it.

Lappo-Danilevskaia was resourceful even through her feelings of despair, making sure to call people who could help her (such as Nikolai Pavlovich Akimov, a well-known and influential experimental theater director in Leningrad). She also demonstrates the power of the imagination in enjoying the travel into exile. Her decision to take her mother and son into exile was partly for herself, as she notes, but it is also true that she, like many Gulag survivors, faced an impossible choice: should she take her relatives into exile or leave them in Leningrad where they might not survive, or where her son might be taken into a children's home? She returns to discussing the search and the process of going into exile, reflecting a different side of the 11 days than she had explored earlier. Here she describes her father, who refused, or was unable, to take in what was happening during the search.

> Of course, I was in despair [when the apartment was searched], what is there to say? But I was the only person [who was practical about these matters]. My father was very naïve. [When the NKVD officials who came to search our apartment said,] "Certainly, yes, we'll put you in prison, if we find any weapons," my father just said, "Please, have a look," and his eyes went right back to his book. That's how he behaved. Father was like that. Mother was completely dismayed. Then I thought, what am I to do? Akimov. I called Akimov. We were on excellent terms with Akimov. I called Akimov, and told him what was going on. He wasn't afraid to meet me, by the way. And he gave me money. Enough that I could get there [to Frunze], and still have some money when I was there. So, enough for the ticket, with Mother, well, I was afraid to go alone, I was afraid I wouldn't have the courage. If nobody was with me, and I was completely alone, I'd get up to something. Something bad, of course. I needed my child to be there. So, my child had to be there, and I had to be the mother. Then I'd be able to take charge even under [the weight of] it all. And I went. We went. [The trip] was five days and nights. I was looking out the window: at that steppe out the window.
>
> *Iu: Then there was the desert, sands, camels, on the horizon…*
>
> *L-D:* I pointed them out to Mother. I said, "Mother, we always wanted to, I always wanted to ride, travel—it's wonderful! See—it's wonderful." And imagine, Mother said, "[If we hadn't been exiled] we'd never have got as far as Central Asia! Wonderful!" Nothing dreadful, we'll get along. When I had talked to that Pashin [the official in Leningrad], he laughed loudly and said, "Oh, good Lord, [exile] won't be even half a year! What would it last a long time for?" Can you imagine?

Lappo-Danilevskaia expressed surprise that Pashin did not take her exile seriously but, in fact, his answer was one that officials often gave to exiles and prisoners. These officials may have believed the terms would be short or they may not have wanted to deal with the difficult feelings the acknowledgement of longer terms would evoke. When asked if she, too, thought that her exile would only last a short time, she answered:

> Me—oh, no! Me—no.
> *Iu: It lasted 20 years.*
> *L-D:* I understood that it was a bad business. I understood that I would somehow . . . would somehow manage. But how it would end, I didn't know. So, I got there.
> *Iu: There, under police surveillance!*

Exiles, like special settlers, had to report on a regular basis to authorities, who sometimes conducted unannounced spot checks on the people under their supervision. In the next section, Lappo-Danilevskaia describes how she thought ahead, even while in Leningrad, and made the system work better for her by asking Pashin to change the date of her arrival. In this way, she ensured that she could have a few days to settle in to life in Frunze before reporting to the authorities, so that she could make better decisions about a job and a place to live.

> I got there [to Frunze] and ended up—what was it called, where we lived? Well, lots of people went there, we were living in an Uzbek peasant's house. Yes, and by the way—when I was leaving [Leningrad] I said to Pashin: "Listen, I'm supposed to present myself [to the authorities] on such-and-such a date; write me in for later! I'll go three days early, and try to find work, so I don't get sent off anywhere." And he wrote that in for me, that I was supposed to arrive and present myself [in the commandant's office] three days later [than I actually arrived]—do you see? We arrived. There were the devil only knows how many people in the same situation as me. And I didn't know what to do—wherever I poked around, there was nothing [no jobs].
>
> [While we were waiting] I noticed at the last minute that there was a little boy lying on the floor, all covered in snot—dreadful. And on top of him, this fool here (pointing to Iurii). And he's kissing him. And the boy has whooping cough. I lost heart. At that point, I lost heart, really and truly. And so I went to the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs]. I got there—let them at least give me something, somewhere, [a place] where he could be sick. I couldn't fix myself up anywhere. They listened to me and began to write out [orders for me to go] to some *kolkhoz*, I didn't know where, somewhere. And suddenly I thought, what am I going to do at a *kolkhoz*? There's nothing for me to do there! I said, "I'm not going anywhere!" In a [fierce] tone like that. That fellow [an official] was already writing! He looks at me, astonished. I said, "I won't go! There's nothing for me to do there." He said: "What do you mean, you won't go?!" I said, "What

am I going to do there?!!! I have to feed my child! My mother's with me! She's old. What am I going to support them with? What am I going to feed them? I won't go!" He laughed out loud, [and] said, "Well, all right then, that's an unexpected reaction." You see, he wasn't used to it, it was an unexpected reaction. I seem to have played on such things all along.

Lappo-Danilevskaia had learned that reacting this way could actually help to improve her situation, and that of her family. She describes the difficulty she had in finding a place to live and a job. Even if they were well qualified for a position, exiles had a hard time getting jobs. Once a potential employer discovered their status, they would often withdraw a job offer. Employers were afraid that they would get into trouble for hiring anyone connected with "enemies of the people."

I was already doing it on purpose. That is, in the first instance, when I first said it, it was a gut reaction. I'm like that, you see, I'm just like that: I won't go, and that's it. On the other hand, I realized immediately that that was just the right thing, I couldn't do anything else, I didn't know how to. [I]n short, I started looking around for somewhere to set myself up. I had to find something, somewhere. I had money, not much, but I had some. Akimov gave it to me. So, I found, and it was very complicated, a sort of hut, a wattle and daub house: the owner was in the first room, and I was in the second. There were three of us [in one room], and we set ourselves up there. I went to get a job at a theater, quite within my rights. They [welcomed] me with glad cries, they were very glad to see me. But when I came back to them a second time, they had figured out that I was exiled and everything fell apart. [They said that] the post was filled, that they didn't have any more posts. [Then] I went to the radio, there they [welcomed] me with glad cries, as the saying goes. [A young Kirghiz at the radio station] gave me material, which I was going to read [on the radio]. Fine, I learned the material. I get there: "Let's go!" He's going along fine, but suddenly, he sours up, in every sense of the word, and he says: "That's how it is…"

Iu: Again, the post is filled!

L-D: We go along. A man's sitting there, one who wasn't there when they took me on, now he's come back, he was on a business trip. He's also a Kirghiz. "What are you doing here!" he shouts at me, "You exile, you 'enemy of the people!!!'" At me. I turned around and left. Well so, there I am, without work. And my money is running out.

Iu: And on top of it all, we didn't have the right to go anywhere else, and had to report to the commandant's office. Like that!

L-D: And every week I'd go, report in, every week. What's more, there was a queue. [S]o, in short, we had to live, and I started to take in sewing. Since in my day I sewed well, and later my friends, my close friends, asked me to sew things for them. But then [back in Leningrad], I didn't do it for money, of course. [In exile], I sewed professionally, and very well, too, just between us, and so I made

good money. So, we could live. Then later it happened that a position opened at a library. A special medical library for the doctors. And I worked in that library. A year later, the institute was organized. In 1939, the institute was organized [and the library was included in it as a student library].

Here Lappo-Danilevskaia refers to the State Scientific-Medical Library [Gosudarstvennaia nauchnaia meditsinskaia biblioteka] *of the Kirghiz SSR in Frunze. She was hired as the library director in 1939 and then at the institute library about a year later. As she describes below, she became the library director through luck, evasion, and working the system. In 1947, she was denounced and briefly lost her job.*

So, I found—on the floor, literally, I found an order from the Soviet Ministry of Health, that libraries were being organized at the republic level. State scientific medical libraries. Which they took up immediately at the ministry—they received me wonderfully at the ministry in Kirghiziia. Then they had even forgotten that I had been exiled. They'd forgotten about it completely.
Iu: Later they suddenly remembered [that she was an exile].
L-D: Mmm. In short, I organized a library in the medical institute, then, you see, I found that [order from the Ministry of Health] and I showed it to the [officials at the institute] and said that I was organizing the republic's library for the Ministry of Health. And I got my way: at the ministry, I wrote a letter to Moscow, and I gave it to them to sign. With the minister's signature, in the name of the minister. And I became the director of the republic Scientific-Medical Library. (Laughs.) So that's how I slipped through . . .
Iu: In 1947, they got even with you for it.
L-D: And how they got even! From Moscow—oh, how they got even. I was traveling to Moscow to a [library] directors' conference. I got to Moscow somehow, to the conference, and there was the director of the *raion*-level Scientific-Medical Library. And Muradian was the director.[11]

When I was supposed to go to Moscow, suddenly for some reason my papers didn't get processed for a long time. The whole thing was that in our ministry [in Frunze] they had forgotten that I had been exiled, and they got embarrassed [when an official in Moscow pointed it out]—what were they to do? Well, and when I insisted, they wrote me out the papers but [the library directors in Moscow] got interested, what was going on, why had this taken such a long time? [A]nd evidently they asked around. Muradian treated me wonderfully, since it wasn't the first time I'd gone, and apart from anything else, I was the youngest. And they treated me very well. After the conference she has a meeting at her house, with only a select few. I'm one of them, five or six people, at the most. She sits me next to herself, she's gentle and nice, and at that very time, she's writing a denunciation [of me].

Lappo-Danilevskaia moves directly to the topic of her library work. It seems that she makes an unconscious connection here: the fact that Muradian wrote a denunciation is particularly unjust because of the excellence of Lappo-Danilevskaia's work.

> Yes, and at all those, at all those meetings, I had the best library. People came to visit, incidentally, from Moscow and checked over the library, and I had everything beautifully [organized]. And I was in the best standing [so that my library could have access to foreign journals and other literature]. All sorts of foreign literature were loaned to us, certainly, but it all went on in great secrecy. Newspapers, the secret ones, went out separately. And I had secret clearance—they were secretly cleared, and went through me.
> *Iu: They were stamped "Top Secret."*

Iurii then notes that it was strange that no one from the "First or Second Division"—the security divisions in each state organization—supervised the work of Lappo-Danilevskaia, an exile. It is clear from this next section that Lappo-Danilevskaia took a great deal of pride in her work and identified herself closely with it, so much so that she talked about herself as if she and the library were a single entity. Her dedication to her work is partly what enabled her to get her job back quickly after she was fired in 1947, a story she tells a bit later in the interview.

> *Iu: And Mother—and here's the most interesting thing—is an exile! She didn't have a supervisor from the First Division on the staff, or from the Second, either!*
> *L-D:* Yes. Then [later] they gave me a building. I was separated from the medical institute. And they gave me a building. And I became the republic library. Independent, by then. In a separate building. There I had my existence, and I left [to return to Leningrad] from there. But that was already . . . heavens, 1956, 1957, the Fifties. They fired me [in 1947 after Muradian's denunciation]. (Laughs.) They told me [it was Muradian who had denounced me]. They told me, in the First Division. Well, that was what I had supposed.
> *Iu: The First Division was the division of secret documentation.*
> *L-D:* The Deputy Minister told me. They fired me. Time passes. Well, I was taking in sewing [for about three months]. But at that time, they were beginning to exile the exiles to remote—
> *Iu: To remote, mountainous regions.*
> *L-D:* I was going along the street one day and I met the Secretary of the Party organization. She was on very good terms with me. Very good, she really liked me! She was a diehard Communist, but her husband had been imprisoned for more than ten years. On top of that, she was very gentle towards me. But she believed in Iosif Vissarionovich [Stalin]—I heard her myself.

This official helped Lappo-Danilevskaia write a letter to the Central Committee describing her work and the political intrigues around her, in an attempt to get her job back. This next section also demonstrates the contradictions common in the USSR: the Secretary of the Party organization, despite her belief in Communism, helps Lappo-Danilevskaia, while the Deputy Minister would not even acknowledge her. Both officials were highly placed, both dedicated to Communism, yet they each reacted very differently. This meant that Soviet citizens in general, and those who were facing exile or imprisonment in particular, could never know who might be an ally and who might work against them.

> She [the Secretary of the Party organization] said, "Larisa Mikhailovna, what's this, are you out of work? Well, you must do something!" I say, "What can I do?" She says, "To the Central Committee! Quick, to the Central Committee!!!" Yes, and in my [former] place [at the library] there was this bastard, he really wanted—he dreamed about that library. Well, he wormed his way in, of course, he helped in all sorts of ways. "Write it all down," she says, "all of that." So I took a pen and—[she says,] "Let's write!" I wrote it all down. There was this Annenkov, he was the Deputy Minister,[12] a Russian. He was always on good terms with me, but he stopped seeing me after [the denunciation], he turned his back when I was fired. He didn't acknowledge me. He turned his back. A few days later I was called in to the Central Committee. I get there, I knock. They tell me, "Wait." I sit down. I sit there. In the corridor. Annenkov comes along. "Larisa Mikhailovna," he says, "greetings."
>
> *Iu: He acknowledged [you]!*
>
> *L-D:* He acknowledged [me and said,] "You'll be called shortly, one moment. We won't keep you." So, it was horrible—the door opens, they call me in. And then everything got going. It's not important anymore, how, what, everything got going.
>
> *Iu: They gave her back her job, paid up her back pay.*
>
> *L-D:* Then I left in 1957. And as a rehabilitated person, I asked for an apartment for myself. And they registered me. For an apartment.

Iurii was also rehabilitated in 1957, as was his father (posthumously). Iurii and Lappo-Danilevskaia discuss below the absurdities of the Gulag system. Their ridicule of the system—the rich, dark sense of humor with which they discuss it—is common to many people who lived under the Soviet system. Iurii here also notes that he, like many people, went to get a second rehabilitation certificate in the 1990s. Iurii also had to be rehabilitated, even though he had only been two-and-a-half at the time he was exiled, because even in the 1990s, some documents still referred to him as the child of an "enemy of the people." This made many bureaucratic transactions (from finding work to having legal rights to an apartment) difficult for him; having a rehabilitation certificate meant that he could legally counter any of these documents.

Iu: Later, two years ago [in 1998], I went to get rehabilitated at the Bol'shoi dom.
L-D: He was two-and-a-half [in 1937], and two years ago he still had a document in which he was described as a family member [of an "enemy of the people"]. Now they've given him just "rehabilitated." Like me. Two-and-a-half years old, and rehabilitation like a grown person. Can you even fit such a thing in your head? A two-and-a-half-year-old child receives a document as the son of a rehabilitated mother. Then he gets rehabilitated himself.

After a long pause, they gave the interviewer copies of the rehabilitation certificates. Lappo-Danilevskaia noted that it was not hard to get the documents. They applied only once for the certificates and received them one month later. They were lucky in this: many people (including Rodina and Ibragimova, chapters 4, 8) had a much more difficult time getting these documents. Lappo-Danilevskaia then reflects on what was hardest for her during her exile.

The most awful thing [was that] I was wild with fear. Fear that if something happened to me, then everything would be lost. I was afraid for my son, for my mother, for my father. Wild fear—always! You know, it's hard for me to say [how I coped with this fear]…Here's what it was: I have a child, I have to, I have to [be strong]—I don't have the right to [fall apart]! I have a child, I am responsible for him. And in general, I have my mother and father, too, though they died later.

Her father was ill in 1937 and remained in Leningrad, where he died a few years later; her mother died in exile sometime in the 1940s. Lappo-Danilevskaia describes another aspect of her experience in exile that she found difficult—the internalization of external constraints. As a result, she could not think freely. This is something that many former Soviet citizens describe—not just those who spent time in the Gulag. Lappo-Danilevskaia concludes by expressing her appreciation for the great gift of freedom of thought.

And at that time, I couldn't even think what I wanted to think; it was bad enough not to be able to talk, but to think! I couldn't think, you see! I feel happy! [That's all we could think.] And when I could already think freely—what year was that, Iura?
Iu: In 1991. Even earlier—1985, 1986.
L-D: Under Gorbachev. Under Gorbachev I was already thinking differently, I could already think, you see? I didn't just keep quiet, I could think as well! You understand, it's more frightening when you mustn't think. It's one thing not to talk, but—when it's forbidden to think! So, and what's more, no matter how squalid things were for us, I could for a time—for a time, at least—say

everything that I wanted to. And that is a great deal!!! That is a great deal . . . To forget them [prisoners and officials in the Gulag]—no, I'll never forget that. I won't forget them ever. Not only—how many people I've seen! My God. How much grief I've seen. How can one forget that? Never mind that it was millions, millions. It's terrible to think about. And then all those exiles from the Caucasus. From there to where we were [Kirghiziia], incidentally. Chechens.[13] Horrors. Yes, of course, it was a terrible time.

She continues, reflecting on the present and future:

You know, I don't know what's going to happen now, how everything might turn out, I don't know, what's going to happen. Putin. I would like to think well [of him], I'd like to. But it may be that he will want a lot of things, and it won't work out—that could also be. And it may be that he'll want a lot of things, and he'll turn in a direction that isn't right. Right for me. For us.

You see, we don't know that yet. How can one know—that's just it. But at least for now I can think what I like, say—anywhere, on the street, anywhere at all—I can say everything I want to.

Lappo-Danilevskaia died of a heart attack in her apartment in December 2003. She is buried at the Northern Cemetery in St. Petersburg.

Illustration 4 Larisa Mikhailovna Lappo-Danilevskaia's grave

CHAPTER 5

Surrounded by Death

Interview with Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko

The interview was conducted by Jehanne M Gheith in May 1998 in Moscow.

Translated by Jehanne M Gheith

Illustration 5 Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko's apartment and art

Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko was put into prison and then sent to the camps in 1941, in her words, because she was ethnically Tatar, looked Japanese, and was married to a Jewish man. Thus, she was foreign (not quite Russian) on three different counts and, therefore, not regarded as a loyal Soviet citizen. This was the more ironic and painful because Tsivirko came from a long line of revolutionaries. Like Lappo-Danilevskaia's husband (chapter 4), Tsivirko's great grandfather, grandfather, and father all worked against the Tsarist government and in support of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Being connected with foreigners was punishable by law in Stalin's Soviet Union.[1] *Tsivirko's case demonstrates that even seeming to be foreign was considered suspicious. There was a climate of distrust around non-Russians, and large numbers of various ethnic groups began to be deported in the mid-1930s. Tsivirko was considered an unreliable element even before the mass deportation of the Tatars of Crimea in 1944 (see chapter 3). The formal reason for Tsivirko's arrest was that her husband denounced her. Her first husband, a captain in the navy, worked secretly for EPRON,*[2] *an NKVD organization that strove to recover sunken ships and submarines. Although the details are not clear, it appears that he betrayed Tsivirko in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid being arrested himself. This was common practice in the 1930s and 1940s, and it greatly contributed to the climate of fear and suspicion, as people did not know whom they could trust; as Tsivirko's example shows, even family members could betray one another.*

In 1998, Tsivirko was a spunky yet fragile 82-year-old ex-ballerina whose apartment was covered in the art she obsessively created: beautiful painted plates, Sprite bottles, drinking glasses, all covered in the same, beautiful floral designs. Tsivirko grew up in and near Moscow and moved to Leningrad, where she worked as an artist and ballerina in the 1930s. She was arrested in 1941 and returned to Leningrad only in 1956. Tsivirko was first imprisoned at the Bol'shoi dom *on Liteinyi Prospect in Leningrad. From there she was sent to the Sibirskii Corrective Labor Camps [Siblag], near the town of Mariinsk, then to Novosibirsk, and later to the Dolinka camp, part of the Karlag complex in Kazakhstan (Map 1). Freed in 1956, Tsivirko was rehabilitated in 1958. After returning to Leningrad, she had difficulty finding work and did a series of odd jobs for many years, including as a dishwasher and night watchman, eventually becoming an assistant artistic director at the Nevskii House of Culture in Leningrad. She remarried in 1987 at the age of 72 and moved to Moscow to live with her new husband.*

Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova (born 1934) was part of a social network that helped to take care of Tsivirko and her husband, who were both elderly and frail. Ibragimova, whose interview appears later in this volume (chapter 8), was the daughter of a well-known Soviet writer, Gumer Gali. Ibragimova was interviewed first and then she introduced the interviewer to Tsivirko; Ibragimova remained for that interview. She interjected comments regularly, giving this interview the quality of a conversation as much as a formal interview. Like Ramazanov (chapter 3), both Ibragimova and Tsivirko are (were) ethnic Tatars. Unlike him, they were well integrated into

mainstream Russian society; still, they were not able to escape suspicion and suffering because of their nationality. Together, their narratives show the effects of the Gulag system on two generations of ethnic Tatars, a Muslim population that has been little studied in the context of the Gulag.

Tsivirko's thinking and narration is very disorganized. In fact, her narrative was so disjointed that it is almost impossible to establish the chronology of the events she describes. This kind of disorganization may be a result of age or of traumatic experience. Yet her winding narration also beautifully illustrates the perils and possibilities of oral history. Tsivirko's recounting shows how hard an oral interview can be to follow, how individuals can jump from topic to topic in a way that is less common in written narratives. As discussed in the introduction to this volume, Alessandro Portelli, a well-known oral historian, explains that these intuitive leaps also provide an opportunity to explore the kinds of associations that likely are responsible for these narrative shifts. He argues that the associations people make can tell us as much about social and individual life as can a linear, direct narrative.[3] In a powerful example of this, about a third of the way into our first interview, Tsivirko described giving birth to a baby in a prison camp. Her relating of this story shows that her own mother and her child are bound together in Tsivirko's mind. Furthermore, the way that she tells this experience emphasizes that the usual life order is shattered and re-formed by the Gulag experience: it is her mother who is alive in Tsivirko's future, while her child dies and is present only in memory. In Tsivirko's story and in her manner of narration, we can see some of the ways that the Gulag radically disrupted family relations and expectations for the future.

Tsivirko's interview shows again and again that boundaries between life and death were porous for those who lived in the prison camps. For one thing, life under such extreme circumstances was tenuous; the early death of her child (as of Greczyn's, chapter 11) is one tragic reminder. Tsivirko describes several instances in which she was surrounded by dead bodies. Her focus on these incidents indicate how painful this was for her and how she continues to return to these experiences in her memory.

In her opening story, Tsivirko associates her personal betrayal by her husband with her political betrayal by the state. At first, it may not be clear why she begins with the story of her husband's affair with another woman, but later, it appears that Tsivirko saw her time in the Gulag as a story of betrayal by the state, so she came to connect the personal and political betrayals. According to Orlando Figes, such an association of the personal and political dimensions was common among Gulag survivors.[4]

The way Tsivirko tells the story of her arrest, though confusing, is important. Many Gulag survivors describe the search: typically the NKVD came at night and searched everything in an apartment, looking for incriminating documents or other materials. Tsivirko instead mixes the description of the search with her memory of working to hide the paintings at the famous Hermitage museum from the Nazis. Thus, she connects her arrest both to her personal memory of betrayal and to the events surrounding the Nazi invasion.

At times, Tsivirko's narrative mimics published memoirs. For example, when, late in the interview, she says that friendship among political prisoners was a gift, her language is very close to that of many memoirists, including Evgeniia Ginzburg. As discussed in the volume's introduction, from the early 1990s on, such interpolation of well-known memoirs was common among Gulag survivors.

Tsivirko's speech is particularly disconnected and she uses lots of "fillers" ("so," "that is," etc.). Her slight speech impediment sometimes made it difficult to understand her. Also, unlike some others in this volume (Rodina and Ibragimova), Tsivirko's narration is external: she does not focus on internal or psychological dynamics, but rather on telling stories. Because Tsivirko's narration is so disjointed, we have edited heavily. Note how Ibragimova directs the interview: her idea of an interview is something that follows factual lines and she sometimes interrupts Tsivirko to find out the facts, to try to make the narrative more coherent. When the two women speak in turn, we distinguish them by their initials.

The interview took place in Tsivirko's apartment in Moscow.

I don't remember exactly all about my time in the camps, I have a cracked head; they beat me really well in the camps. [They arrested me because] I look like a Japanese woman [and because] my first husband worked secretly for EPRON (Special Purpose Underwater Expeditions) and also he was Jewish. And I was already working in the theater. And we went on tour. I returned and found my husband with another woman *[baba]* at home…

Ibragimova interrupts: You should begin with when they arrested you.

GTs:[5] On August 24, 1941. The war [WWII] had begun right before this on the 22nd [of June].[6] At that time I worked at the Hermitage. All of us artists worked, we evacuated the paintings, we hid them from the Fascists. Then I worked at the aerodrome. Well, I drew these posters where they stick Hitler in the butt with a bayonet. That kind of poster, propaganda posters. And on August 24—at that time my husband was giving lectures and he went to Krasnodar.[7] And he returned on August 24. They [NKVD officials] came, three of them, and they began a search. Yes. They dragged out everything that they could. They arrested me for being a spy. Well, for one thing, I'm not Russian. I'm Tatar, yes, I answered them, my father was a Crimean Tatar. My father worked for Morozov.[8] Our father participated in the revolution; he went as a volunteer. My grandfather was a revolutionary, my great-grandfather a revolutionary. And for what?

In answer to the question of whether Tsivirko herself was a Communist, she stated that she had been in the Komsomol *[Communist Union of Youth].*

GI (in impatient tones): Giuli, you weren't a Communist, you never entered the Party?

GTs: What me? Are you nuts? I didn't have time, they didn't invite me to; they wouldn't have taken me into the Party, I was still very young. I have been working since I was 15. I started working at a very young age.

A pattern is set up that is repeated throughout the interview: in response to a question, Tsivirko begins to wander, and Ibragimova gets the interview back on track. In this section, Ibragimova realized for the first time that her mother and Tsivirko were in the same labor camp. Ibragimova's face lit up at this new-found connection to her mother. The fact that they had not talked about this is indicative: even as late as 1998, people often did not talk to each other about where they (or their relatives) had been in the camps—even when both parties knew the fact of the other's incarceration.

It is clear in what follows that Tsivirko has trouble telling the story of the baby she bore in the camps: she lurches suddenly forward into that story and then suddenly away from it.

Oh, I went to all the prisons. Northern Kazakhstan, that is, Karaganda, and then…

GI: What prisons were you in?

GTs: I'll tell you. The first one was Mariinsk prison.

GI: And in Leningrad?

GTs: Oh, in Leningrad—but there's only one prison, Liteinyi Prospect.[9] Then in Mariinsk prison. Yeeees, they took us on the train.

GI: Giuli, my mother was in Mariinsk Siblag!

GTs: In Mariinsk? And I was in prison there!

GI: And my mother was there. The Tukhachevsky sisters were there, Bukharin's wife was there, they were in the same cell.[10]

GTs: And then I went to the Novosibirsk prison. I had a baby there. They beat me horribly. The prison doctor thought I would die and the baby, too. But I stayed alive and the baby did, too. He was born. He lived eight months. From hunger and beating my nipples had adhered to my breasts. My ears were all beaten; I hear poorly. That goes without saying. They beat everyone, including me. Not an exception, as they say. So, he [an interrogator] said to me: "Sign here that you are Japanese, that you are a spy, that you worked for Japan."

When asked if she signed the interrogation form, Tsivirko responded sharply:

No!!! I knew that they'd shoot me. Three times they took me out to shoot me. But I wasn't afraid to die, but I was very afraid that Mama would think that I had done something dishonorable. That they put me in prison [for a good reason]. But later Mama told me, after I'd been freed: "I know what you will do tomorrow. I know that no one can buy you or sell you! You are a decent person, I raised you that way." And it really was like that. At that time, I struggled with

> hunger; they wouldn't let me work anywhere after I was freed. For two years this rehabilitation process dragged on. And I wasn't guilty of anything.

In the above passage, Tsivirko claims that she did not confess because of her private relations with her mother. Her mother figures here as an internalized moral force and then as someone who later affirms her daughter for her behavior. Tsivirko's narration shows how hard it was for her to stay with the experience of her child having died after eight months. She mentions it in passing and then, as becomes clear in the next excerpt, finds it difficult to return to the brief life and early death of her son. The problem of finding work, although painful, was much safer ground. She does return to the birth in the next excerpt, but notice the roundabout way that she gets to it; notice, too, the ways that her mother is a persistent part of Tsivirko's consciousness. Through recounting how she wrote her mother that her child had died, Tsivirko demonstrates her grief; through her relationship with her mother and her sense of that relationship she can begin to talk about the birth and death of her own child.

Tsivirko expresses the difficulty in communicating that censorship created. She, like many Gulag inmates, sent letters through "free people" [vol'nye],[11] *individuals who had access to the camp but were not incarcerated. For some kind of barter or payment, they would sometimes run errands (including mailing letters) for camp inmates.*

> And then, no matter what they did, I wouldn't sign. I had written earlier through free people. Because no matter how much I wrote Mama, I didn't even know if she was alive or not, because the censor threw it all away. I wrote that the child had died, that I had been very sick after that, that in terms of my nerves, I had God knows what. (Pause.) And a woman who had been put in prison in 1937 asked me, "Why do you write the truth? You tell your Mama that you are living well, that they feed you well. No one beats you, nothing like that. And you have not suffered anything, absolutely nothing." I wrote that and got an answer and that's how I knew that Mama was alive. (Laughs.)

Tsivirko's experience with writing letters is another example of the way the Gulag disrupted family relationships and sense of self. Tsivirko can only communicate with her mother when she denies her experience and lies about her condition. The official postal system, then, both created opportunities for contact and for receiving life-saving packages, and complicated communication, necessitating the development of codes in order for mail to pass censorship (see chapters 10 and 16).

Tsivirko suddenly moves to the seemingly unrelated topic of being transported from the prison to the labor camp, yet the emotional association of life and death becomes powerfully clear by the end of this next section. She refers to her hands as "paws" here and later in the interview. While such usage is common in Russian humor, it also indicates the extent to which Tsivirko felt herself to be more animal than human.

I gave birth in this way, so that they would be merciful to me. See, they were trying to force me to sign [a false confession] and I didn't want to. They [prison guards] beat me then and I lost consciousness. I was lying there, they were kicking me with their boots. And a [female] doctor saw it, heard it. They were yelling, "Get up!" Well, they cursed, they used bad words . . . "Get up, why are you faking?" And I lost consciousness, I don't remember anything. She [the doctor] took me away and put me in the hospital. "She," said the doctor, "is going to give birth." Impossible—to give birth there. What is she talking about? I didn't even have a stomach, I was skin and bones. I was impossibly skinny.

One time when they were taking us from the prison to the camp, we were walking on the road; it was already November. And I began to hack up blood. I thought, I probably have tuberculosis. My father died of tuberculosis and diabetes. I thought, well, I'll probably leave my bones here and Mama will never know where I am and how I [died]. They dragged me, [and] a doctor came along. He was drunk. He felt for a pulse. There was no pulse at all; well, he put a name tag on my leg. And they put me in the morgue. I lay there. I was unconscious. And suddenly I woke up. I touched myself and there I am in my birthday suit, that is, completely naked. I thought, "What's going on?" I felt around, there were logs, frozen logs all around me. I thought, "Why am I here? What are all these frozen logs doing here?" I jumped up and this was on the second floor, there were these plank-beds around me. Down below, the door was open, light was coming from there. I crawled and on my four paws I moved toward it. I couldn't walk yet. I pushed the door with my head. Well, I pushed open the door, some guy was sitting there drinking tea out of an iron mug. How he yelled, he threw himself at that door, he yelled so much, like a crazy person!

GI: Giuli—did you give birth then?

GTs: No, that was later . . .

As can be seen in the excerpt above, Tsivirko's thinking is not at all chronological. When first listening to her, both Ibragimova and the interviewer thought that she had given birth and then ended up in the morgue, but the opposite chronology applies. The fact that these events were intimately connected for Tsivirko expresses something important about the experience of losing a child and, more generally, about life in the Gulag, where the line between the living and the dead became blurred. It also articulates Tsivirko's own sense of deadness, of grief at having lost a child. She had not yet had the child when she was placed in the morgue. But it did not seem a leap to Tsivirko to move from describing the birth to being deposited in the morgue; for her, this was all part of the same story—a powerful way of expressing grief.

There's a haunting moment in Tsivirko's narration: "I gave birth in this way so that they would be merciful to me." This is a complicated statement: it is true that pregnant women were usually not executed in the Gulag until after the birth of the

baby, so, in one way, this is a statement of fact. Tsivirko's comment seems to operate on a psychological level, as well: she gave birth so they would stop beating her, she gave birth, perhaps in part out of the complicated desire—conscious or unconscious—for life that many women had in the camps.[12] *Although she did not say anything about intentionally trying to have a baby, the timing suggests that Tsivirko got pregnant while in the camps. Given the violence in the camps and the prevalent sexual abuse of women, she may not have had control over the sexual act.*[13] *But she takes a kind of control in her narrative by the way she speaks of it.*

Tsivirko then talks about her understanding of Stalin.

As a young girl, I shouted, "Hurray! Long live Stalin!" on Red Square. And now I think that he was just a shit. An idiot. (Laughs.) I know his daughter Svetlana.[14] We lived on Patriarch Ponds. We went to school on Pimenovskii Alley, where [children of members of] the Politburo[15] also studied. Svetlana was younger than me. Now, they say, she's gone into a convent. Where she is now, I have no idea.

GI: She's in England. In England.

GTs: That means she went to a convent there. To atone for the sins of her father. Now where did I stop? During Khrushchev's time, Khrushchev was already in power, they had already denounced Stalin, they had already, as they say, discredited him. Although they discredited him with respect. He died well. And how many people did he kill? After all, we slept on the floor, on cement, in prison. Just like this (she demonstrates, pressing up close to Ibragimova), one against another. And they [the guards] screamed, "To the left, everyone turn to the left. To the right, everyone turn to the right." And everyone was beaten. I'm not even talking about the cold and the hunger, that was terrible. How we slept there, it was horrible. [After prison] when I saw a real mattress, full of straw, I burst into tears. That you could sleep on a real mattress. In general, they crippled me. I was a healthy girl [when I went to prison].

GI: When did you change your mind about Stalin?

GTs: On Liteinyi, there, in Leningrad. The first interrogation: he [an investigator] beat me so hard that he knocked out all my teeth. And then I was in solitary, and I didn't understand anything, why, how, what was going on. I really didn't understand anything, I had no idea what "spying" meant. How could this [imprisonment] have happened?

GI: And at that time you thought that Stalin was guilty, rather than that it just happened?

Tsivirko answers with a Russian proverb: Well, you had to think that the fish rots from the head.

GI (surprised): Oh, you understood that? Because not everybody did. Everyone said that Beria, Yezhov[16] *and Stalin weren't guilty, that's what everyone thought.*

Tsivirko then describes the transport from Leningrad to Mariinsk, a trip of more than 2,050 miles. The trip to the camps was usually made in stages [etap] *in highly uncomfortable conditions in cars meant for goods or animals.*

> So then, and I went then by train, in a quarantine car; I had bloody diarrhea and dysentery. So they sent me to the quarantine car. And everyone died there. The representatives of the Third International were with me.[17] They were like this (pointing to herself)—old. Everyone died. I was the only one who remained [alive]. There was one German woman. From Germany. She had on this fur coat. And it was already November. It was cold. And I left in August, in a little gabardine coat and that was it. I was completely not dressed [for the weather]. She [the German woman] cursed Stalin in front of everyone; she cursed him for all she was worth. And as soon as the light fell on her—there was a little barred window there—her face was terrible. So, in short, finally, we arrived in Mariinsk. The door opened, [the guards said,] "Get out!" But there was no one to get out. I was climbing out, and I was stuck to the fur. To that woman's coat, made of fox fur, so warm. She said to me, "Find my daughter—my 17-year-old daughter, they took her, too; find her, give it to her. If you don't find her, take the coat for yourself." And I climbed out onto such a big gangplank, on all four paws. There everyone—a-a-a, everyone was standing there [waiting for the other prisoners]. And I looked just great. And they asked me, "And where are they?" And I [answered], "Well, they are all lying there dead." There were about eight people probably in that quarantine car. And they all died, every last person. (Pause.)

After her time at Siblag, Tsivirko was transferred to exile to the Dolinka camp in Karaganda (where Lappo-Danilevskaia's husband was incarcerated, chapter 4) where she had a lighter work regime, although she describes fairly heavy work even here. The recollection of being a blood donor—giving life to other children, and keeping herself alive with the money she thus earned—immediately brings her back to the memory of her son, whom she could not save.

> Well, we all planted, sowed, there was mowing. The village of Dolinskoe. Well, my lord, what didn't we do! We were raking potatoes, with a big Soviet shovel. We were making a reserve supply. And sometimes we simply stole. We were so thin that wherever you put them it wasn't noticeable. We lived on potatoes. Then I was a donor, I even have a pin. A donor. I gave blood, I saved children. And my son died after eight months. He died. He was born weighing one and a half kilograms, blue. He looked at me with the eyes of a grown person. I felt that he was doomed. After this, I was sick for a very long time. Something somehow came to me . . . I really thought I wouldn't survive. But I survived, as you see. And I lived to be 82.

Tsivirko was released from the camps in 1956 and rehabilitated in 1958. When Tsivirko refers to the "101st kilometer," she is alluding to the fact that many returnees were not allowed to live in the major cities. They had restrictions written in their passports, saying they could only legally live more than 100 kilometers outside of the major urban centers. The jobs that Tsivirko (and many others) could get were entry-level, low-paying, and a far cry from their original occupations. Yet returnees were usually grateful for any work, and always fearful of losing it. Prior to her arrest, Tsivirko made her living as an artist, which the regime considered ideological work. She therefore faced particularly severe restrictions in her jobs, to prevent her from being a corrupting influence. In describing what a difficult time this was, Tsivirko admitted to despairing so much at times that she considered suicide.

> And then they [the authorities] almost sent me to live at the 101st kilometer like a parasite. [But even when I got back to Leningrad,] no one would hire me for any job. I even wanted to be a conductor in the tram and tear tickets. Even for that they wouldn't take me. An announcement, "We need people very badly." I go [to apply for work but they say,] "We can't take you, in your work record [*trudovaia knizhka*] it's written that you are an artist and a director." Well, in short, I said, "What kind of ideological front is tearing tickets in the tram?" Well, then I understood [and asked], "Tell me honestly: do you have instructions [not to hire people who were in the camps]?" [They answered,] "YES!!! Not to give work to 'enemies of the people.'" And that was that. I washed dishes. I worked as a night watchman. What didn't I do, just so as to earn my bread honorably.
>
> *GI: This was after she returned to Leningrad. It wasn't yet rehabilitation, she returned without having been rehabilitated, she simply returned from exile.*
>
> *GTs:* No, I was already rehabilitated. And they still wouldn't take me. But friends in Moscow helped. I had a lot of friends. They helped, and gave me sketches as work. So, I did that, I drew sketches of costumes . . . I wanted to turn on the gas. In a private apartment, you can die, but in a communal apartment *[kommunal'ka],* you can't.

Here, Tsivirko alludes to the fact that in communal apartments, in which each family had a room and shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, it would have been difficult to commit suicide as there was little privacy.

Tsivirko then discusses her experience in going to government offices seeking work. This evokes for her a memory of a criminal woman in the camps. Many memoirs of members of the intelligentsia describe only negative relationships among criminals and politicals; this interaction shows another side to this dynamic. When Tsivirko talks about individual criminals, she is sympathetic to them, but when she refers to them as a group, she is antagonistic. And again, as for many of Tsivirko's memories, her mother figures in her recollections.

> [The official asked,] "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm here about the question of getting work. I'm rehabilitated." [The official answered,] "They don't talk to anyone about that here!" They closed the door on me and that was it. Then I said, "Give me a piece of paper!" They gave me some paper and a pen and I wrote such an insolent letter. I even wrote, "If Lenin rose from the grave he would wash you away from here to hell with a dirty mop!" I said it like that, I can curse in a classical way. A woman taught me. Mashka, this criminal woman, taught me in return for a piece of soap I'd given her. This girl REALLY needed to wash; there was some kind of mange on her skin. She had to wash and there was no soap. What kind of soap would there be there? And I put there, on her bosom, a piece of "Red Poppy" [soap], which Mama had given me, I kissed the box. And I kept a small piece, just in case, as a way to remember. I thought, when I smell it, it will be as if Mama is near me. And I gave her a piece: "Masha, take it, wash yourself, girl." There were a lot of criminals there; they did what they wanted to; they even had knives. And it was hard to remain intact there. You had to be an artist to survive. And I was a great artist.

Tsivirko bore the psychological marks of her time in the Gulag well into old age. She expressed a strong desire to end her life several times during the interview. In answer to a question about what, if anything, she had found positive in her time in the camps, she moved swiftly from the positive to despair.

> Friendship . . . Friendship! Article 58ers [political prisoners] became very friendly with one another. They helped each other, shared their last piece of bread equally. That was the only good thing there. The rest—rudeness, insolence, and beating! Nothing else. I'm not afraid anymore, let them take me, I'll die on the road.
> *GI: Stop it.*
> *GTs:* I'm not afraid of anything, I am afraid only of losing him [her second husband]. I have had a very difficult life. (Cries.) And I remained completely alone. Do you understand? I don't want to live in this life, I am sick of being patient, do you understand? I don't understand anything.

Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko died in 2002.

CHAPTER 6

It Wasn't Life

Interview with Nina Ivanovna Rodina

The interview was conducted by Jehanne M Gheith in May 1998 in Moscow.

Translated by Jehanne M Gheith

Illustration 6 Nina Ivanovna Rodina

Nina Ivanovna Rodina was born in 1926 in Moscow; the family later moved to Kiev. In 1942, when Rodina was 16, her mother, Zoia Mikhailovna, was shot there by the Nazis. In the late 1940s, Rodina moved back to Moscow with her father and her brother, who had been severely wounded in the Second World War. She became a teacher of Russian literature and language in Moscow, where she worked until her arrest in 1950 and subsequent imprisonment in the Gulag. She was accused of being a spy for the Nazis because she knew German and had survived the occupation of Kiev. Rodina's story, like those of Ianke and Ramazanov (chapters 2, 3), shows that experiences of the Second World War and of the Gulag were intimately and powerfully connected.

Rodina was not in a labor camp but in a prison that was part of the Gulag system. Even though she was imprisoned for a relatively brief time—three years—her experience there colored all of her later life, profoundly changing her sense of self. Despite her innocence, her arrest gave her an intense and lingering sense of guilt. The organization Memorial helped Rodina (like many others) to talk about her Gulag experience for the first time and this was crucial in helping her to come to understand and to live with the effects of her imprisonment.

Throughout the interview, Rodina gives many examples of unique acts of resistance and subversion. For example, because she couldn't talk openly about her prison experience, Rodina developed a simple yet powerful strategy for bringing Zoia Mikhailovna, her deceased mother, into her life in a daily and important way. Another example is the strong sense of community Rodina was able to develop with her cellmates, despite the best efforts of the guards to prevent close relationships.

It is important to note how Rodina uses the term "German" in the interview below. For her, the terms "German" and "Nazi" were interchangeable for a very long time. In the 1990s, Rodina became acquainted with some German youths who had come to the former Soviet Union in lieu of army service, as part of an effort to aid those countries most harmed by the Nazis during the Second World War. For Rodina, getting to know these young Germans was a powerful experience; she even went to Kiev with them and showed them the sites of the occupation. Rodina's story demonstrates a long process of coming to terms with the effects of intensely harmful treatment by both the Nazis and the Soviets.

Rodina was released from prison after Stalin's death in 1953 in an amnesty granted to those charged as minors. Compare her comments on the incomplete freedom that resulted from amnesty to the comments of other survivors in this volume, who, despite receiving a full rehabilitation, nonetheless encountered problems upon release.

What is not discussed in an interview is sometimes as important as what is spoken. In Rodina's case, she hardly mentions the close male relatives in her life, such as husband, father, and brother, despite the fact that she lived with and cared for her brother and father in the 1950s. In part, this omission is likely because the experience was painful for her: her brother had been severely wounded in the Second World War and caring for him was difficult, both emotionally and physically. These silences also

underline the extent to which her mother's death and her own time in prison were the central facts of life for Rodina, the events that she was dealing with most actively.

Interviews with Rodina took place in her small, lovely Moscow apartment. She was eager to discuss her experience. Because she was telling her experience as she remembered it, there are sometimes gaps in information, and chronology is often skewed, that is, events are frequently recounted in the order in which Rodina remembered them, not in the order in which they actually occurred. We have retained much of the chronology as Rodina presented it for two reasons: (1) her process of association is revealing; it shows what experiences were connected in her mind, which, as with Tsivirko (chapter 5), says a great deal about how she is living in the present with the memories of prison and her early life; and (2) this kind of gap in chronology and information is a common difference between oral and written narratives, a fact that we want to highlight.

I was born in Kiev into a family of teachers. Mama was a music teacher, Papa taught physics. I had an older brother. We lived in Kiev. And when the war began I had just barely turned 16. I worked in a military hospital. I was young, patriotic. I wanted to be of some kind of use for my country. Well, later it all turned out tragically. Our forces retreated and the Germans quickly approached Kiev. The way the Germans fought—they didn't fight front to front, no, they would surround a place. They surrounded us—and nothing remained of our hospital. It was awful.

Rodina explains what the Germans had done.

They killed. They killed all the soldiers, they killed all the wounded. They blew up cars, they set fire to them. Well, it was a war . . . And I lived through this myself. Moreover, I took it very hard. We [Rodina and her co-workers] had already retreated from Kiev. We were at the Dnepr [River], that is, we were supposed to go across the Dnepr to the other shore. And when we were already on the other shore, the people from the hospital caught up to us, those who had for some reason been held up in Kiev. And we didn't know why or where they were; we were worried. So they came and they were crying. And they were crying because they had blown up the hospital with all the wounded inside it, those who couldn't walk. They thought that the Germans would come and would hurt the people in the hospital [so they blew it up]. They chose the lesser of two evils. I was a young girl, for me this was all, of course, awful.

We got almost all the way to Kharkov (Map 2). If you look at a geographical map, Kiev and Kharkov are pretty far apart. We had almost gotten to Kharkov. We, there in Ukraine, we were going to Moscow, home, to our homeland. On foot, of course; moreover, we walked only at night. We spent the days somewhere in the wheat fields. We would hide somewhere in the fields and move at night—farther and farther.

We didn't make it to Kharkov, because there was this unexpected twist in our fate. We had changed our clothes . . . we had been wearing our [work] uniforms, since it was a military hospital, so we had changed those. In a village, people had given us their clothes. So we looked like country girls. But it was very hard to find shoes in the villages. And in one village an old woman gave us galoshes! Rubber galoshes . . . usually, you wear these over some kinds of boots or over something. But we had to wear them on our bare feet. And it's rough ground there—and our feet were all bloody. Some guys from the hospital brought us socks, these thick, woollen, sheep's wool socks. We were so happy because our feet were all covered in sores from the rubbing. It turned out that these socks were taken from the winter uniforms of the German officers. But we didn't know that. And when we were walking through a village, some [German] soldier said to us: "Halt! Halt! Where did you get those socks?" Then everything started turning like in a kaleidoscope. They threw us into a shed and then into some car. They brought us back to Kiev, and that's how I ended up in Kiev during the occupation.

My mother died in the occupation. The occupation was very difficult. In all kinds of ways. First the Germans came into Kiev and began to kill people—they killed Soviet soldiers, officers. They killed them; it was a war after all. They killed and killed. And later there began to be these orders, by the Germans. *Aufruf* in German: an announcement. In Russian, German and Ukrainian languages, the order was given to turn over your radios to the Germans. There were no televisions then. Bicycles had to be turned in and radios. Later, you had to turn in warm clothes, later still, other things. This was in the autumn; the Germans needed warm things then, and they took them. But the fact is that in these radios that people turned in, someone had placed an explosive device. They accepted the radios at Kiev University. And the German soldiers accepted the radios and the radios reached to the ceiling; they were storehouses. And they began to explode. And after that there began, you know, these actions. I don't even know how to say this . . . it was awful.

Here Rodina describes the Nazi practice of declaring an 11 P.M. curfew and then, at 11:05, going out to shoot anyone who was on the street, breaking curfew.

[In the mid-1990s,] I showed the [German] boys the monument to Bogdan Khmel'nitskii[1] and the bushes where a German soldier, a machine gunner, had lain. You couldn't see him. Five streets come out onto that square. And he's there—with a machine gun. If anyone came out from any street—anyone, a kid, it didn't matter to him—he would destroy all, all of them. At first it was for five minutes, later—a little longer, and before their retreat there were 15-minute actions. They killed everyone. Later, they would take 200 people from the streets; these people became hostages. If you killed even one German,

they would all be shot. And people would get taken in [by the authorities]—it was, after all, the city in which we all lived. Our acquaintances were taken in, and our teachers, too. People tried to rescue them and tried to give ransoms in exchange for their freedom but nothing worked. So—200 people. Someone killed one German and all of these 200 people were shot. So the occupation was very hard, very hard. I saw boys hung, a 13-year-old boy. That's why I couldn't live in Kiev, such a change, such horror.

The occupation lasted four years; it went on for four years. That's a big part of a person's life. And—a horrible part. I was there for all four years. And when they killed my mama . . . they shot Mama, they sealed up our apartment and I was left on the street. We had acquaintances, there was one friend [a woman] who is now in L'vov. They protected me.

And what was the reason given for killing your mother?

Oh, there wasn't any reason given. [During the occupation,] I entered medical school and it was just at harvest time, the gathering-in, and they sent us out to work in the fields. To help out there. A German who had no arms, he was a colonel or a general, he was supposedly the one who ran all the agriculture. He was very nice, he wasn't the kind of Fascist that we had imagined. They took us in, housed us, gave us food and drink, and we worked there. And I left Kiev.

And your mother was shot?

I'll tell you about that now. So we left Kiev for this work and so I, I had a terrible dream. I had a dream that I couldn't find a place for myself; I was terribly upset. So I went to this German [colonel or general] and I said, "I have to go to Kiev." And he said I couldn't. He let people go only if they were sick. And so I cut my legs, so that I would have abscesses, a rash. I burnt nettles and rubbed them on myself. And I went to him and said, "I'm sick and I need to go to Kiev for a short time." And he saw my rash and cuts and signed a paper so that they wouldn't arrest me on the road.

I, and another girl, she's now in L'vov, we went to Kiev. At times we went on foot, at times cars gave us a ride. We arrived in Kiev, and she lived a little farther than me—on the same street. We lived on the third floor. I ran up the stairs. The apartment had a German seal on it saying, "If you open the apartment, you will be shot." I jumped away and caught up to my friend and we went to her house. Her mama told me that my mother had been arrested. Well, they arrested her. I raced here and there, people gave me some things, some food. They told me, "She's at the Gestapo." I went to the Gestapo . . . The first time they took a package from me for Mama. And the second time they said, "She's not here, she's been sent away." I didn't see Mama again.

And [in 1943] when they liberated the city and our Soviet troops came in, then my [experiences during the] occupation and my sufferings seemed very small [compared both to what had happened in the country and what happened next].

Rodina then describes the direct, negative consequences of having survived the Nazi occupation of Kiev. Because of this, she was questioned by Soviet authorities. It is rare to admit to signing a confession, as Rodina does here.

I was in the occupation, that is, I was already basically branded. You were in the occupation, that meant that you were a German spy. Me, "But they arrested my mama!" Them [Soviet officials], "Prove it!" This was all carefully thought out, they played it out in a premeditated way. They said for my activity as a spy, this version was very convenient for me. I had made all this up. Mama's death—that was on purpose, a kind of legend. Mama was in Germany to provide a connection and I was here. I couldn't prove I was innocent. And I signed everything. And they [Soviet interrogators] found my guilt in interesting places. They asked, "Did you read the announcements in occupied Kiev?" I said, "Yes." "In what language?" I said, "I read it in all three languages. I read it in Russian because that is my native language. I read it in Ukrainian because this is Ukraine. I read it in German because that is the language I learned in school. I found it interesting that I could understand everything. I read it in all three languages." They put that in the record.

They asked me, "Did you discuss this with anyone?" Well, how could I not discuss it with anyone? Let's say I met you, I would ask, "Did you turn in your radio? Did you turn in your warm things?" If I'm talking with you, that means I'm already discussing it. So, I replied, "I discussed it!" "With whom?" I named my neighbor, my friends. You understand that I had talked with them. There is this thing, Article 58. This is the political Article 58-10—that's for anti-Soviet [activity]. Point 11 is for [organizing or supporting counter-revolutionary] group activity. I was accused of active counter-revolutionary activity in the period of the German-Fascist occupation. Well, so then. That meant that there was no exit; since I was an "enemy of the people," I had to be condemned. But when they began to sentence me, it somehow accidentally became clear that I was 16 years old [at the time of my alleged crimes]. And in Russia you can only be condemned by a court from the age of 18. But they had already taken me in. And there was no way back.

One captain who read me the sentence said, "Three years of prison. Incarceration in a prison for active counter-revolutionary activity in the period of the German-Fascist occupation." He read in a bass voice and with such emotion that if at the end he had said the words, "She will be shot," it would have been completely natural. And he leaned down to me . . . We were alone together in a little room—well, not a room, this little, tiny space where they had brought me for the reading of the sentence. He was huge, so big, and I, very small, stood before him, my hands behind my back. I didn't have a belt because [the jailers thought] maybe I'd suddenly hang myself. And so I stood in some little shirt, half naked before him, with my hands behind my back. I'm standing there and

he's reading. And then he bent down to me and said, "Well, when we want to apologize, we give three years." And that was that. That's how they apologized [for arresting me even though I was underage].

And then *etap*. This is hard to convey. You're in a train car for goods, not for people, and all around are murderers, perverts, bandits. And this is how they send you off: they gave us this salted herring. There was no water and they gave us a piece of brown bread and this herring. And you go for thousands of kilometers beyond the Urals. Well, it was very difficult.

[We travelled for] about three weeks. There were some stations where they took us to the bathhouse. And at one of the stations they take you to a transfer prison, and it's important that no one sees this. At night, with dogs, well, you can imagine.

And in my train car there were an awful lot of people, it was completely full (gesturing from floor to ceiling). Like that. We reached the prison. I had this psychological dislocation . . . I couldn't hear anyone or anything, I didn't want to eat, I cried all the time. It was as if I'd turned to stone, and I probably would have died there if not for these prostitutes from Vienna—these—Austrians. I came in and they said, "Oh, we have to save her, we have to save her." They were screaming and I didn't even want to look at them . . . There were 14 people in the cell and then I came in. They bring you bread in the cell—in one piece and you had to cut it. And they had their own rules about what pieces were considered the best. And I didn't know which was better. So they chose the very best pieces for me. I didn't need this at all, I didn't want anything, but they kept saying, "We have to save her, we have to save her." The guards took prisoners out for a 20-minute walk, I didn't go; why did I need a walk? My life was over. Then some time went by and one of these Austrian girls got this [piece of cloth] out of a mattress from somewhere; she somehow ripped out a piece and made a handkerchief. With different flowers on it! It was beautiful. And with the black walls in the cell, the walking courtyard was covered in black paint, the fence was three meters high, also all black, you only see the sky for 20 minutes on a walk. The sky wasn't visible from the window because of the metal fittings. Those were the conditions. And when she got this handkerchief, she sat on the floor, put it on me right here on the knees, and started to say, "Look, look, a red flower. And look here, a blue forget-me-not. Here, look at this green grass." She talked to me as if I were a small child. And when I saw these flowers and her thin hand, still a child's hand showing me the flowers, I cried. And when I cried, they were all so happy because although they were prostitutes, their human feelings and compassion were normal. That is, they understood that now there was a break, there was an outlet for some of my tension.

And so I was in prison for three years. Stalin died, the officials called me in and said, "We're letting you out because of the amnesty." That meant I was a criminal but they had forgiven me. They forgave me but said, "You can't tell

anyone that you were in prison. And sign here, saying that you won't tell anyone that you were arrested." As if…They arrested me when I had been teaching tenth grade, the senior year, in school. I was supposed to return to work and where had I been for three years? "You can't tell anyone." People would ask, "Where were you?" "Oh, I was visiting relatives." "And why have you come back so beat up looking?" "Well, everything I had was stolen."

Well, life went like this: they didn't accept me back at work; I had been arrested under a political article. But I could work as [the secretary in the school]. The secretary got 30 rubles. I lived in a *kommunal'ka*, I swear, I didn't have anything to eat, there was nothing to eat and I would make noises like this [she raps with her spoon on a plate], so that the neighbors thought that it was food. It's hard to convey…I had been—as if I were a criminal. I applied for rehabilitation. And they didn't accept it.

Well, there are these waves [of bureaucratic stinginess] here. And they didn't give a reason [for not accepting my application for rehabilitation]. "No, no, we aren't open now," and the window shuts. I began to go there so often, I thought, "Well, what is this, if I were guilty, then why did they set me free and ask for my forgiveness. If I'm guilty, then go ahead and punish me. If I'm not guilty then give me the chance to live normally, so that I can work." In general, it wasn't life. It was awful. What kind of morality was that, when we lived surrounded by lies? [If something came in the mail] my neighbor would ask, "Who did you get a letter from?" And I knew right away: now she'll go denounce me…

At this point in the interview, Rodina describes a pivotal moment in her life. She had been feeling guilty and depressed for years, and then, in the late 1960s or early 1970s, went to vacation at a house owned by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Her perspective changed because of some relationships she formed at this time. Although it may seem odd that, given her history, Rodina was allowed to vacation at a Communist facility, such seeming contradictions were common after Stalin's death in 1953. There is also a shift in Rodina's narration here: while she has not talked about it yet, in the years between her release and this vacation, she had gotten married, had a daughter, and then grandchildren.

My grandson, who was seven years old, couldn't come for some reason, but I took my granddaughter with me. And we vacationed there. And this became some kind of turning point to the return of earthly joys…let's put it that way. I rested there, I talked to people, people related well to me, and I somehow began to relate to myself a bit differently. Because I had felt that I was branded, an exile, that I was horrible, that I was worse than anyone else. Therefore, I tried to hide from everyone, and then I saw that people, good people, could relate to me. Something in my heart was touched.

I had felt that I was an awful person since I couldn't tell anyone about being in prison, or prove that I had been there, and also because I signed [the false

confessions]. I punished myself, I didn't stand up for myself, and then I wondered, why didn't I go abroad [and escape the Gulag]?[2] Then I saw people here from other countries, how they acted. If they are hot, then they take something off, they take their shift off; but if I was hot, then God forbid anyone should know that I was hot. I would die but I wouldn't tell anyone that I wanted to eat. But if a foreigner wants to eat, he comes and takes [food] because his reflexes are natural. If I liked someone, I tried to hide it. If I really didn't like someone, I tried to hide it. All the time, I would tread on myself.

Everything was not quite right. This is hard to convey . . . I'd go to the doctor, I'd say, "I'm probably crazy, I don't act as I should." And they would say, "As long as you can control your actions, as long as you can evaluate them accurately, since you know that this is bad, then, so far you're a normal person. But when you lose control over yourself, then we'll understand that you need to be cured, that you really are crazy."

Rodina then discussed her daughter and why she had named her Zoia Mikhailovna, after her own mother.

Well, look up there, it's a small photograph from a document. That's Mama, my mama, shot by the Fascists. She was 40. And during the war we had gotten especially close, because suffering had brought us together. So it was harder for me to lose her. They say that time heals all—but for me the more time went by, the more I missed her. I don't even know where Mama's grave is and I really wanted something that would remain, something in memory of Mama. And so since Mama was Zoia Mikhailovna,[3] I met a Mikhail and I decided, no matter what, to [marry him and] give birth to a daughter. I don't even know how I got the wild idea. In general, I am not at all mystical. Recently, people have asked me, "What if you'd had a son?" The thought never entered my head. Never! It was impossible; it had to be a daughter and she was born! And it turned out that in this way I received such a greeting from my mama. Well, and it was very good because my daughter distracted me almost completely from my former sufferings. She was a good girl, capable, did music, finished school, studied well.

Coming to terms with the Gulag experience was a life-long process for many people. While part of the knot had been loosened for Rodina while on vacation at the Communist Party facility, it was only in the 1990s that she could talk directly about her experiences in prison. A major factor in Rodina's recovering a more solid sense of self was her relationship with the German youth she tutored.

And only in Memorial, where I learned to talk with people, learned how to analyze correctly, how not to judge myself, did I begin to think, "I'm not worse than others."

And what made that possible for you?

The fact that other people who had also gone through this severe school of life, and yet lived a little bit easier than I did. For some reason, I was focused on this tragedy plus my arrest, plus the apartment I lost, and my personal life somehow didn't come together. And that was hard for me. And it seemed to me that I was worse than everyone. See, this one got married, her husband died, so she got married again and now she lives freely, she travels, goes places, makes friends and loves. But for me, it was as if everything had ended and everything was happening around me.

But you did get married?

I got married, my husband died not that long ago, he died…And the biggest happiness I have received is when these German boys came to me. They were raised completely differently. I'm a teacher. If I'm talking none of them has the right to interrupt me. For me—this was a gift. I talked and they were silent. I asked, "Why are you silent?" "We're waiting." "What are you waiting for?" "We're waiting—maybe you're going to say something else?" And so it's like that: a gentlemanly relationship to me as a woman, to a teacher, this shook me up because, underneath, I had dreamed about this all my life…And I never experienced anything like it in my life. I didn't have enough deep communication, soul to soul. I needed more of that!!! And suddenly these boys appeared, who looked me in the eyes. Then the girls appeared. And I became friends with them. And, well, there's my grandson, Ilia. I say, "Ilia, look, there's Reinhold [one of the German students]—we were having breakfast together—and he has said thank you three times, and you?"

And what did Ilia say?

Well, the Germans being here has made it easier because he used to think, "It's all your imagination." But three days ago, he's studying and working. He's very busy. He works in a bank. They have to wear ties to the bank. And a white shirt. He writes me, "Ba![4] Ba, I need a white shirt at 1:30." And that's it. Well, I ironed him some white shirts, hung them, and took red ink and on this note I wrote what my fantasy prompted me to: "Dear Grandma, please, if you can, prepare a clean shirt for me. I thank you in advance." And I also wrote, "I kiss your hands." He read it and then wrote, "Approved!" He understood my hint that something wasn't quite right. Although, of course, this is all very small stuff, but I really like when people look me in the eyes, when they believe me, when they understand me, and when they forgive me if need be. You understand: for one small mistake [I believed] you could hate me and in answer to this hatred—I simply don't have such an all-embracing love. Although now I am learning this.

There's another very important moment with these same German boys. Fascists and Germans, for me these had been synonyms. More than ten years had gone by [after the war], and here near Moscow there was a competition.

Sailing. And we had rented a *dacha* there. And the German team—beautiful girls and boys, well trained, well dressed, with no complexes—they took part in this competition and they were sitting on the bank. There is a wonderful reservoir there, Kliaz'minskoe; they were sitting there, enjoying it, talking so emotionally. I heard the German language and I had to go into the bushes and I sobbed. For three days I didn't leave home, for three days I couldn't look at anyone. I had heard the German language. I love German, I love German speech, I love the music, this sharpness, because everything is expressed there. You understand, I love the whole culture: Heine, Goethe, Mozart, Schiller, I melt from it. But when I heard German speech I didn't associate it with genius, I associated it only with *trra-ta-ta* (imitates automatic gunfire). And so I heard German speech—and this was 30 years ago, that is, it was many years after the war—but I couldn't…

And it is only now with these boys, these German boys and girls…I asked one of the students why she came here. She has good parents, she finished high school, her parents gave her an apartment in Berlin. Why did she come here? And she said, "I wanted to do good." She came here to do good! She came here to care for our sick, our lonely, sometimes broken, people. Well, how could you not bow before that? It was the first time in my life I had seen this up close! For me Germans and Fascists immediately got a little bit separated. Fascists and Communists, with our Mustachioed One [Stalin], they for me were on one side of the barricade. And now I saw people. I saw people…with blue eyes, welcoming, neat, with such a huge sense of responsibility and decency. Well, what else can I tell you? I've already opened up so much.

In the 1950s or even the 1940s, how did you relate to Stalin?

Very well. This was a mass psychosis and we fell under it. My parents were never Party members, and they never said anything, in front of us they never discussed these topics. Mama sometimes sighed, because she worked, she taught music. And she had to teach the history of the Party—not just teach it, but also write a summary of it. At night she—and she had two children, work, a family—at night she would sit with these booklets and summarize. That is, she had to rewrite from the booklets into a notebook to give to someone in the Party. And she sighed over this. And so that was a kind of protest. But for me, that was simply Mama's tiredness; I didn't rise any higher than that. In my eyes, Stalin was a righteous man. During the occupation, I saw a pamphlet with a picture on the cover. The booklet was called, *The Bloody Dictator*. [The cover showed] Stalin with an ax in his hand and blood dribbling from the ax! And when I saw his image, I got cold because for me he was an idol, he was a kind of God…When I was ten years old, they had to take out my appendix and I was screaming and yelling, "Stop torturing me, or I'll tell Stalin!" I was yelling that on the operating table. He was—the highest standard of justice. Do you understand?

And now?

Well, now—you ask . . . The shroud has fallen from my eyes. The shroud began to fall when I ended up on the other side of the barbed wire. I saw enemies—the real ones—there. Of all the thousands of people there, I could count the enemies on my fingers.

Rodina compares the experience of the difficult years of the Second World War with the years of Stalin's rule and the purges.

Well, the arrests. As a "member of the family" there was that article, if a husband was arrested, then the wife was a "member of the family of an enemy of the people."[5] And they arrested them. If you had relatives overseas, there was also some article [in the criminal code] against that. It was forbidden to have relatives overseas. During the revolution, one of our relatives went to France and got married there. And we didn't write and we didn't know anything about her—until the war. And during the war, somehow [the lack of communication] ended; I don't know how. She died there and it was very hard to send her ashes here during the war. They were sent in a box as if they were oat flour . . . and we didn't know it was her ashes. And they were hungry years during the war, and so they mixed this grey flour, made it into some pancakes and ate her. You understand what all this had come to . . .

All of our life was very bad. And I began to understand, there, there [in prison] I began to understand. Later I arrived here and I saw that the same thing was happening, that Stalin was enemy number one. This—Stalin and Hitler—they share a pedestal, but Hitler—somehow he's not our monster, but this one, supposedly he's in our society and we bowed to him. Do you understand?

And when you learned that Stalin had died, how did you react?

In many different ways. I—again, with dreams—I had a dream. An old woman of prayer was in prison with us; she was arrested because she believed in God. She was very sick, such a sick and unhappy woman. I told her my dream and she said (whispering), "HE'S dead . . . "

Everyone was afraid. Some people were happy, some cried. But everyone was afraid because we had gotten used to this system. And now something else was coming and no one knew what it would be and we didn't anticipate things getting any better. So we were very tense. But later they told us, "You have been amnestied. But not all of you." Well, I had a light sentence, so I immediately fell under this amnesty. There were various obstacles. Beria was still in power. And many were in prison because of him. He would send forth an order: "In your region you need to arrest 100,000 people." And don't dare overfulfill it without reporting: "You write me first that you have more enemies and I will give you

permission." That's the kind of "democratism" we had, you understand . . . Beria was awful.

Only later in the interview did Rodina share more of the intimate details of prison life. Here, she mentions a trip she took in the 1990s to Kiev with the German boys she had tutored. An accidental encounter vividly evoked her prison experience.

I went to Kiev with these German boys and we went to Memorial there. And a woman was talking: she had written a book [and we were at her book opening]. I didn't know this woman. She told her story and said that just before she was arrested she somehow ended up at a train station. She didn't have an apartment—no money, nothing—her husband had been arrested—and there she is at the station. And she asked the KGB men, "What should I do?" They [said,] "You're free, do what you like." Well, then the family of her husband's acquaintances came for her. The Zaritskiis. She said the name and I trembled. She finished and I asked, "Did they [the Zaritskiis] have children?" She said, "Yes, there was a daughter. Katrusia. They shot her in prison."

I said, "I was with this Katrusia in prison. Katrusia was pregnant. And she didn't tell anyone that she was pregnant. When her stomach began to grow, they took her in for interrogation. She had been sentenced to be shot. And they called her in and said, "In such a situation we, we don't shoot women—just so you know how humane we are."[6] Well, something like that. She was Ukrainian and wanted [to name her child] Iaroslav, like the prince.[7] And she said, "Well, if I at least write down how to name the boy, will you tell them that I want to call him Iaroslav?" "No." [They refused.]

And then one woman, a guard from the prison, took pity on Katriusa and said, "Well, what's wrong with these people? They won't give anyone paper. You sew what you want to say on a diaper. They'll pass the diapers along. They give the child in a diaper, to the relatives." And so we sewed a whole will, with our fish-bones, on the diaper, on the diaper.[8] She sewed and everyone collected thread for her. We'd pull out red threads from the mattress cover.

There is something fascinating about this story of a group of women using their fish-bone needles—all they had—to sew a mother's will for her still-unborn son—and his name—into a diaper. The diaper was the perfect instrument for carrying information because what guard would want to check a potentially dirty diaper? There is humor and wisdom in this subversive act. Changing diapers is part of many women's daily lives in Russia; these women used their familiarity with this literally messy act and with the guards' refusal to engage in it to their advantage, to work against the system. In another refraction, an act that in a different setting would be ordinary—women sewing together before the birth of a child—now carries the weight of memory and

tragedy, community and subversion. Rodina also notes here the difficulty of living "for the peephole" [dlia gliazochki]*, the small aperture in the door through which guards supervised inmates' activities.*

And so, in the cell, we had a school; I made everyone study. They [the Austrian prostitutes referred to earlier] learned Russian from me. Also, we didn't get to move enough. They forbade us to do exercises. And all of that added to our depression. I said, "Well, let's not do exercises but let's clean the cell." And there was no rule against cleaning the cell; in fact they had to let us do it. We raised the beds, we really needed to move.

Besides which, in prison, we also had this one very interesting thing: it was forbidden to make friends there. As soon as they [the guards] noticed that I liked you, they would separate us. Therefore I would scream at you, "Jehanne, you opened the window again!!! You are such a contagious pest!" I would grab your hair and you would whisper to me. So, this [piano] accompanist from Vienna, she would whisper to me, "Ninochka, I want so much to tell you some good words. Tell yourself all kinds of things that are good, tell yourself, and know that I have said this to you." And I'd yell, "Oh, so you want me to catch a cold? I've told you about this!" "But it's stuffy in here." Like that, for the peephole. Otherwise, they'd separate us. And a writer who was in prison with me, Sof'ia Semenovna Vinogradskaia, she was very afraid that they would separate us. And so I always yelled at her. We agreed on that earlier. We'd go to the bathroom and whisper to each other, "Let's fight together today!" "Good idea!"

And, later, was it hard to learn not to live "for the peephole"?

Without the peephole is easier of course—with the peephole is awful. And the lights! That there was light around the clock, that was awful.

It was hard. And also: the monotony of the food. Oatmeal—it's really very good, but when you have it every day . . . You see what it's like: but you have to eat it anyway. So they brought in one Australian woman. [We asked,] "How do you feel about oatmeal?" She said, "MMMMMM." And she neighed like a horse; that meant she loved oats. And we loved her right away.

And there wasn't sufficient nutrition. I lost my teeth there. Yesterday I was at the dentist's and, looking into my mouth, she said, "Well, how did this happen, how did this happen?" In prison, you had to wait three or four months to get to a dentist. You had to write requests for three or four months. And, when you got there, a guard would be sitting on one side of the room and the dentist across from him. They took you into the city to the hospital, to the city hospital. The dentist's hands shook; she's a young woman and a guard with a submachine gun is standing there. She says, "Well, so, you need to have a cavity filled and here you need to kill the nerve." And I said, "Dear doctor, please, just take it out, I can't stand the pain any more. Please remove it!" And she said, "But it's only a small hole, well, if we just [had you come in another time, we

could fill the cavity and we wouldn't have to take the tooth out]." And I said, "They won't bring me again, so I'll go crazy from this small hole, please take it out!" I begged.

And yesterday on the chart, the dentists were writing some diagnosis of what I had lost my teeth from. It is hard to convey all this…

In the next section, Rodina goes into greater detail about how she applied for rehabilitation. One might think that after serving a prison term even though one was innocent, the process of rehabilitation would go smoothly. But this was often not the case, as Rodina's experience shows. She had to work hard to gain full rehabilitation "because of the absence of a crime," rather than because "the charges have not been proven." The latter phrase indicated that the person was still under suspicion of a crime.

I submitted my documents for rehabilitation soon after I got out. I was freed in 1953 and in 1954 I wrote my first request. But they didn't accept it. In 1955, I submitted it again. Again, they didn't accept it. And in 1956, 1957, they didn't accept it.

Even after the Twentieth Party Congress?

They wouldn't accept it, they wouldn't accept it. This is our politics. I was in despair. In 1957, I went three weeks in a row. The window slams shut: "We aren't receiving right now; we aren't receiving right now." And it was only because a soldier, who was standing there, he was a guard, he saw that I was upset and crying and he said, "Throw them your application." When she opened her window, I tossed in my application in an envelope to them; I threw it like a bomb and ran away as fast as I could. So it fell near a person [in the office] who had also been in prison, but he was a lawyer and he had gotten the right to do this work. So he got it, and on that very same day he wrote me a letter to say, "We are examining your application." And in blue pencil he signed it, Groshenin. I got it either that day or the next. They wrote, "because of the absence"—no, not "because of the absence," but, "the charges have not been proven!" So the charges remained. They hadn't succeeded, poor lambs, in sniffing out my sly counter-revolutionary nature. And then I wrote again, not that long ago, "All the same, I request that you rehabilitate me." And they rehabilitated me and they wrote, "In the absence of a crime…"

Through hard work, Rodina achieved full rehabilitation. But, as she describes in the next section, the psychological effects of her time in prison continued long after this rehabilitation was granted.

After I left prison—you know I had what's called in our prison language "space sickness" [agoraphobia]. I was afraid to cross the street. I didn't know how to cross the street. I grabbed on to my father, and I said, "I'll stand here for a

> bit, you go yourself and I'll just stand here." First, everything hurt, absolutely everything hurt . . . And second, the noise, there was such noise, you know—like a bomb raid . . . I cried . . . I had to register, we have a system of registration, we had to go to the prison to get a document. To get there, you had to get on a tram. I said, "Papochka, why don't you go?" I was holding on to him with both hands, we were standing there. Everything hurt, everything, absolutely. Well—terror . . . Like when you open a cage, a bird who hasn't been in freedom for a while won't fly out right away. And an animal [that has been caged] won't go out right away. So I had this feeling and it lasted a long time, a very long time.

When Rodina tried to get help from the medical profession, she was unsuccessful. This was typical of the times, for, until the late 1980s when glasnost *[Gorbachev's policy of limited openness] had taken hold, doctors who helped—or even listened to—former political prisoners risked getting into trouble with the authorities. When Rodina says that through her relationship with the German youth she is "becoming liberated," she uses the word* raskrepostilas'. *One of the roots of this word is serfdom, so this literally means something like "to become unserfed."*[9] *There are other, more common Russian words for "liberation" (e.g.,* osvobodilas'*), but Rodina gives her growing sense of inner freedom the weight of historical association and the power of an enormously important social movement. Throughout the interview, Rodina has offered a complex commentary on the process of "becoming unserfed" after time spent in the Gulag system. Through naming her daughter after her mother, through her relationships with the German youth, and with relationships with her grandchildren, she works with and through her Gulag experiences. All of this is part of her inner, gradual movement, into, if not complete healing or repair, then a capacity to face and live richly with the long reach of her experiences of war and imprisonment.*

> Sometimes it was too much for me and then nothing helped, not my will, nothing. I wouldn't want to see anyone. Rarely—lately, this happens rarely. When it happens, I don't want to see anyone, I don't want to talk on the phone. I don't pick it up—I can't. This is called depression. And then my grandchildren came along—such a joy because there are two of them and I love children so. [They have given me] a kind of release, a very great release. Such a soul-satisfying, limitless kind of joy. Well, now I have also become liberated *[raskrepostilas']* a bit with these German boys, because for me Germans were enemy number one and now they have stopped being enemies. They have stopped being enemies and things are much easier for me. Although I still . . . the priest says, "Forgive, forgive [the Nazis, the Soviets]." And I forgive but—that's a formality as if I were writing a document, and in my heart there's still a weight.

PART THREE

Children of Enemies

CHAPTER 7

Three Death Certificates but No Grave

Interview with Boris Israelovich/Srul'evich Faifman

The interview was conducted by Cathy Frierson in July 2005 in the city of Vologda in the Vologda oblast.

Translated and introduced by Cathy Frierson

This interview reveals much about life for a child of "enemies of the people." Both of Boris Faifman's parents, Communist believers who chose to emigrate to the USSR, were arrested precisely because of their foreign origins. As was true for many children of "enemies," as a small child Faifman became an orphan, and was treated as an enemy himself. Though he had few memories of his parents, he bore the consequences of their groundless arrests for his entire life. Bitter about the injustices he suffered, he bemoans the fact that he has several different death certificates for each of his parents, but not a single grave to visit.

Boris Israelovich Faifman was born in June 1932, to Romanian Jewish refugees to the Soviet Union. His parents, trade union activists in Romania, decided to move to the Socialist motherland when his mother's relatives emigrated to the United States in 1929. The Soviet government settled them in the northern city of Vologda, in the Russian heartland, where they received housing and jobs. Faifman's parents were arrested in 1937, leaving him on his own as a five-year-old. Neighbors temporarily took him in, but NKVD officers soon arrived to deliver him to the Vologda "child receiver-distributor." The Russian term is detskii priemnik-raspredelitel', *which some scholars mistakenly translate as the child reception-distribution center. That*

translation softens the term, erasing its technical resonance. The term for reception is priemnaia*; a* priemnik *is a technical part of a machine. In the Soviet system of children's institutions, youngsters were processed in receivers and distributed as so many units, in a dehumanizing system under labels true to the mechanical worldview of the 1920s and 1930s. Inside that system, children were to be "reforged" into Soviet men and women, like elements being processed in a steel mill.*

The child receiver-distributor was the first way station of Faifman's decades-long journey as a ward of the Soviet state. During his initial processing there, he received a new patronymic; his documents thereafter read Boris Srul'evich Faifman. This would subsequently hinder his search for his parents and information about their fates. Faifman remained under the state's supervision and constraints through his childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. He was restricted to a trade-school education. Only in the 1960s was he able to make his first return trip to Vologda from Krasnoiarsk, in southern Siberia. Once back in Vologda, Faifman methodically and tenaciously reconstructed a life out of the fragments he recalled from his early years there.

His interview provides information about the life of an orphan of "enemies of the people" inside Soviet institutions. Hunger, deprivation, enterprising rule-breaking to survive, humiliating bullying, one sustaining friendship, and labor are the central memories of his years in orphanages. In the absence of family and of educational opportunities, he held fast to the human relationships he was able to build and to the value of meticulous excellence in his manual trade as a toolmaker. These choices served as two sources of physical and emotional survival for orphans of "enemies of the people," as well as for individuals themselves repressed by the regime.

During his interview, Faifman strikingly returned fully to the past at several points, inhabiting the place and time of his description, speaking in the present tense, his expression looking more inward through his memories than outward at the recorder, the interviewer, or the room in which he sat. Faifman's recollections jump about, have many phrases or words interjected, and sometimes start and stop mid-sentence. This translation retains some of these rough edges of his interview as illuminating elements of his level of education, lack of interaction with other victims of political repression, and thus, his relative lack of mental resources to process his experiences and memories. Faifman commences with the story of his parents:

> I would like to begin with how my parents wound up here in Vologda. In 1929, my parents were in a group of twelve persons who fled to the Soviet Union from Bessarabia, which was then [in] Romania [subsequently Moldavian SSR, Map 3]. They requested, I don't know, political refugee status or simply refugee status. And they sent them to live in the city of Vologda [Map 4]… Probably they [fled because they] had heard plenty of Soviet propaganda about "How good it is to live in the Soviet country" [a line from a popular song of the time]. And there had been some kind of arrests there because of trade union activity. They fled here, after one or two of their brothers had already been imprisoned

for three months. And at the very same time, Mama's entire family went to the U.S.A., in 1929, and, of course, they asked her to join them, but she and her fiancé, husband, I don't know, decided to come here to the Soviet Union. In 1929, her two brothers, father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother went [to the United States].

Here, that means, Father worked for a while as the director of a store, then as the deputy chairman of the union of trade workers. Mama worked at the "Clara Zetkin" sewing factory . . . We lived right in the center of town on Clara Zetkin Street, number 22, on the second floor, in communal rooms. Our room was in this communal apartment. I remember that somewhere opposite our building there was a church. And while I was in the orphanage, I believed that I would find my home by finding this church . . . But when I came here (chuckling), the little church was gone.

Faifman turns to the arrests of the group of Romanian refugees, including his parents, in 1937. During the interview, he gestured to explain that when his mother was arrested, he had been rolled up in a thin mattress to be carried to the neighbors.

Well, how did it happen? Since our parents had fled Romania, Romania was a capitalist country, they accused all of them [the refugees in my parents' group] of being spies. All 13 persons. That they were Romanian spies. I saw their case file and that's what was written in their case file. Around six people confessed to being spies, [and] six people did not confess to being spies, including my parents, who did not confess. Those who did confess did not withstand the torture, and said that, "We are all spies, everyone, everyone." So all were indicted as spies. Therefore, they arrested Father first, on October 30, 1937, which is precisely . . . it coincidentally turned out later that October 30 is the day commemorating the victims of Stalinist repression.[1] During the interrogation, since he was an honest person, he apparently told them that Mama had relatives who lived in America, and they came after Mama. They usually arrested people at night . . .

I don't remember how it happened. But as people have told me, they came at night, and they took me, really, still sleeping in bed to some neighbors, as it happened, to the boy who had been my courtyard playmate . . . I don't know who hid me, obviously, the neighbors. Because they carried me sleeping at night in the bed to the neighbors, and later there, I don't know exactly, how many, a day, two, maybe a month, I don't know how long I lived at the neighbors before they sent me to that NKVD receiver-distributor. And all of our things were put out, notebooks, all the photographs, they threw them all out into the corridor, and our neighbors, not suspecting that this was risky, gathered a lot of those photographs. One of the women—my parents had photographs made of me once a year—and so one of the women gathered all those five photographs.

I was then five years old. After a certain time, everything was erased from my memory about what my parents looked like, it was all erased, and I had no image whatsoever…There were also photographs of me with my parents. I found one of those photographs with my parents, with my father, when I came here to Vologda. I found it with a woman who worked with him. At that time photographs were usually glued to cardboard, so the photo was torn from the cardboard, folded in half, and hidden somewhere.

Faifman's journey to recover photographs of his parents occurred in the 1960s, a quest made possible by the so-called Thaw and its after-effects.

[T]hey moved me about all the time, moved me about, at the end, to put it succinctly, I lived in Krasnoiarsk. So, in 1965, I came here to Vologda, during the Khrushchev Thaw, to the KGB, to find out if there were photographs of any kind in my parents' case file, and at the same time, to search for them around the city of Vologda. Back then, it was the practice to photograph the entire workers' collective together. I got a photograph of my father on the trade union card that they gave me. The KGB gave it to me; therefore, it had a small photograph. But, there was no photo of any kind of Mama, none at all. So, I went to the address bureau. Yes, that's how it started…

[T]hese neighbors, to whom they had carried me during the night sleeping in the bed, lived right here. I went to their place. They told me, "At the sewing factory, a woman works there whose last name is such and such, a rare last name, therefore it will be easy to find her, her address." I went to the address bureau and found the address where the woman lived. I asked. She answered, "I worked there much later, I don't know." She gave me some kind of last name, I again went to the address bureau, again took the address of some woman, again went to her, asked and asked for photographs, and at long last, I found a group photograph with Mama in it. I asked that woman for the photograph, took it to a photo studio, they took just Mama out of the picture, photographed it, I returned the photograph to her. So that's how I got photographs of Mama and Papa.

The interview returns to the topic of Faifman's experiences at the age of five, when he lost his parents.

So, I remember when I landed in the receiver-distributor…here in Vologda…when they took me there. But the receiver-distributor was surrounded by a fence, and a knotted rope hung out of the fence. The people who brought me pulled on the rope and a bell rang; for some reason I remembered this. First, because it was the ringing of a bell. The ringing of the bell I, maybe, still wouldn't have remembered. But when they opened the gates, a brilliantly shining bell was hanging there, which was engraved in my memory.

At the receiver-distributor, even there, children were locked up. Just imagine my condition, yesterday there were Papa, Mama, today there was no one. When I woke up in a strange room, and without parents. That's what my condition was. I cried there for days on end; apparently I didn't submit to some kind of routine or still something else happened. And I, a five-year-old boy, landed in the punishment cell…After all, it was an NKVD institution. NKVD. Well, I don't remember it clearly, I remember only that I was in the isolation cell. For a long time, how long, I don't remember. But when I came here in 1965, I went to the KGB. I went to that receiver-distributor, asked that they show me that isolation cell. It was some kind of smallish room. A bed, but without bedding. What kind of bedding there had been, I don't know, because when they showed it to me, it was without bedding, just the bed. Like that. How long I was in there, I, of course, don't know.

I remember that later they sent me from that distributor to a preschool orphanage, somewhere in Arkhangelsk *oblast* [Map 4][2]…How I went, with whom I went, I don't have any recollection. Somewhere in Arkhangelsk *oblast*, to this day I don't know where that orphanage was. Well, I have some guesses, some suppositions. But I don't know exactly. First of all, the reason I know that it was Arkhangelsk *oblast* is that I was there in the preschool orphanage as an over-age child. Not only I, but our entire group. It turned out that when I turned eight and was supposed to go to school, our group should have been sent to a school-age orphanage. But there were no spots available in the school-age orphanage, so we started school from the preschool orphanage. So in the preschool orphanage when I was already in the older group, there was a two-story building—although it would have been something like a village—but in this village there was a two-story building, apparently it had belonged to some kind of landowner or *kulak*. Because there was not even a school there. We walked to school in another village which was called *Pogost* [Graveyard]. *Pogost*—that's where they bury people. So [that village] was a bit bigger, and we went to school there. And since I had already learned how to read by the end of the first grade, and in Russia, as you know, windows usually always had a lot of chinks in them, and then they were covered with newspapers in the winter to keep warm. And I would lie on the bed and read. In capital letters, the newspaper was called "*Pravda* of the North," "*Pravda* of the North" it was. Therefore, I found out that it was Arkhangelsk *oblast*…

Downstairs there was a dining hall, all the games, and the bedrooms were on the second floor, above. And since we were, you could say, over-age, there were no special separate rooms for the older children, boys and girls. Therefore, we all slept in one room.

Responding negatively to a question about whether all of the children in the orphanage were children of "enemies of the people," Faifman explains how he learned about his own status as a "special settler," the same as those persons punitively exiled. In other

words, he was not simply an orphan, but an enemy himself. The search for clarity and documentation of his true status came to matter a great deal to him. In 1995, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation decided that children of "victims of political repression" also qualified as victims who could thus receive special welfare benefits available to victims of political repression.[3]

> No . . . they didn't establish special orphanages for one, for two, for three, for ten children of "enemies of the people" . . . [S]o when I was in the preschool orphanage, and in the school-age orphanage, as I recall, no one ever said anything to me about [my status], no one commented on it. And not the staff either, no. Until recently, I thought of myself as a ward of orphanages. But when I needed to get a certificate from the orphanage, it turned out that I was not in the files of any orphanages. I found out that I am and was in the lists of "special settlers" . . . I'm saying that I requested a certificate through the office of the *prokurator*, I needed them to give me the official status of "repressed." So I requested the certificate through the office of the *prokurator*; I wanted to submit it to the court, so that they would recognize me as repressed. The *prokurator* made inquiries in the orphanages, but I did not show up anywhere in the orphanages' lists. An answer came from Arkhangelsk that I was registered as a special settler, and I asked again there, from where they had taken me to the school-age orphanage. And they said they had no such information. And on top of everything, they changed the year of my birth and my patronymic . . . My patronymic was Israilovich, it became Srul'evich.[4]

Faifman returns to the conditions in the orphanage, and speaks of the difficult war years.

> When I was in the preschool orphanage, that's exactly when that war of 1939 broke out. We didn't have much in the way of food. The only thing that I remember of our food was that at first they fed us soy kasha, it was so repulsive and the attendant sat there, eating hers and saying, "Eat, children, eat a little kasha! Ah, what delicious kasha!" (Speaking in a deeply sarcastic voice.) So, from all of this I concluded that since they fed us soy kasha, it means that things were pretty bad, and then they gave us unsweetened tea. And the attendants also said that if you sprinkle bread with salt it will be tasty, which leads you to conclude that it wasn't very good. And in the school-age orphanage (I was in the school-age orphanage for a year), the war started, and there, of course, they fed us worse . . . [T]he orphanage was in a luxurious landowner's house; he [had been] the chief landowner of the entire settlement of Lal'sk [Map 4] . . . [D]uring the war, all the boys slept in the landowner's house. The girls slept in the chancellery, that was all in the servants' house, it was their house. Not quite as nice. We ate—there was a common, big dining hall for 120 persons. Everyone, before the war, everyone ate together. During the war, they divided

this dining hall, they made a storeroom there, and the boys ate first shift, the girls ate second shift. And there was also a big courtyard. The orphanage had a farming operation on the side, three horses and eight cows. Before the war they also had pigs, since there were a lot of leftovers. During the war, there were no longer so many leftovers, [so] they didn't keep pigs anymore. And there was also a plot of land next to the estate where they planted potatoes here, vegetables there.

And that farm was a real farm, the way they used to make them in the old days…There was a housekeeper who managed all that. And periodically, they brought such good milk there. When the war began, that supplementary farm saved us to a certain extent. During the first year, well, they would hand us a piece of bread, a spoon or two of mashed potatoes, and a glass of tea with milk—well, water whitened with milk, without sugar, without anything. That's what they gave us for breakfast. For lunch they gave us soup, a bowl of soup and that was all. When [19]42 arrived, the director told us that the New Year's tree[5] had brought us oatmeal for the holiday; they gave us oatmeal as a second course for lunch. I don't remember what we ate for supper, something like what we got for lunch in that first year, 1941, the beginning of 1942.

In discussing the juvenile delinquents who came to the orphanage, Faifman uses the term dedovshchina*, which comes from* dedushka*, the word for grandfather. This refers to the practice of hazing in the Russian Army, which was receiving much media coverage in 2005, when he gave this interview. This hazing of new recruits is extremely violent and often leads to the victims' death or suicide.*

We lived very badly. Why? Because, since we, the little ones, were the youngest, and they brought some juvenile delinquents from the city of Kirov [Map 4], who began to pick on us, and it was something like what they now call in the army *dedovshchina*, it was something like this *dedovshchina*. If they released you already from the orphanage at age 14, that means that [the delinquents] were 12, 13, 12 to 14 years old. And we were [from] eight years old up to their age. At first, they thought up all kinds of foolishness, "Give me something." "I don't have any." "Then swear." "Swear how?" Like this, we lay on the floor, I won't say anymore. (Faifman makes a quick gesture indicating that the young boys were supposed to simulate sexual submission.) "What do you mean you don't have any thread, you have buttons sewn on with thread." "And if you swore, and you have whatever it is I want, I'll get it from you." And so you hide your bread ration in the dining hall at lunch. And they were called not "grandfathers" the way they are in the army, but "masters." "There's your master." He demands what he wants from you. If your master was a smoker, then you had to go around the town—not the town, around the settlement—and gather cigarette butts, so that he would have something to smoke. When the staff caught wind of this, then it was like in a prison, in a camp, or someplace else—an attendant

would stand at the door, in the doorways, and search us, when you left the dining hall, everyone from their feet to their head, so that nobody took any bread out. So then you had to come up with a way to get it out, because if you didn't bring the bread, then they would send you to the village to steal something or beat you up, really beat you up badly.

And you couldn't tell the staff, that was called being a snitch, and if they found out you were a snitch, then they would beat you up . . . Someone would sneak a bread ration out, and in an hour or two, start to eat it. You would see him, your mouth would start watering: "Give me your ration, I'll give you mine tomorrow." That would happen, or else someone would get potatoes, and you want to eat: "Give me a potato or two, I'll give you my bread ration." And so once I owed someone a bread ration that way, and since they were strict with the bread during the war, they cut it, weighed it, gave each person his bread ration. Six persons sat at each table. The attendant brought us a plate of bread, she would leave, we would grab the bread, hide it in our pockets, blow off the crumbs, and take the plate away. And she would bring the bread, here and there, and apparently forgot, and would bring you a second plate. So, that's how I gave my master the bread I owed him, but he then asked for the second one. He said, "You have to eat today without bread." "What do you mean without bread? I owe you one ration. And I gave you one ration." "Give it to me," and he started to take it away from me. I squeezed it in my hand, but almost everyone, especially the older guys, all of them had knives. Everyone had a knife, the knives were basically for the garden, when we would steal things from gardens, we would cut and clean what we stole there. He went at me with the knife and caught two of my fingers. I cried out, an attendant ran up, and that's how I got this scar on my finger for my entire life.

Then there was the soup. They put the pot on the table. So it was like this, if the young ones sat at the table, they knew how to arrange themselves when they sat down. Because the soup was given out this way—today I'm first, tomorrow you're first and I'll be last. And they ladled it out from the top, you would get all the good stuff in it [if you were first]. The second one would take it, and it would continue like that, and the last one would get only the broth. [That happened] if we were all the same age. But if both the older and younger kids sat at the table, the older guys always ate first. They would eat all the good stuff, and the young ones would get only broth. That's how we ate.

Then, in 1943, apparently they sent that director to the front, [and] we got an elderly director. Apparently. Everyone there had lice, of course. And this is how we slept. The older boys slept more or less okay, but this is how we would sleep. We had one-person beds. Either they didn't fire up the stove or there was no firewood, or they fired it up poorly. So, we would put the bed like this, the mattress on the board without any bedding, two of us together, and put on our padded jackets, and put the second mattress on top of us. That's how we slept.

There were two boys at the orphanage nicknamed Cow and Goat. Cow, because he ate a lot before the war, Goat, because they always had to pull him into the dining hall, there was no way he wanted to go in there. So these two boys, they just slept inside the stove. As soon as they heated up the stove, it was warm in the stove, as soon as the coals went out, right in their clothes, they would crawl in and sleep.

We went to school with the rural, the village population. We stole from them any way we could . . . we orphans. First of all, we would meet in that dark corridor, and go through all their bags, and take what we found. We would take bread from one person, someone would take pens, pencils, and then we would sell them to those same village kids for bread. Well, everyone did what he could. Several children in the orphanage made knives. We were specialists at making knives. We sold knives to the village kids, for bread, which we really needed. They didn't give us much bread in the orphanage, and [a village kid] would bring [us] bread today, and tomorrow he would say, "That's enough, I've already brought enough." "No, that's not enough. Bring some more." So those are the ways we got enough bread to eat.

There were lots of us [orphans], after all, and we all worked together, and each of them was on his own. Especially the village kids. And there was something else we would even do. During the lunch break, during the long break, they would give us 50 grams of bread in school, in addition to the 50 grams we got at the orphanage. So there were some comrades who would keep watch over the teacher, who would carry the cut up bread on a tray, and in a dark place as she was coming, he would grab as much as he could and run away. Then the teacher would have to count out the pieces, how many children she had to give bread to, but where was she to get them? How they got out of that situation, I don't know. And then there was what I said, that we would take bread from the table. After all, they didn't give out much bread. So, then the cook, the attendants, had to come up with these six portions, the cook or the attendants came up with six portions to feed everyone who had not gotten bread. There were instances when one of the kids would sneak into the storeroom, and would steal, say, bread, there. Again, I don't know how the attendants and cook got out of that situation . . . That went on through 1943, then in 1943 the new director somehow figured out how to get rid of these older boys, and there was no more of that. [S]omehow, apparently he knew how to bargain with people at the top. For the first celebration of the October Revolution[6] that he was there, he gave us each a piece of chocolate. In addition to breakfast, lunch, and dinner, he gave us each a piece of chocolate. And somewhere—I don't know, the collective farm, or somewhere—he made them give flour to the orphanage, and they made us pies, they baked us real pies, and in that ballroom, they set up tables, the way they set up tables for holidays. We sat at those tables and, for the first time in so many years, ate something tasty, and some kind of soldier from the front told us about

events in the war, and we ate. That was our first such . . . real meal, you could say. After that [director came], our life became more or less normal.

On the topic of food in the orphanage, Faifman also described how kitchen duty provided opportunities to get extra food on the sly. In particular, he explained that children on kitchen duty learned how to slip their bread into the pan of melted butter when the cook was not looking. Survival, he makes clear, necessitated rule-breaking.

So your week in the kitchen fed you for another week; well, not a week, I don't know, but long enough after kitchen duty, as they say, life became a little easier. On top of all this, a boy came to the orphanage from the countryside. He was also around 11 or 12 years old, he already plowed and harrowed, he worked with horses, and everything. And I became friends with him. And at that time in the orphanage the boys had to—of course I don't remember, either one day a week or how many days—work for an hour and a half in the carpentry shop. So this friend and I were always in the carpentry shop, all our free time we were in this carpentry shop, we cleaned up, we helped the carpenter, whatever he needed. We had a lathe, but it didn't have a motor. So the carpenter had made such an enormous, big wheel, and this kind of handle, and a counterweight. Two or three of us would rotate the handle, and the carpenter would turn something. Then we would work there with the planer, we made stools there, like these, and rakes. Rakes, the tines, we planed the wooden tines for the rake. Once the carpenter said, "Go to the forest and cut down [something for] tines." We took an ax, the three of us, we went. The forest was directly behind the settlement. We went into the forest and cut down the straightest little pines for those tines, tied them up, put them on our shoulders, they were heavy on our shoulders, but they were easy to pull along the ground, so we brought them that way, and made rakes. So, my work duties began when I was either 11 or 12 years old. My labor duty had started. And I worked with this friend. We plowed, and harrowed, but I always lagged behind him. I was a city boy, he was a country boy, so he was experienced.

Once the farm director hired us for the summer, for the whole summer, to bring water to the kitchen for the summer. I made a two-wheeled cart for the water barrel—that is, it had one axle and a barrel sat on top of it. We ride together, and the stream is nearby—say, 500, 600 meters, we ride into the stream, the horse too. One stands on the bottom of the river, the other stands on the cart's axle, you dip, hand it to him, he pours it into the barrel, you dip, you hand it to him, he pours it into the barrel. We fill up a barrel with water, ride back to the kitchen, then again one stands on the axle, the other stands on the porch, you dip out of the barrel, the same way, you hand one over, another, and empty the barrel into the kitchen. So, that's how we worked together.

> [W]e became such friends that we always, always did everything together. Sometimes there were three of us, but he was always one of them. For example, we had to bring logs. And logs were floated down rivers then. So, you would go on the same cart into the river, tie on a log while it was floating, tie it to the axle, and then drag it back. So that's how we hauled logs… He was my best friend… His name was Sima Shvetsov… And we went for hay together, we would load it, in the winter, in the winter, that haystack. Just the two of us, without any grown-ups. We would come this way. We would load the hay, put branches on top, the way grown-ups do it, we would pack it in, tie up the load, and deliver it.

Faifman continues, almost in a trance, to reminisce about his friend, recalling Sima's mastery of horses as a trait that gained respect for him among both children and adults at the orphanage and farm.

> We were the same age. And he stuttered very badly. And it would happen that somewhere we would be talking, and I would understand him, and he—I often filled in for him, what he was trying to say.

Asked whether news of politics and the war reached the orphanage, Faifman explains how the children heard about the war and, mostly, experienced its repercussions.

> There was one radio for the entire orphanage. All we knew about the war was what we heard on the radio. [S]o on a holiday, they sometimes invited soldiers from the front, they described it. And, of course, we experienced hunger. When it got closer to the end of the war, they started to feed us better. They already began to give us 20 grams of butter in the morning and, it seems to me, ten grams of sugar. We spread the butter on the bread with our finger, and then we licked our finger, so that there wouldn't be anything left. The attendants wanted to give us manners, [so] they made little wooden spreaders. They weren't allowed to give us knives. No one was about to use a little knife, I mean a little spreader, to spread the butter. Some butter would stay on the spreader, so it was better to use your finger, and then lick your fingers. No manners whatsoever…

Faifman then turns to the question of clothing at the orphanage. He again refers to his official status as a special settler, which meant that he appeared neither in the orphanages' lists nor their budgets, and suffered for that.

> And at the orphanage, as soon as summer began, we threw off our shoes and went barefoot all summer… Barefoot. And in the forest, on those needles, those pine cones. We went everywhere barefoot. And our feet became so tough… That was a pleasure. We did that ourselves, we threw off our shoes. And we did not

put shoes on. And then it happened sometime in 1942 or in 1943 that there were not enough shoes for everyone, and I, to tell you the truth I didn't assign any significance to it, but now that I've just found out that I was in fact not a ward of the orphanage, but had been assigned to the orphanage, and I lived by the same rules. So the cold arrived—and I had no shoes. Others were wearing shoes, not everyone, while I, they gave me warm socks and slippers. The temperature was already below zero, and I went around in slippers until they found me some shoes. It also happened, I don't remember right now why, but for some reason I was left without a winter hat. Either someone stole it, I don't know where it went. I went around in the bitter cold without a winter hat. Both ears got frostbite, of course. Then there was a huge scab like this. Then they gave me a hat . . . For many years, even in the summer, that spot would break open, I had big ears, now they are normal (chuckling) . . .

And it happened once that autumn came and we were still going around barefoot, it was already freezing, the puddles froze. The ground was already frozen hard, but we were still running around barefoot. There were no shoes, so we went from the orphanage across the road to the garden, [and] there we grabbed a radish from the ground, it was clear it had been thrown out, it was either a big radish or a turnip, I don't remember exactly. And we all went up to the guard and asked him to let us cut it and eat it. And the guard at that time was a person, well, a house-painter, a worker who did the repairs at the orphanage. He was there even when the landowner was there; he served the landowner in that house. When he saw that we were eating that frozen radish, he went to the director and asked if he could invite the three of us to his house. The director gave permission for one entire day. There, he fed us with bear meat, with mashed potatoes, and gave us vegetables, carrots and radishes and such, as much as we wanted—our bellies grew fat. One of my comrades even threw up; he overate.

Faifman again discusses his closest friend in the orphanage, Sima. Since he stuttered badly and could not make himself understood, Sima depended on Faifman, despite being the better farm worker.

We lived there until we were 14 years old. Since we were already working age, they sent the oldest of us in the summer to the haymaking at the farm. The grown-ups mowed, and we raked up the hay, into piles; we would carry them here, sweep up there. Lots of people went there. And so from springtime until the haymaking and after the haymaking until the fall, six of us lived there, I had to be with my friend there, since I was a good worker, and he couldn't make it without me anywhere . . . I don't know how Sima lost his parents. At the end, he lived with his uncle. But that uncle was an invalid. I don't recall how long he lived with his uncle. Then they delivered him to the orphanage. And Sima . . . in

the spring, when he plowed and harrowed, they gave him half a liter of milk. They didn't give us any, they gave it to him.

Faifman's memories of working led him to speak of his departure from the orphanage to the only education the system made available to him, technical training at a vocational high school. He recalls making himself a wooden suitcase—a nearly universal artifact of these years for persons living in special settlements, forced labor camps, or orphanages. The city of Luza was just to the south of the Arkhangelsk oblast *(Map 4).*

[W]hen we turned 14, each of us made himself a suitcase in that carpentry shop. They gave us some kind of clothes from the orphanage and took us around the middle of August to a trade school, to learn a trade in town. It was 25 kilometers to the Luza station, so they hitched up a horse, put all the suitcases on the cart, and as for us, we walked the whole 25 kilometers. Well, if someone couldn't make it, was faltering, he sat on the cart . . . Sima and I went together; since we were the same age [and] in the same group, they sent us together to the trade school. We arrived at the school. No one, of course, asked us what we wanted to be, what kind of profession we desired. And the professions there were lathe worker, mechanic-tool maker, and machine tool repairman.

[At this school] I never heard anything from anybody [about being the son of "enemies of the people"]. I don't know if it was in my documents or not. But I never heard from anyone, anywhere, that "you are the son of an enemy of the people." I remember that when I was studying at the school, the guys would point at someone and say, "He's the son of an enemy of the people." But they didn't know about me. Not once. Perhaps someone said something behind my back, but to my face, I never heard it. And they made Sima and me study to be mechanics-tool makers. And our entire group, our entire group was only people from the orphanage. Twenty-four persons—all from the orphanage . . . We studied like normal students with all the [other] students. And in addition to our trade, we also studied Russian language, math, and I think, history. I don't recall.

Next, Faifman explains his attitude toward Stalin as a child, and his growing understanding of the crimes committed by his regime.

No one, no one knew what he was, everyone believed in him. Well, I knew when they took me from the preschool orphanage to the school-age orphanage over two days, that they took me right past Vologda. The attendant, either she knew about Vologda or she knew something else. In short, according to rumors, they said that they had put a lot of innocent people in prison. And that's what I considered my parents, innocent. But why they were putting innocent people in prison, I didn't know anything in particular . . . When I was still in the school-

age orphanage, I tried to find my parents. I wrote an appeal to the attendants. So, a questionnaire came back, asking for my father's first name, patronymic, and last name; Mama's last name, first name, patronymic; [and] the year of my birth. And after all, I didn't know any of that. And the search ended with that . . . I believed that they were [still] alive . . .

I learned their fate when I finished that school and they sent me to work in Krasnoiarsk [Map 1].[7] I worked at a factory in Krasnoiarsk. There, during the Khrushchev Thaw, I sent an inquiry here to Vologda about my parents. So I got the answer, "Your parents died in Kolyma from heart disease. One in 1942, the other in 1943. You can send an inquiry to Vologda, they'll send you answers." They were already rehabilitated then. And this is how they were rehabilitated. One of the women whose husband was in that group, but apparently she married him only here, she didn't arrive with him [from Romania]. So they did not put her in prison. She even said, when my parents were arrested, well, "Give the child to me." And they told her, "And are you sure that you won't wind up there yourself tomorrow?" That woman. And she was living in Kiev during the Khrushchev Thaw. So she sent an application to Vologda from Kiev about the rehabilitation of her husband. At that point, they only rehabilitated persons through applications. And since they had all been arrested in the same case, they rehabilitated all of them together. To rehabilitate them, they sent the file from Vologda [to Kiev], since she lived there. In Kiev, it was already the Kiev Regional Military Tribunal that reviewed the case. They issued the rehabilitation there, in 1957. But I received the documents only in 1962. I received a letter about my parents' rehabilitation, and a month later, a death certificate. They were shot. And I understood that it was all lies. If they had been alive, they would have searched for me, but no one was looking for me. And I had to mourn my parents three times. The first time I mourned them when they were arrested, the second time I mourned them when I received the information that they had died in the camps, and the third time I mourned them when I received the information that they had been shot. Even when they informed me—I wrote an application to the KGB. So that's how I have three death certificates for each of my parents. Probably there's no one in Vologda who had three death certificates at once.

Continuing on the topic of the execution of his parents, Faifman expresses his resentment and sense of being exceptionally persecuted. He was not the only child to lose both parents during the Great Terror of 1937–1938, but the number of similar cases is unknown. A secret document written by the state security chief in June 1938 reported that more than 15,000 children of repressed parents had already been sent to orphanages; the state should be prepared to accept 10,000 more.[8] These figures would not capture those orphans taken in by relatives or living on the streets. Still, Faifman correctly recognizes that he was in a minority. Men were executed and incarcerated at

a higher rate than women; and even mothers sent to the camps as "wives of enemies of the people" typically returned home at the end of their terms.[9] He is also correct in that children with two repressed parents were most likely to wind up as wards of the state and, thus, be channeled into the technical and trade schools at age 14 or 15. Children with one repressed parent were permitted to complete a ten-grade school and enter an institution of higher learning, as Ibragimova's experience shows (chapter 8).

> [I]t's unknown where they were buried. There was a people's commission formed here in Vologda, it exists still. But they didn't do anything about this case. Now, still, there are many rehabilitated persons still alive. I am probably the only rehabilitated person remaining in Vologda. And the rest of the people who call themselves rehabilitated, it was only their fathers who were repressed, and they remained here to live [after their fathers' arrest]. Look, that's the difference between us—they stayed right here to live, with their mama. Receiving love and care, motherly care. When they grew up, when they finished school, anyone who could go further went as far as he wanted. Not like [me]: they kicked me out of the orphanage, whether I wanted to study or not. They also received professions, whatever they chose. Maybe they bore the mark of "enemy of the people," but even so, they could choose for themselves their profession. They lived to their natural death, their parents, and even several of their fathers were alive. They had their parents with them until they died natural deaths. They have someone's grave to visit, to mourn or just to go to their grave. I have none of that. They didn't let me receive an education; they didn't let me choose a profession. And there's no grave, either.

Boris Faifman died in October 2009.

CHAPTER 8

Enumerated Units

Interview with Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova

The interviews were conducted by Jehanne M Gheith in Moscow in May and July 1998.

Translated by Jehanne M Gheith

Illustration 7 Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova (standing) and Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko (seated)

Giuzel Ibragimova (née Galieva) is from an intellectual family of Tatar origin in Kazan (Map 1). She is the daughter of Soviet writer and literary critic, Gumer Belianovich Galiev, who wrote under the pseudonym of Gumer Gali. Gali was the first person to translate and publish Communist texts in the Tatar language.[1]

Gumer Galiev was arrested two times, the first in March 1937. He served ten years in the notorious Noril'sk labor camps (Map 1) and returned to Kazan in 1947, when his daughter was 12. He was rearrested and sent into exile in 1949 and he died there in 1954. Ibragimova's mother, Sufkhari Ruvinatovna Biktogirova, called Kharira, was arrested in August 1937 as a "member of the family of enemies." She spent five years in the Sibirskii Corrective Labor Camps (Siblag), near Mariinsk (Map 1), and returned to Kazan in 1943. In 1937, after both parents were arrested, the young Ibragimova and her older sister Alsu (b. 1929) were sent to a detskii dom *[children's home] in Irbit, in the Sverdlovsk* oblast *(Map 3). Their grandfather had difficulty locating the girls because of an administrative error in their documents. After searching for three years, he found them and brought them back to Kazan. Born in 1934, Ibragimova was two years old when she was sent to the children's home. Because of her age, and the error in her documents, until 1991 she did not know which children's home she had been in. Such mistakes, which occurred frequently, made it difficult for such children to retrace their pasts; Faifman (chapter 7) reported a similar problem.*

Ibragimova's story demonstrates the multiple disruptions and reinventions of the family that the Gulag produced. She had only two years with her father before his first arrest and then only two more ten years later. Between the ages of two and seven, Ibragimova was also without her mother, who was imprisoned. Like many "children of enemies," Ibragimova and her sister Alsu spent large portions of their childhood years without either parent. This interview also reveals that even when parents returned, it proved difficult for family members to come back together after their different, arduous experiences.

Ibragimova told the story of her family's ordeals through reading the related documents and then talking about them. She first read the documents of her parents' arrests; then, her father's posthumous rehabilitation certificates. Her mother received the first of the latter documents in 1955; Ibragimova obtained a reissue of that certificate in 1993 when she sought to establish his full rehabilitation. Ibragimova also read the documents detailing how she and Alsu had been sent to a children's home.

Being a child of enemies often separated people from their own histories and created important gaps in the transmission of knowledge between generations. The documents allowed people to establish what had happened and provided external proof of the events. In Ibragimova's case, they also enabled her to tell the story of her family's fate in a compressed way.

Like Ibragimova, many children of enemies (including Faifman), who did not know their parents, spent years recapturing their personal histories through recovering documents. Many children of enemies were very young at the time of their parents'

arrests. Absent public information about the repressions, they often got information about their parents' and their own pasts primarily through documents related to their parents' arrests, incarcerations, and rehabilitations. The documents also offered a limited opportunity to obtain justice, as rehabilitation certificates provided a proof of innocence. On a more practical level, finding work in the 1950s and receiving access to certain privileges provided to Gulag survivors in the 1990s depended on having these certificates.

Ibragimova had gathered together all the documents before the interview and frequently referred to them. These material objects grounded her memories—sometimes even substituted for them— and provided a trajectory for her recollections. The documents, placed in relation to one another, were what she had left of her parents.

Ibragimova's narrative reveals an ambivalent relationship to the documents that many Soviet citizens shared: these papers are considered both to be incredibly important and to have a limited relationship to inner realities and deeper truths. For Ibragimova, as for many others, the documents both evoked her painful past experience and connected her to the people she loved. As Ibragimova's discussion in the middle of the interview about her father's death certificate shows, though, she was also keenly aware that the documents could be deeply inadequate or "idiotic," as she puts it.

The fate of children of enemies could be complicated in a number of different ways: while many opportunities were closed to them, sometimes the occupations that they could enter are surprising. As Ibragimova explains, although she could not enter the university of her choice, she was able to attend a prestigious institute of higher education and go on to a successful career as a mathematician. She attended the School of Mathematics and Physics, beginning in 1953. In 1957, she married a physicist, Marat Ibragimov, who worked in the closed city of Obninsk, the site of the first atomic electrostation in the USSR.[2] After undergoing a thorough background check, Ibragimova also worked there.

Ibragimova narrates the double prejudice she encountered as a child of enemies and as a Tatar. She discusses this in greater detail than either Ramazanov or Tsivirko (chapters 3, 5). Ibragimova described other life challenges and how she had dealt with them. In the late 1950s, the couple had a son, El'dar, who was born deaf. Ibragimova devoted much of her life to raising him, and takes pride in the fact that he has a degree from the prestigious Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute (MIFI), and that he is married and has a good job. In the former Soviet Union and post-communist Russia, it has been very difficult for people with disabilities to achieve such goals.

Interviews were conducted regularly with Ibragimova over a span of ten years. The excerpts here are taken from the May 1998 interview, unless otherwise specified. There are occasions where Ibragimova elaborated in a second interview (July 1998) on something she had said in the first one, and we mark these instances in the commentary and in the notes. The interviews took place in Ibragimova's Moscow apartment. In 1998, the apartment was cluttered with stuffed animals, which provided an odd contrast to the depth and power of Ibragimova's story. Early in the interview,

she refers to Evgeniia Ginzburg, who wrote a memoir of her 18 years in the Gulag, and to Ginzburg's son, Vasily Aksyonov,[3] a well-known writer who later moved to the United States.

> My name is Ibragimova, Giuzel Gumerovna. And my maiden name is Galieva. Galieva. So. My Papa was Galiev, but since all writers take pseudonyms and that name was too long, he was Gali. Gumer Gali.
>
> My Papa is a writer. A literary critic. He created the first magazine of Soviet literature in Tatar. In Kazan. Where Ginzburg was. My mother knew Evgeniia Ginzburg really well because she worked with her husband, Pavel Aksyonov. And I knew Vasily Aksyonov very well, her son.
>
> They arrested Ginzburg before Mama. They arrested Ginzburg for herself, but my mother was arrested as a "member of the family," after my father was arrested. My father was arrested March 8, 1937. Yes. And my mother was arrested August 10. Five months later.

In response to the interviewer's question as to what the alleged reason was for her father's arrest, Ibragimova read his arrest and rehabilitation certificates. In order to show the flavor of much of Ibragimova's interview, which constituted a dialogue with the documents, we include brief excerpts of the dry legalese of the documents, and examples of the way that Ibragimova talks back to them. The document excerpts appear in quotes below, with her comments interspersed. The language of the documents is standardized and was virtually the same—with slight, but important variations—for all arrest and rehabilitation certificates. Her father was convicted under Article 58:

> "On the basis of this account and in accordance with Articles 319 and 320 of the UPK[4] RSFSR the Military College of the Supreme Court of the Union of the SSR sentenced Galiev, Gumer Belianovich to incarceration in prison for ten years with the confiscation of all his personal property, and any property that belongs to him. Also, he is disenfranchised from his political rights for five years."
>
> About this being disenfranchised of political rights. You know about this, right? They leave you without the right to participate in voting, without the right to work. The period of punishment began on March 10, 1937 but they arrested him on the 8th. "The sentence is definitive and is not subject to appeal. An original document, attested with the appropriate signatures," and so on.
>
> So. [W]hen I read my father's file, [I saw that] he didn't sign anywhere. He didn't confess anywhere. Nowhere. Absolutely nowhere. And here is his death certificate. My father was arrested a second time. He had served his ten years from 1937 [to] 1947. At the end of 1947, he returned from Noril'sk. He returned to Kazan. So. But Kazan was a closed city. There were a lot of military objectives there, so then, in 1949, when the second plot, the Doctors' Plot[5] began, all of those from closed cities who had returned from exile, they were all arrested again. And exiled again. But now they didn't send them to prison but to

a settlement. Into exile. And in 1949 they sent Papa—straight from work they took him to the Kazachinskii *raion* of Krasnoiarsk *krai* (Map 1).

And in 1954 he died there [in exile]—literally several months before he would have been released. He died. They killed him. And they killed him, in general, premeditatedly. He did heavy work with timber *[lesopoval]* but it wasn't that [that killed him]. Since he was a literary figure, a writer, he published this little local paper, and he exposed all the negligent workers. And one was a drunk and a debaucher, he just up and [killed my father after] Papa wrote something about him [in the paper].

In the first interview, Ibragimova did not provide additional information about her father's death. In the second interview, she went into greater detail, beginning with a brief discussion of what it had been like when her father returned to Kazan from the Noril'sk camp, when she was 12.[6]

At that time, of course, I didn't understand anything; well, I was an adolescent, all of that. So now when I think about the relationship between Mama and Papa, they somehow adapted in a new way after ten years of separation. And such a ten years. That is, they somehow built their relations anew. I remember they somehow, someway, talked through their relations and they were good. Well, what is there to say here? How their fate would have turned out [if they had not been arrested]—I don't know. I don't know. All the same, of course, [the Gulag system] destroyed everything so thoroughly. Of course it was hard. And then, already later, after they'd arrested him [the second time], when he was in exile . . . They killed him, they killed him, yes.

They [officials], from the Kazachinskii NKVD, sent Mama a telegram saying, "Your husband is very sick, please come." She left; they gave her time off from work for this. She went there but she didn't find him alive, well . . . he was unconscious, that is, she found him alive, but no longer [conscious]. Yes. And she buried him and brought us everything in order, the letters everything, everything, everything there was. She took his manuscripts. You understand, [she had a feeling of] deep terror. The terror of repetition. The deepest terror. It was subconscious. All the time, she'd say, "Don't keep letters. No material evidence. Don't talk in public places. If there are more than two of you, don't discuss any political themes." It was simply terror. And this terror, by the way, didn't leave her even at the end. So much time had gone by, right? She basically didn't tell us a lot about her life so that we would know less and discuss less. [Gulag survivors] had a very immediate sense of terror and panic. A panicked terror that this might happen again. And cripple our fate.

Papa's [relatives] from the village wrote to him all the time. After all, Mama couldn't go see him since we were in school. How could she, how would she go? She herself had only just been [released]. And [his relatives] kept saying . . . You understand, I don't want to accuse them, I'm afraid to accuse them

> because life was so hard for everyone. No one knew that this was happening. His relatives thought that this was it, he was already there, that he would never return from exile, that it was permanent exile. So they wrote him all the time: "Settle your life, Kharira [Ibragimova's mother] doesn't come visit you, so settle your life." And more in that vein like, "Build everything anew." Like, "Get married both there and here and all of that." And it was true, he had a woman there. And either her former lover, or she had someone else—I don't know the details, he [her other lover] worked there, too, and I think he was jealous. And also, Papa published some paper there. And he sat and wrote a small article; he was the editor of this little local paper, he sat on the stump, he wrote this little article.[7] And [his murderer] partly sawed through a pine tree and it fell on him. You understand here that there was a double crime: that is, his murderer was condemned. But he didn't say that he killed [Papa] because of jealousy. He said that it was because he [her father] was writing a lot about lazy people and Papa was accusing him of being a loafer, that he wasn't fulfilling his quota, and so on. Well, they condemned him, all of that, but it was such a tragedy. And Papa died in 1954, literally several months before he would have been released. So it's not such a romantic story but, you see, all of this is a tragedy of life. That's how it all turned out. And how can you accuse these relatives? They probably also wanted good. If they had said, "Well, just wait a bit, life will change, you'll return to your family," then, well . . . who knows [what might have happened]?

While acknowledging the role her father's family played, Ibragimova manages neither to blame them nor to condone their actions. She understands that they probably meant well, but if they had not encouraged him to develop a second family, then perhaps he would have remained alive. We now turn back to the first interview in May 1998, in which Ibragimova picks up the description of her family's fate after the arrests.[8]

> And Mama returned [from the camps] in 1943. See, here are Mama's documents, too. She was imprisoned in Siberia, in the Mariinskii Gulag, for five years. Her fate was very difficult in that she had graduated from the Financial-Economic Institute, in its time, and also she had married my father at 19. Papa was 28 and she was 19, he was older than she. And even though she graduated from the Institute, no one would give her a job [when she returned from the camps]. Later, all the same she would get work but be fired very often. Until 1956, until her full rehabilitation. They fired her very often. We didn't have anything to eat and all of that.

Ibragimova returns to the story of what happened to her and her sister. Because Alsu was five years older than Giuzel, the two girls were put in different orphanages.

[When Mama was arrested] I was also sick. I was in the hospital. I had very severe meningitis. I was in the Regional Committee's *[obkomskaia]*[9] hospital, since Papa was a member of the Regional Committee of the Party. And this man, Professor Levskii, was also there. And when they came [to take us to children's homes] after Mama and Papa's arrest, they came to take us as children of "enemies of the people," he said "I will not give up the children. They stay with me."

At first he tried to cure me [at the hospital]; later, he took me home and as soon as I began to get a little bit better, all the same, [the authorities] came and took us away. They sent both me and my sister to children's homes. So, I'll show you the documents. I'll show you the documents. We were in the children's homes for three years. And then Grandfather found us. So now I'll show you. How many letters I wrote [later] and nowhere, nowhere were there any documents about this [their whereabouts]. [The officials] didn't tell them [her relatives] that we were in the children's homes. The documents didn't say anywhere that we were in children's homes.

Well, and how could I [remember which children's homes we'd been in]? I was two years old [when we were sent there.] Of course I didn't. Our grandfather asked non-stop for them to tell him where we were, where. (Her voice rises on this last "where.") No one would tell him where we were. And then they enlightened[10] him.

Ibragimova then described her long search for this information: the events happened in the late 1930s and she obtained the details only in the 1990s. First, she read a 1991 document showing that she and Alsu had been sent to a child receiver-distributor [detskii priemnik-raspredelitel'] *of the NKVD.*[11] *The document did not contain any information about where they had been sent.*

And then [later, I went to] the office of the Moscow *Prokurator*, I interrogated them and they told me that from Kazan (Map 1), they sent children to Irbit in the Sverdlovsk *oblast* (Map 3). I wrote to the archive and from there they finally wrote me. You see, see here, the archival document: "The Branch of the State Archive of the Sverdlovsk *oblast*, Irbit, communicates that having examined . . ." (Her voice breaks.) "During the examination of documents from the Irbit Children's Home Number Three the following documents were found: A summary of the actual population of the Irbit Home. Children's Home Number Three, on 25 October 1937. Last name, Guleeva Giuzel, born 1934, from the Kazan Children's Receiving Center of the NKVD." "Guleeva"—they didn't even write it correctly: "Guleeva, Giuzel."

And also, see, here, they wrote, in the accompanying letter from Kazan: "In accordance with the telegram of the NKVD SSR, number 85, 460, three children are being sent to your children's home in the company of an educator,

Kotelnikova, of the Kazan Child Receiver-Distributor. When you have received the enumerated units, I request that you send a corresponding receipt."

That receipt was not sent, which, together with the incorrect spelling of the last name, made it difficult to find the children. As noted in the interview with Faifman (chapter 7), it was common practice for Soviet children's institutions to refer to children as "units." In the second interview with Ibragimova, she describes the pain and insult of being called an "enumerated unit" several times, saying "we were two units. Like a herd." In the first interview, she returned to the topic of how being a child of enemies affected her life and that of her sister.[12] *Ibragimova accurately notes that admission to universities became easier for children of enemies after Stalin's death in March 1953. She applied and was accepted in 1952, entering university just after Stalin's death but before the system had changed.*

In [elementary] school, my sister and I never hid that our parents had been repressed. Whatever will happen, will happen. But somehow I went through all the stages from a Pioneer, all of it, then I entered the Komsomol, I was a member of the regional committee of the Komsomol, I was very, well, invested?—well, how can I say it? We just believed. I was an idealist, a patriot, all of that.

And the first time it hit me [that I was the daughter of an "enemy of the people"] was when I applied to university. Well, when I went to the university to apply, to Kazan University. I was applying to the Chemistry Department. I really loved chemistry. They told me that they could not admit children of "enemies of the people" to the Chemistry Department. Because, they said, "It's like this: we send students in their third year on an internship to chemical factories, to large enterprises, to closed factories. And how could we send you? You, after all, might organize an explosion! And, in general, children of "enemies of the people" [cannot be admitted]." So. [I]f [only] I had known that Stalin would die and that in three years, in two years [I could have been admitted to the Chemistry Department]. I entered in 1953. Well, I could have just waited and not been concerned at all. But at that time [I couldn't be admitted to the Chemistry Department].

All the same, there were many good people along the way. We were standing there crying in the hall, a man came up to us, very handsome, Boris Lukich Latin. He was the Dean of the Physics and Math Department at the University, he embraced us. We told him what was the matter. He said, "Don't cry, children." And they had arrested his brother, an artist. He understood and he said, "Don't cry. Come to be admitted to my department, to Physics and Math. Mathematics is a science outside of politics. You will always need it. You will never get into trouble—it is an indifferent science. Not ideological." And he convinced us to go to Physics and Math. I graduated from there.

And my sister graduated from the medical institute. Mama, too. My sister wrote very well. She had such a literary gift. Apparently from Papa. But Mama

said, "Only over my dead body [will you become a writer]. I will not let you go onto any ideological front." Because, see, various writers in the camps, in prison, they all had to do the hardest labor because they didn't have an applied profession. But for a doctor or an accountant, say, well, their lives were a little easier [in the camps]. My sister didn't want to go [to medical school]; she cried, she had difficulty in anatomy class for two years. But she graduated from the medical institute, she's a good doctor, she's an award-winning doctor of the Russian Federation.[13] Now she's already retired. She lives in Kazan. Mama lived with her since I got married and left.

Ibragimova then turned to her parents' rehabilitation certificates. She read her father's rehabilitation certificate from 1955 and a second one issued in the 1990s. The first one stated that "in the absence of a crime, his case has been discontinued," but did not say anything about a full rehabilitation. The certificate from the 1990s stated that "Galiev, Gumir Belianovich . . . is rehabilitated completely." She compared this to her mother's release document, the end of which reads: "The resolution of the Special Commission of the NKVD SSR from 4 August 1937 in relation to the file of Biktogirova has been rescinded and work on it has been discontinued [prekrashcheno]*."*

It was Mama who worked to get these documents. But this one [pointing to a rehabilitation certificate from the 1990s]—that's already [obtained by] me. A new document because this document [her mother's release certificate] is impersonal. Do you understand? "Discontinued." What does "discontinued" mean? That is, the word "rehabilitated" was not written.[14]

After the law of the Russian Federation, "On Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression," was passed in 1991, Ibragimova received new certificates that did include the word "rehabilitation" for both parents. This meant that she was eligible for the (small) pension and privileges that the law afforded. Ibragimova then discussed the psychological effects of her experience.

You know, psychologically it was very difficult; that is, even yesterday when I was collecting these documents for today, I had to take a sleeping pill, something to calm me down because every remembrance, of course, is very difficult. That is, all of this reminds me so much of how all of this was hard and painful and insulting. And it's insulting that Mama didn't live, at least to see this . . . a breath of freedom, I guess we'd call it. All the time, she lived under such a burden of terror. Right up until her death.

We were afraid there would be repressions again. Because Mama, even dying [in 1990], she said, "Well, take care of the rehabilitation documents: guard them like the apple of your eye. Because any state power—well, everything goes in a circle. Everything can change, we don't know who will come to power.

> We don't know what kind of regime it will be. And you need to make sure you have these documents, see, like a passport. Give [the rehabilitation certificate] to your children and never leave the original in anyone else's hands." I have an endless pile of copies [of these documents], even now.

Even with this healthy respect for the documents, Ibragimova could also see their absurd side. Leafing through the papers, she read her father's death certificate.

> "[H]e was eligible for liberation from exile into the settlement. But on July 6, 1954, Galiev died. Therefore he was not subject to liberation." Imagine, so, they've gone completely nuts, right? "Therefore he was not subject to liberation." Can you believe such an idiotic document? So that's the kind of idiotic things there were, yes.

Then, like Faifman, she compares her fate to that of other children of enemies.

> And meanwhile, everyone has his own fate. There are some, of course, that are easier. They took us to the children's home. That is, they tore us away, they took both parents, both Mama and Papa. And there could be someone, let's say, whose papa was arrested but they stayed with their mama. Well, of course it was hard for them, difficult, but all the same mama was there. Such fates. There are those whose fathers were shot right away. But again, they stayed with their mama.
>
> [But] the most awful consequence, the very biggest tragedy for our country is that the very smartest people died. Scholars: Chaianov, our terrific Vavilov, Timofeev—Resovskii.[15] And what writers died! And as far as scholars go, there's just nothing to say. They destroyed our national intelligentsia so that they could bring us to the lowest common denominator. Well, again, the best people died. So, I think that is the greatest sorrow. Because the worst remain. And perhaps [if we could draw on the intelligence of those scholars who died or emigrated], there wouldn't have been such an unheard of collapse as what we've got now. And, how many of your people emigrate? Do the smartest people [leave]? And how many Russians live in America?

A little later in the interview, she reflects on her adult sense of the long-term effects of being a child of enemies. Where earlier, Ibragimova had said that as a child, she didn't hide the fact that her parents were enemies, here she gives a sense of the profound self-censorship she experienced.

> How did these experiences affect me? First, probably, it taught me to identify people. To be a little more careful. Well, this is probably not even my experience, that's probably my parents' advice. We were little, it's probably the way

Mama brought us up. After she returned [from Siblag] in 1943. [She taught us] not to open up all the way. Not to expose yourself. To know how to talk with whom. So that we were definitely suspicious all our lives. This experience probably made us all not be completely open, that is, not talk openly with everyone. We had a very well-defined, limited circle of friends. And I didn't tell everyone that my parents had been repressed. And now? You probably haven't heard but we sometimes hear [people say], "Well, what about it, Stalin did the right thing." Can you imagine?

There are such people. They are very bitter. Well, I don't even know how to characterize them. They try not to acknowledge our social group [of the repressed]. They say, there are participants in the war, there are those wounded in the war, there are mothers who have many children [all social groups that get some kind of compensation]. There are some other social groups. But [these people say to us]: "Who are you? And what do you want? Who do you think you are? Well, they put you in prison. Well, and it was right to put you in prison—you have to put enemies in prison." That is, we hear such things to this day. It happens, it happens. It's offensive, but it happens. Usually when people say things like that, I say, "I would really like to see you in our skin. I'm very happy that you haven't experienced this. Say 'thank you' for your fate." And what, am I supposed to fight with them? That would be useless.

In the next section, Ibragimova describes one of the contradictions of the Gulag—that children of enemies could end up doing secret work in closed cities. In 1957, she was allowed to follow her husband, who worked as a thermal physicist in Obninsk. Both he and Ibragimova worked at the atomic reactor site there.

I had to go through all these background checks for half a year. We got married in January [1957] and only in August did the documents come, saying that they accepted me there. I worked on the calculations for nuclear reactors, at a closed institute.[16] I was a mathematician. And my husband is a physics professor. He's a thermal physicist. That is, we worked in different sections in the same institute. [I]f it interests you, my troubles didn't end there. So along with everything else, later, when supposedly my life [was] somehow [getting] a little [better], I had a very sad event happen. My child was born and he couldn't hear. He was born without an acoustic nerve. And so there began my . . . second big tragedy. But, nevertheless, we didn't get depressed, we never sent him anywhere [to an institution]. We studied with him ourselves. I went to Moscow every week for 16 years. Obninsk is 100 kilometers from Moscow. I went every week on Thursday; I went to a special educator for the deaf. And then we worked with him ourselves. And he went to a regular school. He graduated from a normal school. And he graduated with high marks. Later, he studied at MIFI.[17] That's the Engineering-Chemical Institute, very prestigious, a closed institution. And

he defended his Candidate's dissertation.[18] We didn't abandon him. So that's my victory. We didn't leave him on the government's neck. That is, he himself worked. It was he who defended [his dissertation].[19] He is also a physicist, [working] on the boundary between physics and mathematics. He defended his dissertation. And now he works as a programmer.

So I had a difficult fate. I worked three shifts. After work I came home and worked with him.

Ibragimova elaborates on her experience in Obninsk.[20]

[The city] was basically built by Beria. It was the first atomic electro-station. [A]t this time, in 1957, there were mostly rehabilitated people there; they were rehabilitated in 1956. But all the same, they conducted a long background check on me; they didn't let me go with my husband for six months. And then—nothing [there was no oversight]. There I worked on secret sites. And I didn't burn anything anywhere. I didn't explode anything! (Laughs.)

She was proud of the fact that her husband had earned his doctorate [doktorskaia] *degree—similar to a Ph.D.—by the age of 37.*[21] *Despite their accomplishments and important work, Ibragimova and her husband faced prejudice because they were Tatars.*

It's not just that at Obninsk there were only two Tatar men. And both of them had their doctorates. Well, the other one was a bit older, but [my husband] defended at age 37. And when they moved him to Moscow he was supposed to be the Deputy Director of Science. But they didn't confirm him because he was a Tatar. They told him that openly. And I had this incident happen, very interesting, but I can tell you.

After a year, after two, probably, of work[ing at Obninsk], when I had already accomplished a particular project, they gave me a prize for good work. And we had this secretary of the head of our division, Vera Valentinovna, such a beautiful woman, of unclear nationality. She worked as the secretary. She didn't have any kind of education, beyond eighth grade. She married a military man, her husband worked there, too. And we had, you know, a suite of rooms, one leading into another into another into another. And suddenly, I heard [Vera Valentinova saying], "But they gave the very biggest prize to that Tatar woman, to that Tatar woman." She didn't know that I was in the next room. At first, I wanted to create a scandal but then I thought, "Oh no, I won't give you that." I listened while she said all that. I was young, not bad looking, thin. I went out and I put my hands on my hips like this and I said, "Yes, Vera Valentinovna, they gave the Tatar woman a big prize. I'm a Tatar woman. I have never hidden that." I said, "I am proud of who I am, that I'm a Tatar woman." I said, "And

> in what way am I worse than you?" I said, "If we're going to speak frankly, my mind is better than yours." I said, "I graduated from the university and you?" I said, "I do not hide the fact that I am a Tatar woman." I said, "But what you are, that's still not clear." That is, she was, I think maybe Jewish, she was hiding something. I said, "Who are you? Tell us. If I call you Russian, will you be insulted? No?" I said, "And why should I be insulted that you said that I'm a Tatar woman? And they gave me the prize not because I'm a Tatar but because I did the work. Therefore, no matter how often you tell me that I'm a Tatar you will not insult me." Everyone opened their mouths wide and said, "Well, Gul'ka [Giuzel], good for you." After this, the conversation was discontinued. But if I had gotten offended, she would have continued to tease me later.

Ibragimova returns to the topic of the repercussions of being a child of enemies. That she switches to the present tense may indicate that her sense of difference is still with her; that she occasionally switches to the third person, calling children of enemies "them," indicates a continuing sense of unease with her own position.

> We had a specific cohort [of children of enemies] in our circle [at the university]. The[se relationships] were different only in our troubles. In our bitter fate. That is, we were poor because our parents were all punished. Either no one would hire them, or they were getting fired. And we were social outcasts. But despite that, we never hung our heads. We were all very proud. We didn't let others treat us as suspects. We didn't let them. And even though, studying at the university, we were badly dressed, we were poorer [than the others]. But we always studied hard; we always wanted to prove that we were not worse [than non-enemies]. We are not worse. We are better. That which was forgiven them might not be forgiven us. And therefore we always had to be a half step better.

When asked whether being a woman had made a difference in her university years, Ibragimova did not respond but, instead, discussed whether gender had significance for women who were in the camps. Ibragimova obliquely refers to the fact that her mother may have been raped in the camps. Like many women, her mother did not directly admit to this. She did say that she had been lost in a card game: in such games, criminals often bet women or objects that belonged to others. When they lost an object, they commonly took it by force from the person it belonged to; when it was a woman, they usually raped her.[22]

> Probably [being a woman] did matter for the women who were themselves repressed who ended up there in the Gulag. So for Mama, for example, it had significance. First, she was pretty. Second, well, she was only 27 when they arrested her. And she had two small children: seven and two years old. Imagine Mama's condition. It saved her that . . . well, first, that she sang very

well. She had a wonderful voice. And she said that while she was in prison she and Bukharina [Larina] were in the *kartser* [punishment cell]. Why? Because they sang. When things were hard for them, they remembered their children and, in order not to die from despair, they began to sing. Mama sang Russian, Tatar, and Ukrainian songs. And Bukharina sang very well. But singing in the cell was not allowed. And [the guards] threw them into the *kartser* all the time. There were also criminals in prison. And Mama was pretty. And the criminals, that is, beat her and lost her at cards. And when the criminals asked her to sing some criminal *[blatnye]*[23] songs, Mama sang them. And they made it known that she was not to be touched. So then, so, you understand . . . That is, each person survived as he could. But many people there, of course, were raped.

Ibragimova does not say more about this; instead, she goes on to read her mother's certificate of release from Siblag, citing Biktogirova's "exemplary work" and allowing her to work as a "free worker." In the first interview, Ibragimova, in fact, said very little about her mother—or her silences. In the second interview, she elaborated, giving a sense of who her mother had been and of their relationship.

So everything was very complicated. But then you know, [the system] here either makes people strong or it breaks you. Or it breaks you.

Well, again, this is about how people are put together—both what genes and what kind of parents [you have]. I had, all the same, parents who were very stable, very strong-willed people. After all, Papa, he was so smart. There was a ten-year age difference between Mama and Papa. Papa was 28, Mama was 19 when they got married. Papa was already the editor of a newspaper, the editor of a journal. Papa often ran both, that is, he had the kind of job where he did it all. And Mama finished, practically, well, *gimnazium* [high school], like that. At first she began at a Muslim school *[madresa]* at the age of six or seven. That was before the revolution. My mama was born in 1908. And so . . . she studied at the mosque. My mama knew the Koran beautifully. She wrote wonderfully in Arabic. So, Mama knew all that. And then after the revolution—Papa, first saw her at the graduation evening [from high school]. Because Papa was friends with the director of the *gimnazium*. My Papa. And when they got married, he said, "Kharira, you need to study." At that time, ladies, of course, didn't study anything. [But he insisted], "You need to study. You need to be not only a wife of the secretary of the *obkom* and of the editor of the newspaper. You need to be a person yourself. You're smart. [Study] so that you will feel yourself to be a person and not just a housewife." He said, "I can support a family; there is someone to help [with the children], so go ahead and study." He convinced Mama to go to the Financial Institute. She graduated from the Financial-Economic Institute and then she worked at the Ministry of Finance and they arrested her from there.

> And this education helped her a great deal in the camps. It meant that she didn't have to do the heaviest outside labor because she could work with numbers, with statistics. She worked as a head accountant in the bread factory there. That was some kind of [help]; she didn't have to do heavy labor.

Later in the second interview, Ibragimova discusses her relationship with her mother.

> She died in 1990. October 23. She talked very little about [her experiences in the camp]. When she returned [from Mariinsk], we were little. And she didn't want to worry us. And later, talking about it was forbidden. It was the times. And she was all the more [reluctant to talk] because they kept firing her from work. She would say, "Wait a bit, wait a bit, the time has not yet come. There's no reason to fill your head with this. These are not such happy stories for you to know." And Father also didn't tell us, he didn't talk [about the camps]. Therefore, we didn't hear very much about all these, well, dark stories. But she later told [me a little], when I was studying at the university, and Alia [Alsu] had already graduated and left [home]. And we [mother and I], somehow, we were already like friends. For the three or four years until I got married and left. [In those years], Mama somehow told me a little.

Then Ibragimova turns from her mother's legacy to her father's.

> I didn't know him at all, not at all. That is, see, he was with us one and a half years. Well, first, even this one and a half years, they gave a lot in the sense that—well, how can I tell you? The basics of life. So, he somehow was able to inspire us to study.

In an interview in October 2008, Ibragimova proudly mentioned that a monument had been put up to her father in Kazan in 2006. A street was named after him, as well. She clearly felt that through this a kind of justice had been done.

PART FOUR

Children of Enemies and Then Arrested

CHAPTER 9

From Privilege to Exile

Interview with Valeriia Mikhailovna Gerlin

The interview was conducted by Cathy Frierson in May 2005 in Moscow.

Translated and introduced by Cathy Frierson

Valeriia Mikhailovna Gerlin was seven years old when her parents were arrested in 1937. She was an only child. Her father, Mikhail Gorb, was a former Socialist Revolutionary who had participated in terrorist acts in the revolutionary period. He joined the Bolshevik cause and rose to be a high-ranking officer in the security police, then called the GUGB, and worked in headquarters at the Lubianka in Moscow. Gerlin refers to the service as the GB, the initials for the Russian terms for state security, as in KGB. Her father was arrested in the Great Terror of 1937–1938. As a wife of an "enemy of the people," Gerlin's mother was arrested and sentenced to eight years of forced labor in exile, in conformity with an order issued in August 1937 on the arrests of wives of "enemies of the people" and the internment of their children in state orphanages.[1] Prior to her parents' arrest, Gerlin lived in a fine apartment opposite the Lubianka, with her own room, which she shared with a nanny. After her parents' arrests, she avoided internment in an orphanage for children of "enemies of the people." A married couple (never named by Gerlin), who had worked with her parents in Kiev in the revolutionary movement before 1917, took her in, along with her nanny. When she left her parents' apartment, young Valeriia Gerlin had to leave behind her pet cat, and learned only years later that the cat had been abandoned.

Gerlin's interview reveals not only the experiences of a child who lost both parents to arrest during the Great Terror, but also her troubles as a Jewish adolescent trying to enter university in an atmosphere of official anti-Semitism in the USSR after the Second World War. This is reminiscent of Ibragimova's position as a Tatar and child of enemies (chapter 8). Gerlin was herself arrested in 1949 during a wave of arrests of young adult "children of enemies of the people" and sentenced to exile. Her mother, who had been freed from the Gulag in 1945 and lived outside Moscow through 1949, joined Gerlin in exile in 1950, where mother and daughter lived together until Gerlin's release in 1954. Gerlin completed higher education and had a successful career teaching literature, which she described as the proudest achievement of her life. Married and widowed, she had one daughter, who emigrated. Living on her own in Moscow in 2005, Gerlin was not alone, for her students and lifelong friends continued to be active participants in her daily life.

> My father was arrested in 1937, on April 29, while my mother was later exiled to Astrakhan along with wives of the more or less highly placed "enemies of the people." And she was in Astrakhan until September 5. On September 5, there was a major deportation; they took all the wives. I was in Moscow at that time. My mother left me with relatives, with her friends, with whom I then remained.

In response to a question about what her parents' work had been, Gerlin answered:

> Oy, it is shameful perhaps to talk about this, but I am not ashamed at all. My father was, he worked in the GB; he was a rather powerful director in the GB. At first in foreign intelligence, then he worked in some other area. It's hard for me to say, I'd only be guessing. At the time of her arrest, my mother wasn't working, but six months earlier she was working in . . . the International Red Cross. That's what they did . . . In Moscow, we lived in a building that you might be able to envision . . . on Lubianka Square, directly opposite the GB . . . At one time, it was the residence of the GB staff. We lived in that very building. Before the arrests, I lived with my father, mother, and the nanny, who had been with me from the day I was born and who remained with me afterwards.

When asked what she remembered of her parents, Gerlin said:

> You know, my parents were good, kind, like all parents on earth. I did not see my father very often. When I saw him, he would tell me all kinds of stories, fairy tales; he would carry me on his shoulders. Like that, but that was very rare. But I was with my mother constantly. And with her also, [I heard] my first fairy tales and first songs. The first theater, the first movie. And incessantly many good conversations. Well, she was an open, very sociable person, and it's obvious that I, no doubt, got that from her.

In response to a question about how old her father had been in 1917, before he began working for the GB, Gerlin responded:

> He was born in 1894. Mother also…At first he was an SR [Socialist Revolutionary], then he became a Left SR. He took part in the assassination attempt on, apparently, I don't know, the ambassador was Mirbach, whom they killed in Moscow.[2] And in Kiev, they killed his representative, Gorn.[3] So, that's how he participated in these assassinations. And then, like many SRs, he opportunely moved over to the Communist Party and, like many Left SRs, opportunely to the GB. Left SRs very often made this kind of about-face. They were used to being, so to speak, in some kind of underground. So, he went precisely to that. And somehow they were set up in some kind of work. So, he went over when he became a Communist; at first he was on staff in the system of soviets. He was the chairman of the soviet of these deputies in Kiev. He was from Zhitomir. He was the chairman of the soviet of these same deputies in Kiev at one time, then he did something of the same sort in Odessa, I don't remember what. And then, he—then it wasn't the NKVD, it seems it was the GPU then—they sent him as a spy to the West. He lived for a rather long time in Latvia. Latvia was independent then. After that, he went to Denmark and to Germany. And Mother was with him. That was before I was born.
>
> *And your mama never worked with your papa?*
>
> No, nope. She was not a Party member, but she was very Soviet, absolutely. She did some kind of work in deciphering codes there in the embassy.
>
> *May I ask, your family was very Soviet. Does that mean that they were not religious believers?*
>
> No, [they were] atheists.
>
> *You never thought about God as a child?*
>
> You know, I had internalized some kind of atheist stuff from the very start. And Mother, I was very small when she told me that she had rejected God when she was six years old. So, therefore I had the same attitude…And in general, understand, there was this. I have had the impression my whole life, well, with the exception of the last 12 years, let's say, that everything turned out badly for me, but not the worst. The best of the worst or almost the best.

In the next section, Gerlin refers to Sergei Kirov, Communist Party chief in Leningrad, who was assassinated in the hallway of Communist Party headquarters in Leningrad on December 1, 1934. Most historians consider this the opening act of the terror that followed.

> We were all very politicized from our earliest childhood years. First, we were interested in and knew about all the important political events that happened. The main political event before my parents' arrest was the Spanish Civil War,

which we read about and listened to on the radio. I collected money in the courtyard for Spanish children who had been brought to the Soviet Union.[4] We constantly read about developments in Spain. The fall of Madrid was taken as a personal tragedy. Well, we were little, but that's the way it was . . . And it was exactly the same, saints alive, my God, of course, with Kirov's murder. I remember the day they brought Kirov's corpse. They brought him from Leningrad. And on that very street at Lubianka Square, that is, I, no doubt with my nanny, I don't remember with whom, with whom I stood. A crowd walked past. They were carrying Kirov's coffin. Kirov's coffin. That I remember. In truth, naturally we did not imagine what would start after that. [This is] a very clear memory. A truly photographic image.

Gerlin then recalled more of her childhood.

I started school after my parents' arrest—when I was living with the people who raised me; they were my parents' closest friends, whom I really loved, especially her. The thing is that there were always a lot of people in my parents' home, but they were, basically, people with whom they had ties through Kiev. And in Kiev, they belonged to some kind of a, well, I can't say, some kind of circle, probably, no, certainly not a society, to a kind of circle, broadly speaking, of revolutionary youth. So they were all from there. They passionately guarded those friendships. So, I developed the view that the most important thing is friends. My father had two brothers and a sister, and his mother. They were all in Moscow. I can't say that I had a poor relationship with them. But for me their friends were much closer [than our relatives were]. Although, in general, I loved my uncles.

So, do you remember how, before your parents' arrest, you understood good and evil? That is, what it meant to be a good or strong person?

Well, understand, I had—it's a complicated question. Apparently, I had very primitive notions of that. I certainly knew that one mustn't lie. And when I once, in a fit, well, really in hysterics, I lied to my mother, I suffered terribly afterwards. She understood that I had lied, there was no doubt about it. But I suffered terribly, because I had really broken some kind of, some kind of important rule. Later, I knew that it was wrong to be greedy. I certainly knew that. And Mother carried out experiments on me, which one shouldn't do with children. In the presence of another child, she would say about my favorite toys, "Give it to him." And I did. I really didn't want to do it, but I did. Like that, but I knew that it was wrong not to give them away, because, well, there was no real reason**,** but because it was bad. So, in addition, in general, I also knew that one must not offend people . . .

When asked, Gerlin noted that her family had had a dacha. *She described it in this way:*

Now it's a region of Moscow, it's called Serebrianyi Bor [Silver Pines]. But then, it was a close suburb of Moscow. You could get there by bus. It was a government *dacha*, not our own *dacha*. And we lived there on the first floor. It was a big *dacha*. Two families lived there . . . So, it seemed to me that we had a very big lot. But, probably, it wasn't so big. It always seemed to be. But, probably, there were four rooms and an enormous terrace.

In talking about what had happened to her parents, Gerlin said:

My father was shot. I remember the arrest. You know, they arrested him at work. And I woke up when they came to do the search. The search took place at home. We did not see Father again. They arrested him there. They came to do the search, and this is not my own memory, but Mother told me that when [they told me that they had taken Father], I said to them, "How can that be? Are we already arresting Communists here?" Like that. Well, I remember my feelings very well—everything was finished. That was the main feeling—everything was simply finished. Nothing would ever be the same again. During the search and generally throughout that day. That was in the morning, in the daytime. That was in the morning, then I got dressed, and Nanny took me out to the street. And we just walked silently along the street . . . Mama wanted to throw herself off the balcony, but she didn't.

She understood everything?

Of course.

Were there arrests on your floor before that?

There were, not on our floor, but in the building. I didn't know that. They simply didn't tell me.

Later, did you think your father expected his arrest or not?

He expected it. He expected it. What I know is that he talked about this, because they were arresting everyone around him. There was no way not to expect it. I knew none of this. After Father's arrest, Mama, along with my aunt and my uncle on my father's side, rented a *dacha*, simply rented a *dacha* in Bykovo [near Moscow]. We moved there. Mother went to the city constantly, trying to find out where Father was, how Father was, and so on. And then, probably after we had been at this *dacha* for three weeks, they sent her to Astrakhan. My aunt went with her. I stayed there with Nanny, and my uncle's family lived there with us, my father's brother, and my favorite cousin, his son, who was the same age as me . . . Understand, I did not even cry when my mother left, because they told me that it was for a total of two weeks. She [my mother] held together, she held together. In general, she also did not cry.

And the nanny? She had a very important role, it seems to me.

Of course. But I also had another very close aunt, my mother's sister, who lived with us there at the *dacha*, and after Mother's arrest, there was a period when I

just loved her to distraction. Later it wasn't so intense. But, at one time, simply to distraction. And she played a very large role. So, well, we simply accompanied Mother to the railroad station there in Bykovo. She left from there, they didn't take me to the Moscow train station, my aunt went to the city and I stayed with her. I remember this very well. I remember that Mama was quiet, sad, and didn't cry. When she didn't come back after two months, I already began to seriously suspect that she would not return. And then, when she was arrested, they told me . . . my aunt told me.

When officials told relatives of those incarcerated in the Gulag that their sentence was "ten years without the right of correspondence," this was a kind of code meaning that the person had been shot. Most people did not know this until much later.

When did you learn your father's fate?

You understand, there was this formulation here then. You probably already know it, yes? Ten years without right of correspondence. So that's what they said . . . My other aunt went around trying to find out about him, his sister. But that's all they said. So, sometime around when I was 14 years old, I understood what that meant. I just understood.

That means that you were uncertain for seven years where your father was and what his fate was.

Yes. Furthermore, I waited for him. I would imagine when I was walking, especially when I was walking to school. I didn't live very close to school, so I had to walk around 20 minutes. And every time I imagined that I would meet Father. That is, I believed this, but at 14, I understood. That this could not happen. But I corresponded with Mother constantly. Well, sometime in 1938 probably, the beginning of 1938, when she wound up in the camps. She wound up in a camp in Mordovia at first, and then she was in Komi (Map 4).[5] I wrote very begrudgingly, terribly begrudgingly, I really hated writing.

Gerlin entered school shortly after her parents' arrest.

They just brought me and delivered me to the school. By the way, they placed me in a school near my parents' friends, because one of their close friends worked there as a teacher. It was pretty far from my building . . . She said that it was a good school, and that she would keep an eye out to make sure that no one touched me, no one picked on me. So, they sent me to that school. I arrived on September 1. I remember feeling frightened and persecuted. Especially the moment on the first day, or maybe not the first day, but the second, when some older girls were walking past me, and one of them said to the other, "Well, what would you expect? Her father is an 'enemy of the people'" . . . They weren't talking about me, but about someone [else] . . . They did not know me, they didn't

see me and generally did not notice me. I was small. So, well there was that phrase . . . I was very stricken. And I need to tell you that I was rather lonely in the first grade. Well, I had two little friends, one remained my friend, but the other one did not return for second grade. I don't know why.

Were there no other children of "enemies of the people"?

In primary school, I don't know. I think that one of my first two friends and still another girl did not return for second grade for this reason. I think so, but I don't know anything . . . We did not talk about this. You know, somehow, in some strange way, they didn't even tell me what I shouldn't talk about, but I knew what I shouldn't talk about. That's what we were like already. You know, moreover, I didn't ask about anything at home. I loved the people who were raising me very much, especially Nadezhda Vasilievna [the woman of the couple]. I never asked about anything. There were times when I really suffered, that was in 1939 or 1940. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.[6] On the way to school, I walked past the German embassy, where a red flag with the swastika hung. And every day, that was traumatic for me, literally every day. As for the people raising me, I don't know what they thought, at least, what he thought; she was very simple, the woman. So she said that, well, this is the way it is, they are doing what they have to do, so it is necessary, and so forth. I never asked any questions. But, after all, these were the Fascists, how could they do this? It was terrible.

Gerlin recalled then that the couple who took her and her nanny in after her parents' arrests had both a cat and a dog. The dog shared the first day of the German invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941, with her.

During the war, when the war began, I had just finished the fourth grade, that is, I was 11 years old. As it happens, I recently recalled this clearly to a friend of ours. I remember the first day of the war very well, and he, this friend, insisted that I tell him about it. I remember that I cried all day long. Why? After all, children were eager for the war, we believed that we would knock their caps off. But as for me, I sensed tragedy from the very start. Literally. So, I remember Molotov's announcement, I remember how people ran up, saying that we were at war.[7] We went, there was only one radio, one speaker, they were black dishes, at the station, and we ran there and listened to his speech. And then I walked in the forest with the dog, and she also cried with me. That I also remember . . . So, at the end of July, the institute where the man raising me worked was evacuated to Kamyshin[8] . . . Later we were evacuated out of there also. Further north, you went there on another rail line, but that was another place. No one imagined that the Nazis would reach the Volga.

Gerlin later learned that their neighbors in Moscow killed their dog after she and her guardians were evacuated.

So we were near the Saratov region and there were lots of Germans there. The Volga Germans. So here is one of my strongest impressions. They sent me to school near the settlement where we lived near Kamyshin, say five kilometers away. There was only a primary school, only a four-grade primary school. So I had to walk to the town, and that was five kilometers. I walked with a friend.

Gerlin then described how she became an eyewitness to the wholesale, forced deportation of all Soviet citizens of German descent from the region. First German pupils disappeared from her school, where they had comprised 75 percent of the student body. Then, Gerlin and her friend walked through the railyard on the way home, and heard the cries and wailing of the Volga Germans locked up in cattle cars there.

And did you understand what had happened?
Of course. I just couldn't understand why. Well, we didn't say anything about what had happened. You understand, we just kept silent. I didn't say anything to anyone, but it left a horrible impression. It was an enormous burden.

Gerlin commented that she was a thoroughly Soviet person.

Absolutely Soviet. Even in childhood, when I was five or six years old, I wrote plays about the Civil War, then I would put on these plays; I was both the director and the chief heroine in these plays. And we fought against the Whites, and so, Soviet power necessarily was victorious. Well, all as it should have been. I was a Young Pioneer. They admitted us to the Pioneers when we were ten years old, which means that was in 1939. [There were no problems] with [my joining] the Pioneers. And there were also no problems when it came time for me to join the Komsomol. They heard me out and admitted me. Well, I was very happy, and I wanted so much to be in the Pioneers. Then I really wanted to join the Komsomol. I put in my application the very day I turned 14. So that's how it all was. And, all the same, there were some things that might have seemed petty, but that stuck in my mind forever. You understand, maybe it was more than anything just the way girls' minds work. Well, maybe boys would have understood things more deeply, but with me, it was all compartmentalized in different parts of my brain (Laughs.)

The next year we left [Kamyshin], in autumn 1942. To Bashkiria,[9] there we were in a regional center, in a big village. So it was something like that. And there, in school, when there was some kind of line-up. A line-up: that's when you have a Pioneer demonstration, everyone gives a speech there, they say that they support everything, everything, and so on. So, the point was that we had to kill all Germans, that Germans were enemies, so, I couldn't contain myself and asked, "And what about Goethe and Schiller?" And for that the director said—I was 13 years old—so the director yelled at me in a horrible voice and said, "Work duty, out of the line." Work duty, well that's being sent to

labor. And they sent me to the railroad station, to the platform, to load coal in open cars . . . They didn't say anything [about for how long]. So women workers worked there, they took one look at me and said, "Go home." And I left . . .

Our evacuation there in Kamyshin lasted a year. There were air strikes there, [the Germans] bombed it, but they didn't bomb it consistently, but apparently just used the bombs left over from the bombing of Stalingrad [August 1942]. Or maybe, after all, they were bombing a road under construction there. But we spent the nights in the steppe; it was summer. I had no terror whatsoever about what was happening above us, what was happening to us. Then we went to Bashkiria, lived there for a year in Bashkiria, and it was there, by the way, that I read *War and Peace* for the first time. (Chuckles.)

In answer to the question of whether it ever seemed to her that protecting her during the war had been a difficult burden for her guardians, Gerlin answered:

No, no such thing. When they started to return evacuees to Moscow, they returned to the institute, and he, the man, left, but she stayed with us, with me and my nanny, because they would have permitted family members to return, but not us.[10] And she stayed with us. That was, of course, a very big sacrifice, I understood that. That was so. Otherwise, in general, I didn't feel like a burden. I need to say that other friends and relatives, my father's sister and friends, helped them materially.

Gerlin explained that her guardians presented her as their own daughter while they were in evacuation. Also, because Gerlin had been in German language groups as a child, her German was excellent.

But there was one major complication for me. I could not call them [her guardians] Mama and Papa. I just couldn't. Apparently, all the institute workers and their families, they apparently knew [we were not related]. So, among them, there were no questions. But around strangers, it was really a problem. And then there was once a really unpleasant incident, of which I have a clear photographic memory. We had a German language teacher [in Bashkiria] at a level I could have also taught, but not study. And the teacher was Jewish; she was a good person, and maybe a good teacher, it was just that I knew so much more than they offered then, that I sat and read books. One day she made me stay after and asked me, "Are you Jewish? Are you hiding that?" I had registered as a Russian. Because, if they were my parents, I had to register as Russian. What could I say? So I said nothing, really, just like a partisan under interrogation. It was terrible. You understand, I, first of all, as I told you, how we felt about nationality. Furthermore, to hide one's nationality was disgraceful and terrible, but in this situation, I could not give them away. And so, I kept silent. But even the memory of that remains shameful. It's just that I needed to explain the situation

to the teacher. I don't know if she believed me or not. I didn't look like a Jewish girl. But, the family name gave it away. So, there was that kind of thing.

When asked whether she stayed in contact with her mother in the camp through letters, Gerlin admitted:

Rarely, I sometimes sent something; alas, that's a sin. I wrote Mama after my aunt in Moscow sent me several reminders. I sent these letters to my aunt, she then sent them to the camp . . . My aunt received [letters from my mother]. Then she sent them to me. Very rarely, maybe once every six months. Like that. I later lost them. I lost all of them. I kept them then, but later [lost them]. [When I received the letters] I felt bad for Mama and that was all. I understood that she was not guilty of anything. I understood that perfectly. She just wrote about what was going on there. She worked as a nurse, she wrote about that. She asked questions, she offered advice. The letters were not very long. Just to let me know she was alive. Nothing else. She was freed after the war. Yes, several months after the war. In September 1945. [After that] she came to Moscow. She was forbidden to live in Moscow. They were freed with the restriction that they could not live in big cities. And she left for Ivanovo, she had an acquaintance there from the same camp. My mother was a nurse. She was, by the way, a nurse during the First World War.

I finished high school, and I was already living with my aunt, you know, near Novodevichii Monastery [in Moscow]. Then I entered the institute, but I need to say that it was a very serious blow when they did not admit me to the university . . .

Students who received the top grade—five—in all their classes in high school earned a gold medal. This was the equivalent to being a straight-A student. Gold medalists were supposed to receive automatic admission to the university or institute of their choice, without going through the usual admission exams.

You know, [the fact that I was not admitted] was not because I was [the daughter of an "enemy of the people"], and that was even worse for me. It had a very serious impact on me . . . I was very, very conscientious. I earned a gold medal. But, moreover, I was conscientious, I was also impudent, and thought that I was better than anyone else on the planet. Really. At one time, I even believed that I was the smartest person in the world. There's nothing worse. Thank God, that passed. (Laughing.) Not very quickly . . . I sent in my documents, I generally could not imagine studying anywhere except Moscow University, I thought there was no place else.

Well, where else would I study? For a time, from 15 to 17 years old, I really wanted to be, I don't know, what I wanted to be. In any event, I wanted to be a

biologist, but changed my mind in time.[11] Well, I was afraid to be a mathematician. I was afraid I wouldn't be better than everyone else, and that was impossible. (Laughing.) Literature never occurred to me, so I entered the History Department. And I submitted my documents to the university, with my gold medal, everything was in order. On the very day they gave us our diplomas, I immediately carried mine over to the university. I then went to visit my uncle, who was living at that time in the Vladimir region. I received a telegram, telling me to come to Moscow immediately. In Moscow, there was a letter saying that I had been denied admission to the university because there were no open places. Just like that.

And I had gone through an interview [at the university]. And I had done well in the interview, too. I received a "5" there. So I rushed to the university, and they told me the same thing. I grabbed those very documents in my teeth, and decided that maybe this was the hand of Providence, indicating that I should enter the Philosophy Department, which I had been afraid to do, because it was such an elite department. I was afraid to apply there. There were openings there. So, I'll enter that department. I took my documents to the Philosophy Department. Their admissions committee was taking a break, on the top floor. It was on Mokhovaia [Street] then, in the old university building. I sat on the steps, a fellow sat down next to me, and he started to ask me what I was waiting for and why.

He said, "Why didn't they admit you?" I told him [it was] because of my parents. For at home, they had convinced me never to tell any kind of lie. For it was a true humiliation to lie. I wrote that my parents had been repressed. He asked to see my documents and said, "No, that's not the only reason," and he pointed to my nationality [Jewish in her passport]. And that was such a blow. The first. Horrible blow. I did not go to that Philosophy Department, I took those documents and went home. And from the university I walked along the embankment, thinking hard about what I should do with them. In general, what I should do. Either drown myself in the Moscow River, or to throw my documents into the river. While I was thinking, I came to the end of the embankment, I turned onto Pirogovka [Street], and turned in my documents at the Pedagogical Institute. Like that. (Laughing.) And with that, my doubts about what to do with myself ceased. So I studied in the History Department of the Pedagogical Institute until I was arrested.

When asked whether her life had been destroyed because she was the child of an "enemy of the people," Gerlin responded:

It wasn't destroyed, but if I had not been a child of an "enemy of the people," they would in all likelihood have admitted me to the university. Because Mama had a close friend, who at one time had been the Soviet ambassador to France,

and at that time was the Minister of Education for the RSFSR.[12] And one of Mama's friends went with me to see him, and he questioned me thoroughly about everything, and said that he could not do anything in this total confluence of factors. If it had been only a question of my nationality, he could have done something.

When asked whether she had been aware of orphanages when she was living in Moscow, Kamyshin, and Bashkiria, Gerlin answered that she had been.

I understood that they were terrible. I knew that I had been lucky; moreover, I had been lucky because I was with my own people. And that my circumstances were good in all aspects, and you know, these were people with tenacious morals that were very similar to mine, and I kept some of them. From precisely that period. No, I knew a lot.

Gerlin then turned to reflections about her values as a teenager and young woman.

You understand, it was my character to be frank and utterly convinced that I had to tell the truth . . . So, at that time, I had [to engage in] a terrible duplicity, which was very difficult for me. The thing was that my closest friend in school and at institute, at a[nother] pedagogical institute—she was also studying pedagogy, but she was at the Moscow [one], the state institute. There were two then. Well, she was so Soviet, so Soviet, along with her sister. She was the daughter—there was this writer in the 1920s, Artem Veselyi—[she was] Zaiara Veselaia. Since her mother had divorced her father, they didn't touch her in the 1930s, the two of them, the three of them remained free. Her older sister, Gaiara, was five years older, and it was with Zaiara that I got to be friends in the tenth grade, completely passionate friends.

So, when Zaiara was in her first year at the institute, well, we were both in the first year, they arrested her mother. The girls lived together, the two of them, they were in unbelievable need. We helped them with whatever we could, but there was nothing really to give them.

My aunt and I barely, barely made ends meet. So, somehow they made it. But that was such a Soviet family. So much so that I can't even find words to describe how Soviet. Therefore, I didn't tell her what was going on with me. I really loved her. I understood that [if I told her], I would lose her forever. So, I had to live with this duplicity with her, and with my friends; well, I sort of divided my friends into two groups. Those I could tell, those I could not. I had close friends at the institute. One of them, a historian, is the closest of friends to this day. But we just did not talk about this. We talked about other things . . . They knew that my parents were in prison. They knew about my parents. That was open, but I simply did not talk, I just did not talk about my political torments, my tendencies, doubts, torments. But I had another friend, Alik Vol'pin,[13] and we

discussed everything. And that's where all my friends came from, all my mathematician friends, our mathematician friends, they all came from Alik, and well, even up to this day, at least one of them is still alive.

Gerlin next described the series of arrests that struck her group of friends in 1949. She also described a male friend who was present at the time her close girlfriends were arrested, who then shunned her. The widespread climate of fear caused the severance of many friendships at that time, as individuals often feared being guilty by association with those tainted by arrests.

Later, when they were releasing case files, after the death of my husband already, I read them. These files. See, these. Here is mine, Zaiara's, and her sister, Gaiara's. Their father thought up their names as if he had plucked them out of the sky. So, they were arrested at the end of April 1949. Before that, there was what happened to Gaiara. Gaiara was completing her degree in history at that time at the university, and they accused her of having demeaned the Russian people, because, in some kind of report, she used the phrase that the backward elements of the Russian population were guilty of pogroms against the Jews. And at first they expelled her from the Komsomol, then from the university. Then they readmitted her to the university when she brought in a copy of Lenin and showed exactly the same phrase she had used without quotation marks. They reinstated her. And they permitted her to defend her senior thesis, and so several months after all this distress, she defended her thesis, and we organized a student party at their apartment on Krivoarbat Alley…

I was the person in charge. I tell you this for a reason. I was totally worn out after cooking all day, so probably around eleven o'clock, I said that I had a terrible headache, which was the truth, [and] that I was leaving, I just couldn't do any more. But there was a fellow there, with whom I had come to the party, who was having such an interesting time that he just looked at me with puppy eyes, he so didn't want to leave to escort me home. I told him, "You don't need to," and left alone. The next morning, one of these sisters' friends called me to tell me that people came and arrested them an hour after I had left. Like that. Everyone who was there sat through the entire search, including this fellow. And he was a student in the Moscow State Institute of International Affairs. He was unbelievably frightened, and the next day, when I was walking along the Arbat in complete despair with the friend who had called me, we ran into him. I threw myself at him, but he acted as if he had not noticed me. Thirty years later, when fate accidentally brought us together, the first question I asked him was precisely about that. He said that there had been nothing of the sort, that he didn't recall it. Well, never mind. After that, he didn't want to see me again. So, that means that they arrested the Veselyi sisters. And that resulted in despair, because you just couldn't find more Communist people on earth.

And then there was another blow. I was having dreams about arrests, about everything on earth. Then Alik Vol'pin defended his dissertation, and they sent him to Kishinev, no, to Chernovtsy[14]…To teach. And a month after he got settled there, they arrested him there. His mama called to tell me about it. So, another arrest. That is, there was already a direct path, leading to the next logical person. I knew that it would happen in the end.

Well, at long last, on August 9, 1949, that is, just a little over a month before my twentieth birthday, they came at night, of course. I was frightened, but there was no longer any surprise…I had not said anything to my aunt [about the possibility of my arrest], and it did not occur to me to say certain things. Understand, there was talk about this among the friends in Alik's circle. There were several such persons, and they discussed it. But with my aunt, I had other things to discuss, and sometimes, deeply spiritual conversations. About other subjects, but not about this. But, I felt it very keenly. Well, so they arrested me. That took me to the central Lubianka. It was, it seems, Saturday, yes. Yes, to the central Lubianka precisely because it was Saturday…You understand why [I was arrested]? After all, they didn't arrest all the children of "enemies of the people." I moved in a notable circle. Notable. That's why. More than likely. Maybe Zaiara had crossed paths with Vol'pin. I think that's why. So they arrested me, and since it was Saturday, and the interrogators had the day off, as it were. That's what we called it then. That meant there were no interrogations, nothing happened. And after they photographed me, and took my fingerprints, they sent me to the "box." Without windows, only a door with a peephole.

I decided that this was forever and began to sob loudly. Very loudly. And on top of it there were petty humiliations, such as that they took my belt, and the garters from my stockings. We didn't have pantyhose then, but stockings attached by elastic garters to a belt. I wore my hair pinned up. They took away the bobby pins; I wasn't used to going around with loose hair. In general, there were many petty humiliations. I began to sob very loudly. It is forbidden to sob there, especially loudly. Someone else might hear you. So, a nurse came in, gave me valerian[15] and made me drink it. And she cut off my very, very long fingernails and left. I continued to sob. Then these guards came. They took me out and led me through the Lubianka, through the Lubianka, through the Lubianka, and delivered me to a cell. They decided that I would be quieter there. In the cell there was—I telephoned her today—also a girl who was three years older than me, who remembers this all perfectly, and I myself remember. They opened the doors, and I saw beds, covered with real home blankets. Women in bright housecoats, and with humane faces. And later they laughed, they said that a girl walked in with her hair hanging all about, without her hair pinned up, sobbing with all her might and totally smiling at the same time. (Laughs.) Like that.

Well, and from then on out it was unbelievably interesting for me. You understand, that if I'm talking about my internal state; then the three months I was

in prison, perhaps, I was in the most exalted state. You understand, this is what it had a lot to do with. I already knew that they had indicted me under Article 7-35.[16] And everyone said that I would get five years' exile. I was in no way guilty before this government. Naturally. But, moreover, I doubted the government's fairness in dealing with citizens. No, I was not guilty of anything. And all those women there were guilty to the same extent that I was. [That is, not at all.] Every single one of them had been indicted under Article 58. They faced camps, and I faced only exile. And that put a limit on my own sufferings over my fate. That is, I was ashamed that I felt bad. And that's why that was perhaps my most exalted state in my life. Look, I did not think about myself, no, sometimes I did so, but I forbade myself to indulge in such thoughts. So, there I had several friends, we established our friendships there, at the Lubianka. But later they took me to the Butyrka Prison, where Olga L'vovna Sliozberg was.[17] And that was terribly important, too . . . And I wound up in a settlement, a regional center called Kazgorodok, with Nadya, in the Kokchetov region (Map 1).[18] There were two of us, so it was bearable. I worked as a typist there. Then Mama came. And my aunt kept writing me from Moscow that I should ask to be transferred to a city, where I could study, and so forth. I understood that I would never do anything. But in order to get her off my back, I wrote and asked, and suddenly I received permission, and they transferred me to Karaganda. And Mama and I left for Karaganda; we went directly to Olga L'vovna.

And later, after a couple of months, I met Iurii Aikhenvald, who had also been sent there.[19] Later, they arrested him, nine months after we had married. They arrested him for a second time. They arrested him the second time in 1951. He had also been exiled, but things were more complicated with him than with me. But we got married in December 1950. In Karaganda. In secret from our mothers, for which Iurii's mama just could not forgive him. That we did it secretly. But we got married and registered the marriage. Because there was a fellow there from Moscow who had been exiled, who had a wife, he had gotten married there, to a free woman; she was from a family of former *kulaks*. But she was free. He was invited to become an informer; he refused. And they exiled him out of Karaganda to a settlement. She went to him. And Iurii and I began to discuss this. But they wouldn't permit us [to be together in that situation]. Let's get married. Because if something happens, we'll also refuse to become informers. So, and if something happened, we could go together. And we registered our marriage. And my mama worked in the regional health center, which was in the same building as the registry office. We registered, and folks went to congratulate Mama . . . Mama had such hysterics, oy! Well, since there was nothing left to hide, we rented a room and moved in together. They arrested him nine months later. They held him for six or seven months in Moscow, trying to get some testimony out of him.

Several months already before that, Alik Vol'pin had been brought to Karaganda from the Kaliningrad psychiatric hospital. We found him by chance.

We visited him and he told us how he had become crazy, that is, not gone crazy, but how he got them to diagnose him as crazy. Iurii took it all in. And he understood that he needed to do just the same, because any insane asylum then was much easier than the camps. It was only in the dissident era that they fought against diagnoses of insanity, but back then [in the early 1950s], it was a salvation. And he played that game very well; no one suspected him. He was given several exams by Serbskii [Institute of Psychiatry].[20] Well, he began by writing, well not writing, but thinking up crazy poems sitting in isolation, and said that he had written them long before in the 1940s, and had never read them to anyone. And the poems really were insane. And, that is, since he had already had several interrogators who had not been able to get anything out of him, nothing, that is, except crazy poetry. And, moreover, he said that he did not consider the current government to be either Soviet or socialist. But that he had not said that to anyone; and it was time to spread that around. And if you think that to yourself, then it's no crime. So, well, they couldn't do anything else. They gladly sent him to the Serbskii Institute, when he read them these crazy poems. And there, all the examinations confirmed that he had schizophrenia. You understand that he had apparently so fully inhabited that persona that he proved simply to be a genius in that regard. And they sent him to the Leningrad psychiatric hospital. And when I was released, I was released via the Beria amnesty of 1953,[21] I went to Leningrad in 1953, the second time in 1954. I was permitted to see him twice. And then in 1953 when I tried to return, I tried to return to Moscow, but I arrived at the time when they had stopped issuing residence permits for Moscow except to those going to live with their immediate relatives. But I had lived with my aunt. They wouldn't give me a permit. So, I went back, spent another year in Karaganda, and worked in a school. Yes, I finished school there. Out there, there was an educational program, a two-year teachers' institute.

Asked about her reaction to the news of Stalin's death, Gerlin said that she had been in Karaganda, and that her reaction had been "simply ecstatic."

Olga L'vovna [Sliozberg] and I drank a silent toast. The toast was called, "So he's croaked." So he's croaked. That's a peasant, simple folk's expression. And of course, we couldn't experience anything but joy. Yes, well, Mama was frightened. What would become of us now? And she cried for three days. But later, when they released the doctor-murderers, I remember that day very well.[22] It was Easter eve, April 4. So, Easter came early. She cried again, because she had been an old fool for crying for three days.

When asked when she and her husband had told their daughter about their grandparents' lives, Gerlin explained:

> You know, she lived with us always. So everything was said openly in front of her and there was no need to tell her. It had all been said already, and that was our conscious decision. I knew Trotsky's granddaughter, Sasha Moblin, she also married another exile, also while they were in exile. And they did things differently. They never told her anything. They did not tell her that they had been in exile, they did not tell her who her great-grandfather was, nothing. And there came a time when she became a promiscuous girl. Well, I believe that it was precisely because of that. She later got her bearings, she got out of it. She had enough brains and genes, whatever she needed to get out. But what had happened, had happened. And I believed then that it was because of that. Look, she was a year younger than my daughter, but, all the same, I deeply believe that a child should know everything about her family, if she lives in a family as a part of it, and therefore, one should tell her everything. She knew about our friends, about our convictions, about our past.

When asked how state repression had influenced her individual development, Gerlin responded:

> If there had been no repression, I would have grown up much later and been much more stupid, and I would have understood less, you understand? That is precisely why I said at the beginning that things were bad for me, but out of that bad came good, better than for others. Well, overall, I believe it is necessary to go through this to become something inside. Well, moreover, I believe that it was useful that I was arrested. I wasn't in exile for long, that's why…

Gerlin then considered the place of the Leninist-Stalinist repressions in the full expanse of Soviet history.

> Without a doubt, it was what beat the people down, made them such bullies, fearing everything on the planet, used to submitting…I believe that it determined absolutely everything…

When asked whether she thought Soviet repression and terror were still having an impact on life in the Russian Federation, Gerlin answered:

> To a certain extent, yes. That is, you understand, in what they destroyed in people. Well, resistance, if it was appropriate, the idea of it was destroyed. And as always, as it is during revolution, so during terror, they destroy the very best. It's a law. You can't do anything about it. They killed the best, they imprisoned the best. So, that is, if it's appropriate to say so, the genetic fund of the country changed. It did not disappear, but it changed.

CHAPTER 10

Bridging Separate Worlds

Interview with Feliks Arkadievich Serebrov

The interview was conducted by Emily D. Johnson in Moscow in December 2006.

Translated by Elizabeth Stine and Katherine R. Jolluck
Introduced by Emily D. Johnson

Feliks Arkadievich Serebrov served four terms in the Soviet forced labor system, two in his youth, for criminal offenses, and two later in life, in connection with his participation in the human rights movement. As a result, he saw more of the Gulag than many survivors and can compare conditions in diverse camp locations and periods.

Born in Moscow in 1930, Serebrov was the son of Arkadii Pavlovich Serebrov, a Bolshevik Party member who played a key role in suppressing the Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921.[1] Arrested in 1938, Arkadii Pavlovich spent ten years in the camps of Kolyma, and only reconnected with his son many years later.

The younger Serebrov received his first sentence at the age of 17, in 1947: ten years for stealing salt (a criminal, rather than political, charge). Held first in the Konotopskaia prison in Ukraine, he was subsequently transferred to the Temnikovskii camp (Temlag) in central Russia, and then the Viatka Corrective Labor Camps (Viatlag) in the Volga region (Map 1). Serebrov was amnestied following Stalin's death in 1953. He was rearrested in 1958, this time for the use of excessive force in self-defense, and like his father, served a sentence in Kolyma. After his release from this

second term in the camps (a year and seven months), Serebrov passed a high school equivalency examination and entered the Moscow Energy Institute. He had to drop out, however, due to ill health, and took a job as an electrician. He became involved in the human rights movement in the early 1970s. One of the founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group's Working Commission for the Investigation of the Use of Psychiatry for Political Aims, he provided other dissidents with tips for surviving camp life that proved invaluable once they found themselves under arrest. He also coached the relatives of political prisoners on what to send in packages.

Serebrov incurred the first of the two sentences that he received for his political activities in 1977: a one-year term on trumped-up charges of forgery (Article 196 of the penal code of the RSFSR), which he spent at hard labor in the Mordovian labor camps, located to the southeast of Moscow. Arrested again in 1981, he was subsequently sentenced under Article 70 (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda) to four years and dispatched to the Perm political camps (Map 1). Worn down during this last term, according to many accounts, Serebrov gave damaging testimony at the trial of Elena Bonner in 1984.[2] *He was released from the camps and sent into internal exile in 1986, and was not allowed to return to Moscow until 1987.*

We include Serebrov's story as an example of someone who was a recognized dissident—unlike the other interviewees in this volume, whose stories are not well known. Serebrov's testimony also gives some sense of what it was like to be arrested both as a criminal and as a political prisoner; the experience of prisoners sentenced under criminal statutes is little documented by first-hand accounts. He provides insights into the behavior of the ordinary criminals and their complicated coexistence with political prisoners.

This interview centers on issues related to prisoner communication and censorship. Although in the memoirs and fiction that they wrote after their release from the camps, Gulag survivors have often depicted themselves as almost totally cut off from the outside world during their confinement, in many instances prisoners were able to communicate with their relations sporadically. Inmates could send letters, which were carefully checked by censors, through the official postal service that existed in most detention sites. We include examples of such letters in this volume (chapter 16). Regulations regarding how frequently they could write and whether or not they could receive packages varied by place and time and were enforced unevenly. As Tsivirko (chapter 5) also explained, sometimes inmates could smuggle out uncensored messages through a free laborer or with the help of a prisoner occupying a position of trust in the camp. Although even in illegal communications, inmates rarely took the risk of describing conditions in the camps completely frankly, they did, in many cases, make it clear that they were hungry and lacked the clothing they needed to protect themselves against the elements. Relatives often responded to inmate mail by sending packages. Parcels containing food and clothing addressed to individual inmates arrived at Gulag outposts, constituting an important secondary line of supply for the chronically under-funded camp system. Tacitly recognized by the Soviet penal authorities

as valuable to efforts to reduce prisoner mortality as early as 1923, private parcels assumed even more importance during the Second World War—with supplies disastrously short everywhere, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs ordered camp officials to encourage prisoners to write home and ask for more packages.[3]

Parcels received through the official camp mail system provided extra calories and goods that prisoners could either use themselves or trade in exchange for lighter work assignments, protection from criminal elements, and special access or privileges. Letters from home offered a different kind of sustenance. They reminded prisoners that another world existed beyond the reach of the camps and helped them to retain a sense of their own humanity and dignity despite the degradation to which they were continually subjected.

In the interview that is excerpted here, Feliks Serebrov provides important testimony concerning both legal and illicit channels of communication between the Gulag and the world outside. Serebrov also regularly references well-known works of fiction and memoirs from the Soviet period. He compares conditions in Stalin's labor camps to the hard life of peasants on a collective farm as described by the writer Fedor Abramov, he cites passages from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as illustrations of key features of Gulag life, and he praises Anna Akhmatova for her moving description of the way in which relatives tried to gather information on the fate of arrested loved ones. As noted in the Introduction, such a literary approach to personal history and memory is not at all unusual among former labor camp inmates who were charged on political grounds. Many survivors—like Serebrov—have already spoken and, in some cases, written about their years in the camp system repeatedly; they are well versed in the canon of Gulag literature and have internalized many of its narrative conventions.

For such individuals, an interview that focuses on a single, narrow issue, such as the rules that governed prisoner correspondence, may result in more authentic sounding personal recollections: interview subjects sometimes recall incidents from the past that they have not thought about in decades and that provide new insight into the operations of the camp system. Questions about the specifics of daily life in the camps can sometimes jar survivors from the well-worn ruts of personal memory and encourage them to provide less carefully aestheticized accounts of incidents from the past. This approach to collecting survivor memories, however, also has one distinct disadvantage: the resulting interviews often seem fragmentary and can be hard to follow. In Serebrov's case, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that he served time in many different camps, both criminal and political, over a period of 40 years. As he talks, Serebrov shifts, through a process of free association, between events that transpired in very different places and periods. We have, for this reason, reordered a few passages of the interview for greater clarity.

At the beginning of this excerpt, Serebrov recalls his imprisonment in Kharkov (Map 2) in 1947. He explains that prisoners employed various means of smuggling letters out of the camp: they tossed notes over fences or attached them to the shipments

of raw materials that the camps produced in the hope that a sympathetic free individual would find and post them.

> In Kharkov there was a big transit prison . . . It's been torn down, it's gone now. It was called *Kholodnaia Gora* [Cold Mountain]. It had enormous cells; they could hold, say, 150 people. They were enormous cells with triple-decker plank bunks. And that whole crowd was sent out to exercise in the prison yard [at once]. So there was a big yard and a big crowd. [People] wrote letters ahead of time and looked for some heavy object, a stone or something, in the exercise yard. They tied the letter to it and threw it over the fence. No matter what the guards said, no matter how they shouted, we tried [to do it] so [that] they didn't see. And from my own personal experience, I know I threw a letter like that over the fence, and it got to my mother. She received that letter, she found out where I was, and later she even came there [to see me]. So those letters, people who were walking by, they understood what those letters were, and they sent them on in the mail. So that was one way [of communicating] that existed.
>
> In the camps, too, the distant camps, where the logging stations were, really in any part of the country, so long as something was being shipped for construction—at that time, after the war, the country had to be set back up, huge quantities of every kind of lumber were needed, and coal was needed, and to get the coal, you have to build mines. Those underground shafts, they were shored up with wooden supports, those supports . . . were loaded into freight cars, and together with those supports in just the same way, [inmates] threw in some of their own letters. And the letters came to the mines, where there were miners working, not prisoners . . . [I]f it got somewhere down in the Donbas,[4] then there were freely hired workers, and as a rule they found those letters and sent them on. The same exact thing happened with any other construction materials: if they were sent out of the camp somewhere, then that was one of the ways [of communicating].
>
> [There is no way to say what percentage of letters made it through.] No, it [was] such a lottery . . . I'm afraid to say even 50-50. I'm afraid a minority, of course. But just the same, people could get word through about themselves, either when they were forbidden to write letters, or when, I'm afraid I could be wrong, but we were [only] allowed, I think, one letter every six months, or one every three months.

From the transit prison, Serebrov was transported to the Kostroma oblast*, a densely forested region located to the northeast of Moscow (Map 1). The canal to which he refers, connecting the Volga and Don rivers, was largely built between 1948 and 1952 by convict labor.[5] Serebrov expresses relief at not being sent to Noril'sk, the center of the Norillag camp system (Map 1). Located above the Arctic Circle, on the permafrost, it was an especially harsh camp. Noting, like Lappo-Danilevskaia (chapter 4), that*

camp personnel were not all equally bad, he discusses the efforts of one commandant to shield the prisoners from mistreatment and to prevent his staff from stealing their rations. More frequently, prisoners recall commandants who were completely unconcerned with their welfare (see chapter 2).

> [F]rom there, from Kharkov, I ended up, if memory serves, in the Kostroma *oblast*. At that time they were building the Volga-Don canal, and there was a special camp that prepared all sorts of lumber for the Volga-Don . . . It was a very interesting camp, completely unlike many others. [T]he boss of the camp was a military officer who had been through the war, after which they sent a lot of them to work in the system [run by] the Ministry of the Interior, namely, to the camps. Some of them were bastards, but there were also people who had seen a lot and understood perfectly [how things stood]. They were, well, just, humane, that is, they were people with human feelings. Of course, there were bastards in among them, too—it varied, but most of them were decent people. And doctors came, too, military doctors who had been in the war and then ended up in the camps.
>
> It was my good fortune that one of those doctors didn't let me go in a detachment to Noril'sk, or else I would have died long ago. And the boss, he was a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet and so he was always going away for all sorts of meetings of the Supreme Soviet and he wasn't around the camp often. When he was gone, it became lawless. As soon as he came back, he punished half those guys, the ones who were doing the illegal things, in some way or other, and so it got unbelievably good in the camp. Here's a fantastic thing that happened. They didn't distribute sugar to us [regularly]. Prisoners were supposed to get, I think, 30 grams of sugar. I can't remember the exact quota now. Anyway these 30 grams, [eventually] they added up to kilos, and that boss managed to distribute all that was supposed to be given, that hadn't been given out in half a year . . . People threw themselves on it and then got extremely sick. Their bodies were already pretty wasted.

Serebrov continues discussing the atmosphere in the camps in the late 1940s, when the prison camp population soared. He notes that administrators often could not keep track of the massive numbers of prisoners passing in and out of the large camps. He also focuses on the influence that common criminals exerted over the politicals. The criminals or thieves "of the law" [vory v zakone]*, to whom he refers, were hardened, professional criminals who observed the unwritten laws of the criminal world. At the top of the inmate hierarchy, they refused to work or collaborate with the authorities. Here, Serebrov also discusses the material hardship that characterized life, both within and outside of the camps in this period. In fact, playing on the term "zone"—the camp territory enclosed by barbed wire—Soviet citizens frequently referred to the labor camps as the "small zone"* [malen'kaia zona]*, and the rest of the USSR as the "large zone"* [bol'shaia zona]*. This usage equated the camps and so-called normal*

life, highlighting the material hardship and the lack of freedom that characterized both realms.

[They were] simply enormous camps, thousands of people were detained, and strict records of who they all were didn't exist . . . [S]ay some detachment arrives, or even [some transit group] where it's easier to get to know people. Well, there are criminals in there; most of the people in transit were detained for little or nothing. The ones who were in there for nothing, they got from six to ten years, but the criminals most likely got 25-year terms. There were murderers and gangsters and what we call "thieves of the law." And they began cozying up to those people who had short terms. There was this other article [of the criminal code], colloquially it was called "knew but didn't talk," for non-denunciation [of "enemies of the people"] . . . It gave, if I'm not mistaken, up to five, or maybe up to two years,[6] I can't quite remember . . .

So then [the criminals] searched out people with those terms and started cozying up to them in every way they could: they gave them food, other things. And they said, "Hey, let's change places." Let's say this one was called Ivanov—the one who was sentenced for non-denunciation, who had the short term; and this one's a hardened criminal, let's call him Sidorov, yeah. And so Sidorov starts cozying up to this Ivanov in all sorts of ways, and he has a whole lot [of henchmen], he has a whole retinue, this Sidorov, and so they go at Ivanov from all sides, saying, "Let's do it. What are you worried about? Let's change places." And they traded last names and case histories. And then the next [time] when they were in a transit group together, when they got to some place, a camp or a prison, it doesn't matter which, they'd call Sidorov, and Ivanov would come forward instead of Sidorov and say, "I'm Sidorov." Like that. So they had to know last name, first name, and patronymic, the article [under which they were sentenced] and the term [of the sentence]—that was all. Nothing else was necessary. And so this guy, the criminal, goes legally free after two years in Ivanov's place, and a while later Sidorov announces, "I was terrorized, I was coerced, I'm not Sidorov at all, I'm Ivanov." What they worked out after that I don't know, I have no idea. But that kind of thing happened.

So in all that disorder, what kind of censorship could you have? Well, strictly superficial. It was impossible. And then, a lot of people simply had no one to write to. It was a hungry time; there was a system of ration cards all over the country, or there had just been. The only thing a prisoner could write about was how bad things were for him: send me at least a rusk, anything, and tobacco. Something to smoke was the most important thing; [tobacco cravings were] the smoker's scourge. And that was it, there wasn't anything else [to say]. Well, what could he write about? That things are bad? Everyone already knows things are bad for him. That things are bad when one's free? Everyone knows it's bad [then], too. The conditions were about the same [everywhere].

Regarding this last observation, Serebrov recalls a conversation he had decades later, with Petr Grigor'evich Grigorenko. A former Red Army major general turned dissident, Grigorenko endured imprisonment in a special psychiatric hospital in the mid-1960s and later in the camps. In 1976, he became a founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Group and then the Ukrainian Helsinki Group.[7] *The writer Fedor Abramov, to whom Serebrov refers, was one of the founders of the Village Prose movement, which wrote about the peasantry in the 1960s.*[8]

> At that time there was this writer, Fedor Abramov; he's dead now. He wrote this trilogy, *Sisters and Brothers*, it was called. There was a family, [it's] the story of a peasant family, the creation of the *kolkhozy*, a *kolkhoz* during the war. When I read it, I was horrified. I said, "Petr Grigor'evich, you know, I've read [the book] and made a comparison, and I can't, I can't understand where it was worse, in this *kolkhoz* village, or in the camp." And I came to the conclusion that it was worse in the village. People will tell me that on my part that's blasphemy, what I'm saying, that the poor prisoners were so badly off, and so I say that they were better off than [people were] in the villages…

Serebrov further discusses the extremely difficult material and political conditions in the USSR following the Second World War. The Gulag experienced tremendous upheavals at this time. Political prisoners, many of whom were former soldiers and partisans, began to fight against the criminals who had long dominated the camps and tormented them. In 1948, the Soviet government created special camps [osobye lagery]*, with very harsh regimes, to house what it considered especially dangerous political prisoners.*[9] *By the early 1950s, inmates began to rebel, particularly in these special camps, engaging in work and hunger strikes, and armed escapes. Serebrov refers to two of these "disturbances": mass hunger strikes in 1951 at Ekibastuz, a labor camp in northeastern Kazakhstan, and the 1953 labor strike at Vorkuta (Map 4). In the latter case, and others that occurred in 1953–1954, the authorities responded with force, killing hundreds, perhaps thousands, of prisoners.*[10]

These rebellions have been attributed to the disappointment of postwar expectations of improvement, the harsh conditions, and, as Serebrov details below, changes in the nature of the prison camp inmates, particularly the politicals. The end of the war saw an increase in arrests, as Stalin targeted new groups that he considered dangerous. The Forest Brothers were partisans in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, who fought the re-imposition of Soviet power in their respective countries after the Red Army defeated the Nazis there. Resistance against Soviet rule in the Baltic republics continued into the mid-1950s.[11] *Soviet authorities met with armed resistance throughout the territories that were retaken or annexed at the conclusion of the Second World War, particularly western Ukraine, which was annexed from the interwar Polish state. The Banderites were the followers of Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera, who led a splinter group of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN-Bandera), and its military wing,*

the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), during the Second World War. They fought the Nazis, local Poles, and then the Soviets—ceasing armed resistance against the latter only in the mid-1950s.[12] *Stalin also regarded Red Army soldiers returning from combat further west with suspicion—particularly if they had fallen prisoner to the Germans; many of them ended up in the Gulag upon their return. Marshal Zhukov, to whom Serebrov refers below, led the Red Army's conquest of Berlin in 1945.*

> [I]t was [at] that time . . . when the disturbances began in all the camps. There were uprisings there. That was how it was, Ekibastuz was one, Vorkuta another, when they shot several thousand people there, when they sent the army in against the prisoners with tanks and planes . . . And then in all the other camps there was something like strikes. [I]t began inside [the camps]. [The politicals] put it together themselves. When they started there, the thieves had already made everyone not just fed up but they, well, they made life so impossible for people, and the majority of the people were common people, what were called *muzhiki* [peasants]. There were the criminals and the *muzhiki,* it was divided like that. There was no life for the *muzhiki*. The peasants once destroyed the landowners, and it was the same here: they took stakes and began to kill those criminals, drive them out and all sorts of things. The administration deliberately supported [the criminals], since [it meant] the administration didn't have to do any work there inside the camp, when the criminals kept everything in their own hands. All the criminals were brigadiers and forced people to work. They would fulfill the leadership's plans, never mind what, mine coal or chop down the trees, or [in] some kind of agricultural camp—the plan goes ahead.
>
> But when these disturbances started, strikes, and then a mass of people arrived, it was after the war, 1946, 1947, 1948, even 1949 . . . when they began driving in crowds of Lithuanians, Estonians, the so-called Forest Brothers. People who for the sake of freedom, for independence (the Germans were already gone), continued to fight with weapons in their hands against Soviet power, which had returned. And there were masses of these people. They were holding out, they formed these groups of co-nationals, they tried to hold out together. Then western Ukraine—the former Banderites came along, those people, too. Then came a bunch of people who were soldiers, who had been through the war and there, well, at least this is the story that went around, when they occupied Germany, Zhukov allowed marauding for one or two days so that each [soldier] could send a parcel home[13] . . . And so the ones who were suddenly caught after those two days, they were arrested and sent to prison. And many people ended up in the camps, for those or other offenses.

In the next section, when Serebrov refers to working "for little crosses," he means the notation in a document that an individual was present at his/her job and worked. On the collective farm, payment was based on the amount of work done and an assessment

of its value, measured in work-day units [trudodni].[14] *Later, he refers to state security agents as "Chekists," using the name from the early post-revolutionary years.*

> I met people who were coming home; they'd been demobilized, they came home, either the Russians or the Germans had burned the village, God knows what. There was no livestock, there wasn't anything, nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and they came. And they had been through [Europe], they'd taken a look at how people lived in Europe, they'd seen that. And they were again being driven into the *kolkhoz*, so that they would really put their lives into work without pay for no known goal—for a little cross on the wall, for a check mark. They worked for little crosses, for workdays. They got weapons and organized gangs and started robbing. There were people like that; I was in [the camps] with people like that, too. Those people, who went through the whole war, looked death in the eye—what was there for them to be afraid of here? They began to rob warehouses, shops, and other places. And then once they'd begun, they got a taste for it. And there was a lot, especially in Ukraine, there was really a lot of banditry. Here in Russia, I didn't hear about that sort of thing happening. Well, a few isolated [episodes]. At the time, they made all sorts of films about that, showing the people what outstanding Chekists we had, how they caught them. But in Ukraine it really happened. In Ukraine that kind of thing went on . . .
>
> [T]here was an agricultural tax on the village population. That means, you live in the village, you're obliged to turn over so many eggs, so much butter, so much meat, so many potatoes, so much of something else, and then they still levied a tax on fruit trees, so for every tree you had to pay money . . . And then the peasants grabbed hatchets and cut down all the cherry and apple orchards in Ukraine. Where were they going to get money? . . . Or sometimes there was just some big load of potatoes [that were supposed to be picked] and if you can't fulfill [the plan for] potatoes, then there's a tax or some other thing. So people protested in all kinds of ways, with weapons in their hands, and they tried to sabotage in some way or another. A lot of people got organized in the camps who, in general, didn't have much fear, they didn't know much fear, they weren't given to fear. And their patience soon wore thin. It wasn't enough that their families and their freedom had been taken away, and everything else: after all that they were also oppressed in the camps. And so, in the camps, they started driving out the criminals, so as to put things in order. Work is work, but so no one would confiscate the fruits of their labor. I mean, if you were getting bread and butter there, then [the criminals] would take the butter, and give you a hunk of bread, and even then they'd cut off a piece of the bread. That happened. And that movement started, all across the north, starting in Arkhangelsk and ending in Kolyma. It got there by degrees, everywhere there were camps.

Serebrov describes the camp he was in at the time—Viatlag, a complex of camps located in the northeast of European Russia (Map 1). Inmates there primarily engaged in felling trees and mining. Viatlag was constructed in an area with large phosphate deposits; a railway was built in the mining region, commencing at Fosforitnaia Station, to transport the material to a factory in Perm. Lagpunkt *is a sub-section of a forced labor camp, set up at a remote work site; the number of Serebrov's subsection shows how large some camps became after the war.*[15]

[I was in a punitive camp] . . . it was called Viatlag. It was the twenty-first *lagpunkt*. I mean the camp, Viatlag itself, was considered an all-union punitive camp. The camp had—well, I can't say exactly, about 50,000, if not more, people. Probably many more. So, how can I describe it for you? There's a railroad which belongs to the Ministry of the Interior. Trains don't go there. It started from the Fosforitnaia station and went off into the depths of the forest.[16] The railroad was built in order to haul out lumber. It goes out for tens of kilometers. All around are bare fields where forest once grew. That forest was cut down. It's gone. Further on there's taiga—they laid the tracks further out. And in that way everything around was turned into a desert, and the camp spread further and further out. The [camp subdivisions] were called *lagpunkt-1, lagpunkt-2, lagpunkt-3*. And I was in the twenty-first. And that one was considered a punitive sector within the punitive camp itself, and that was where, in general, the thieves were kept. And it had a small zone where there was a normal regime, and [one where there was] a strict regime. After a certain time, they moved me from the strict regime to the normal regime.[17]

There were escapes at that time, they were always happening, there were escapes. But it was really the people in despair who ran away. If they caught you running away, they killed you, everyone knew that. And before they killed you, what's more, they beat you savagely. And all those peasants in the area, if they caught a runaway, they got a sack of flour. Among—this is in the literature, I don't remember anymore who wrote it—over there, they say, look, they say, there goes a sack, there goes a sack of flour. The runaway, in other words. And the peasants caught him.

So I had no contact with the local people. Though in the camp [I was in] before that punitive one, on the Volga, where the Volga-Don [Canal] was located, I had a friend; I've forgotten what the boy's name was, they gave him two years for something or other. And there were other prisoners, the ones who were, as they say, "authorized to move about without a convoy." In order to perform certain assigned duties for the camp, they went out by themselves; they might work as a driver, for instance, or something else like that. We had one of those. He was my friend, he was from somewhere in the Vladimir *oblast*. And he used to go into that village, and it was awful in the villages, too. They didn't have anything, not to wear, no food at all. There wasn't anything. But the

> prisoners—some of them had absolutely nothing, but some of them had a few things. At that time I had a little stuff myself. He exchanged those things with the villagers for food, that guy did.

Serebrov returns to the topic of communication with the world beyond the camps during his first imprisonment.

> [I only wrote letters] home, yes, to my mother. And then, there was also the fact that I was set up to do my schoolwork through correspondence courses. [U]ntil that time I hadn't received an education . . . at 14, I started to work, and [so] I was set up with correspondence courses, and assignments arrived for me from there, they sent textbooks. Then, as soon as there was a frisk, that's a search, [the camp officials] took all that away from me, and never gave it back. In that way they prevented me [from studying]. Now they force [prisoners] to study, they just force them, but at that time they took it away all the time.

Serebrov recalls that he wrote letters for an illiterate acquaintance in the camp, a Kazakh, who wanted to correspond with a Russian woman he saw in a magazine. Serebrov wrote the letters for him, in exchange for various kinds of material assistance—illustrating the type of relationship that helped the more educated prisoners, who tended to have a more difficult time, survive the camps. Some of them resorted to undignified, even animal-like behavior in the camps. Scorned by other inmates, and destined to perish, such individuals were called "goners" [dokhodiagi]. *In this regard Serebrov brings up the novel by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn,* One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, about an ordinary day of an ordinary prisoner in the Gulag.*[18] *Serebrov also reflects, without rancor, about what his life might have been like if not for the colossal tragedies wrought by the Stalinist system. Like Faifman (chapter 7), he voices regret at his wasted potential and loss of opportunity he suffered as a result of his imprisonment—a lament applicable to many in Soviet society.*

> He [the Kazakh] did me some favors there. He was the orderly in this big barrack. So it was more comfortable for me to sleep, say, my felt boots got dried promptly. And on top of that he did me some other favors. Later he was able, say, to dig up an extra hunk of bread. It was a very hungry time, terrible. A lot of people went under, I don't know, just like that, especially those people, how to put it, the intelligentsia, the highbrow ones. Well, [for example], there was this professor in the camp, who ate from the rubbish heap. What could you possibly find in the camp rubbish heap? He crawled in, and some others did, too. [He was] a person completely unsuited to that life. And so it was very complicated for them to survive in the camp, and a lot of them died because they couldn't push their way around, sharpen their elbows. I'm not saying you had to get in fights, but you had to have enough willpower to survive and

look for a chance to get yourself a hunk of bread and not have the work kill you. You don't have to look far here, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is a brilliant illustration, in my opinion, of that, of how it was possible to take care of yourself.

So, for some time I wrote letters for this guy—and then suddenly I was taken up and sent off in a transit group. And I was thinking, that poor guy, what's he going to do now? Nobody's going to write any letters like that for him anymore. And back then I really, when I was at school, I worshipped literature, and I wrote very good essays, I got high marks for them. So if my life had turned out differently, maybe I would have turned out to be a good writer. Maybe. But since it turned out differently, in the end nothing's come of me.

Next, the talk turns to the subject of parcels.

[In the first camp I was in] parcels were allowed. In all that time [I got] one parcel, so far as I can remember. I got one only once from my mother. But now, I want to be accurate, once she came to see me, I think, but I don't remember, if it was in the camp, or in prison somewhere, because no one stayed in any one camp long: they sent you around from one camp to another…

When I was in the punitive camp we got a parcel; it came during the summer. The heat was out of this world, the parcel was about a month coming, and there was butter in it. You can imagine what happened to it. It was still in its container, maybe it was even a glass jar, well sealed, but it had turned green. We were so hungry, it was butter…Well, naturally we heated it up, it seemed like we killed the bacteria. There were several of us, we ate that butter with something…with bread, I don't remember with what, but we ate it. Since then, I can smell any kind of spoiled dairy product a *verst*[19] away…That was the only time that I remember getting a parcel.

Serebrov describes how much one's arrest affected family and friends, who did all they could to learn the whereabouts of the prisoner and to send parcels with much-needed goods. Anna Andreevna, whom he mentions here, is the poet Akhmatova, who famously described the agony of the Stalinist years, particularly that felt by relatives of those arrested, in her cycle of poems entitled "Requiem."[20] From that general experience, shared by so many Soviet citizens, he moves to a personal one: accompanying the wife of Valerii Abramkin, when she took packages to her husband who was incarcerated for dissident activities.[21] Like Akhmatova, Serebrov illustrates the understanding and sympathy felt by those "in the know" for individuals touched by political arrests. He also shows the networks that formed to support the dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s, consisting of not only relatives, but also former prisoners, who shared their knowledge of navigating the system of incarceration.

Those who were concerned for their relatives who'd ended up in prison, and had some way to help them, of course they went around and found out. Let's suppose, then, that you've just been arrested and sent to prison. You [the relative] run around to a bunch of places, you get somewhere, and you ask. There's another person as unlucky as you, and they become several people. Then when they've got a little initial information, basic knowledge, they go to a different place, where they find out a little bit more. Anna Andreevna [describes] this all beautifully well, doesn't she? And all this, these people taught each other, they went through this school of knowledge, what to do. Well, I'm straying over a bit into a completely different time period, a later one, that time when they began to imprison the dissidents in earnest, and I was one of the consultants on how to assemble a package properly. It was permitted to send a warm jacket, shoes, boots, so the question was how to fix these things up specially, so they didn't get confiscated in the camp: which hat to send, what [sort of] pockets to make, how to make some sort of secret compartments in it that wouldn't be sniffed out? . . .

And Valerii Abramkin's wife, we went together by the way, he was in the Butyrskaia prison, we brought a parcel, that was how it was . . . Katia Abramkina and some friend of hers and I, we went all three together, we brought a parcel for Valerii. A parcel with non-food items and one with food, which was allowed, I think, once a month. We had big packages, we took a taxi, we got to the Butyrskaia prison. Along the way we were just discussing some[thing]; we got out of the taxi, started walking, went into the Butyrskaia prison. [When you entered] there was this street, a normal house, and a little passage. You go through this little passage and there inside is the courtyard of this house, there's this little corridor, well really this path, and another little house further on. You go in there, and that was the parcel depot for the Butyrka. So it was completely invisible from the street.

We went in there, and there, like in a good station, there was this racket, it was completely full. You have to figure out who's last in line, where to stand. There were two or three windows, maybe four, I can't remember exactly, where they would take those parcels. And so we got in a line, and that was it, 15 minutes or so went by, maybe 20. The entrance door opens and [someone] shouts, "Who just rode with me?" And there we were. Katia suddenly remembered, "I," she says, "left my purse in the taxi with my papers in it." We couldn't turn the parcel in, we needed her passport: they only took [parcels] from relatives. And it turned out that that taxi driver had already driven off and he just happened to see that we had left the purse, and there was money in it and papers. He came back [and] brought it. Even now it makes me feel like bursting into tears. He gave Katia back the money [i.e., the purse]. She opens [the purse] to give him some money, he says, "No, really, you don't need to do that." He says, "This is a sacred place you've come to." "I," he says, "understand everything

perfectly." And he left. I don't know his name, his last name, nothing, but it happened . . . That was probably in 1979.

Masha Pod"iapol'skaia, mentioned below, was the wife of geophysicist, poet, and dissident Grigorii Pod"iapol'skii. He was one of the founders in 1969 of the first human rights group in the USSR—Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR (IG). After Pod"iapol'skii's death in 1976, she continued to work in the human rights movement.[22]

[The guards] sniffed over the parcels like I don't know what. So if there were some kind of cookies, or something, they practically ground them into crumbs . . . Later, they figured out what we were doing and banned anything homemade, [so they banned] Masha Pod"iapol'skaia from making homemade baked goods. There were vitamins in that baked stuff, glucose and something else; it was just super, what was in there. They chose the kinds [of vitamins] that weren't spoiled by the heat of cooking, I don't know how they did that. And later this [system] was discovered, and the baked goods were banned . . .

Sometimes, it's true, people [put] some letters, some notes, in those parcels. I don't know, maybe someone got them, but no one would have mentioned that aloud . . . That was taking a risk, that they would take things away from you. If they, say, found letters in a parcel, they wouldn't give you that parcel, you'd be deprived of parcels for another year or so, and [as it was] they permitted packages [only] halfway through the term. So if you had, say, ten years, for five years you wouldn't have the right to receive a parcel. Later, once every six months, it seems, and up to five kilograms, if I'm not mistaken. Why would you deprive yourself of that?

Discussing the later period, the era of the dissidents, Serebrov brings up the experiences of Vladimir Bukovsky, the writer and human rights activist. Arrested four times, Bukovsky spent much of the 1960s and 1970s incarcerated in Soviet psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and camps, until he was released to the West in a 1976 prisoner exchange.[23] *Serebrov discusses the security officers* [kumov'ia] *in the camp. In charge of security and censorship, they also oversaw the network of informers. As agents of internal affairs (MVD) or state security (KGB), these officers were not subordinate to the regular camp administrators, and had separate headquarters, outside the camp compound.*[24]

[T]he criminals had their own channels [of communication]. Nowadays, they use cell phones and all sorts of things, for a payment, and they have drugs there and all sorts of things. Back then, maybe there weren't drugs, they weren't so widely distributed, no, but there was vodka and other similar things—there were those things. And it was possible to send things to the outside. And that happened,

again at a slightly different time, it was the end of the 1960s to the 1970s, when Bukovsky was in the Vladimir prison. He commanded a lot of authority among the criminals. Through the criminals it was possible to send some news out from there, and it got here. It didn't happen often…He writes about it, I think, in *To Build a Castle*, only I don't know if anything's been told about the criminals. There was this Vasia Bril'iant [Diamond Basil], this criminal who was famous all over the country, who, as they say in prison language, held the prison. He was the most important one among the prisoners there, and the administration had to reckon with him, or an uprising might have taken place, or all sorts of things. So that was him. And so [Bukovsky] managed to find a common language with this Vasia Bril'iant, and with his help it was possible to do some things. Though there was surveillance, because the KGB kept watch on the political prisoners, but the criminals, what use were they to the KGB?

There, inside the prison itself…[censorship] was formally taken care of by operatives, the operative division, or in jargon, the *kumov'ia*. Well, in camp language, *kum*. And in prison language, *kum*—it means the security officer [*operupolnomochennyi*]. They had a whole division, by the way; there was the senior security officer and all that, and then some others, and they also had a war going between themselves. They were lying in wait for each other. Each one wants either to be paid a bonus, or they were waiting for some promotion, so they tried to entice informers away from each other. And so, officially, they took care of censorship. But wherever there were political detainees, naturally, the KGB was there, there was special surveillance, and the eye was the KGB's, of course…

[The *kumov'ia*] have their agents, they burrow in among the prisoners, they recruit there and other things. If they [criminals] catch that agent, well in the older camps, they just killed him. Under Stalin, he was a dead man already. If, God forbid, he began to collaborate, he condemned himself to be killed. He would lie down to sleep at night, and in the morning there'd be a corpse on the boards, and that was it. In those old punitive camps I just got away from them immediately. In that camp not a day went by that one or two people weren't killed.

Moving to his own experiences as a political prisoner, Serebrov mentions the Brezhnev Constitution (1977). Known particularly for proclaiming the supremacy of the Communist Party in the USSR, it also made it easier to prosecute dissidents. Article 39 stipulated that citizens could not "injure the interests of society and the state or the rights of other citizens." Article 59 underscored that "the exercise of rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance by the citizen of his duties," which included promoting the interests of the Soviet state.[25] *Although Serebrov was arrested that same year on a trumped-up criminal charge, he was, in reality, a political prisoner.*

And in 1977, the Brezhnev Constitution was adopted; they locked me up, at first, again, they put me away on criminal charges in a criminal camp. But,

however strange it might seem, in the criminal camp everyone knew that I was a political, even though my conviction was criminal. I didn't look like a criminal. And the criminals maintained a very different relationship with me. Well, not the whole mass of them, but precisely the ones who controlled that camp, who were the leaders…

[They related to me] with a certain amount of respect… [S]ince I was alone in that criminal camp, I represented the face, so to speak, of the dissident community, so I had to behave myself accordingly. In other words, I had to think through each step I took, so that nothing bad happened.

In the following episode, in a Mordovian camp (see Dubravlag, Map 1), Serebrov first visits the elite criminals, before going to speak with the security officer [kum]. *He takes care to assure them that he does not go to the* kum *as an informer, which would have drawn the wrath of the criminals. In this, Serebrov shows the protocol one had to follow to stay alive amongst the criminals. As a political prisoner, he was considered more dangerous to the regime than the common criminals. Therefore, his letters were controlled by the regional KGB, not by the camp security officer, who came from a different bureaucracy. At the end of the anecdote, Serebrov refers to the famous dissident, Andrei Sakharov. A nuclear physicist, Sakharov became a human rights activist and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975. Arrested in 1980, he spent the next six years in internal exile in the city of Gorky, until his release during Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms.*[26]

I stopped getting letters…I go to the operative section to find out why I'm not getting any letters. But the operative section—[the camp] had residential barracks, and the so-called headquarters were separate…Whom do you go to? You go to the *kum*. [First] I go to these people in the barrack, [the criminals] who were running that camp, and I say, "Right now I'm going to the *kum*," I say, so there won't be any questions later. They say, "What are you doing?!" I say, "No, here's a statement," I say, "read it." In the statement I had written some protest about how my letters weren't getting through. Moreover, it was sharply worded and they, the criminals, don't express themselves like that, with those kinds of demands…

And after that I…went to the censor, and the censor said to me—I don't remember, I think our censor there was male—we sent and received our letters through the censor; there was no mailbox there, we gave them to this censor…And I went [to the censor] to clear things up. He says, "I don't have anything to do with this. Go," he says, "to the operative."…So I spoke to that censor and then I went to see the operative. "Listen," I say, "what's going on? Why aren't there any letters [for me]?" "No, no, I'm not to blame here," he says. I say, "Well where did the letters go?" "They've been cut off," I say, "Why am I not receiving any letters? Nor [anyone] from me?" In every letter I was getting, "What's happened to you? Oy-oy-oy! Oy-oy-oy!" "No, the letters don't

get through, I write them, and they don't get through." It's true, I [also] wrote through roundabout channels, but [in those letters] I warned, God save us, that nothing from me would get through.

Then that operative says, "It's not me," he says, "who's to blame, it's not me . . . but," he says, "the KGB supervisor, he's deputy head of the administration of the Mordovian KGB, the central one. He came here twice to the camp, talked with me, he called me out for discussions." And his instruction, he says, [is that] all my letters are to be held. Just to put them aside. Not filter them. And so this operative says to me, "So it isn't me," he says, "understand, won't you, what's going on." He knows who I am, he's read my case and, evidently those KGB guys put him through his paces, [told him] what I [did] and why [I was arrested]. And then, when he finally proved to me that he had nothing to do with it, that it was the KGB, then he says to me, "Listen," he says, "is it true that you," he says, "sat around the same table as Sakharov?" . . . It was so interesting for them, and they didn't know anything. I say, "yes," and I started telling him. Enlightening that operative worker, that *kum*. He was an intelligence officer inside the camp, in point of fact, and he really didn't have any conception [of what was going on]. Who the dissidents were was such classified information that they didn't know anything. And there he found out so much from me. Of course, he was so satisfied.

Next Serebrov talks about the year 1981 in the Perm camps (Map 1), and a fellow political prisoner, Mikhail (Misha) Kazachkov. A physicist arrested in 1975 for applying for permission to leave the USSR, and enlisting the aid of the American vice-consul, Kazachkov spent nearly 15 years in the camps, seven of them on hunger strikes.[27]

[F]or three months Misha couldn't write a letter; they confiscated his letters. There were [they claimed] cryptic references [in the letters], some kind of secret references. And Misha said that if they didn't let [his letters] through, "I declare a hunger strike." He declared a hunger strike, they put him in isolation, and the camp, well, the political part, at least, we organized a kind of hunger strike. Later I read somewhere that it turns out I wasn't the first one to be so smart, that before me there were people who thought up a hunger strike that wasn't general, but where today I don't eat, tomorrow you don't eat, and so on, so that the hunger strike never breaks off entirely. [With this system] I don't do myself any great harm. When we were on a strike though, we honestly went without food; we really did go hungry.

And so you write a statement to the *prokurator*, that I'm declaring a hunger strike in connection with what was done to Kazachkov. Though by law we had no right to intercede on others' behalf. We weren't allowed to write a public statement, it was invalid, but you could write on your own behalf. But I [wrote] about

the fact that the censor was acting incorrectly. I didn't put Misha Kazachkov [in it]. And it ended up that then they locked me up, and that was it. But no, that time they let Misha out [of the punishment cell].

Here, Serebrov reflects on the different euphemisms for the camp punishment cell during the Soviet period: cooler [kartser]*, penalty isolator* [ShIZO]*, BUR—Strict Regime Barracks* [barak usilennogo rezhima]*, and the PKT—cell-type facilities* [pomeshchenie kamernogo tipa]. *As time passed, the Soviet regime adopted more bureaucratic language, attempting to cloak the true nature of the site; such official language served to mask and even to make absurd the full horror of the Gulag. The closed prison* [zakrytaia tiur'ma] *to which he refers is Chistopol', located in the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Republic. The KGB sent many political prisoners to this facility, where conditions were very strict.*

Well, then what was it, a BUR, no not a BUR—that was ages ago, a Strict Regime Barrack, yes, but now it's a—what is it, Lord, a PKT, cell-type facility.[28] You had to say it in that distorted way: prison is cell-type accommodation. Accommodation consisting of cells, well, what gibberish. And after that Misha declared a hunger strike and went hungry for, I think, half a year. In other words, he went hungry many times. For half a year we all acted as his reinforcements, and after that they sent him to a closed prison, and from that prison he was released.

[T]here was a woman censor there, but I considered her just a censor for appearances. She looked over all our letters, read them, but over her there [was] some other all-seeing eye, that is, of the KGB, which [watched], of course not everyone, but certain selected people. Though it was a political detainment zone, they just knew who there was capable of what. That's clear. And so Misha's letters, despite the fact that he has, if I remember correctly, really indecipherable handwriting, they really picked through them carefully. Well, a letter about the size of a school exercise book, that's twelve pages of graph paper, covered in tiny handwriting. I wrote letters of about the same length. There was no limit to the length of letters…

Misha, his letters, he had this girlfriend…in fact, they were supposed to get married, and they locked him up…It didn't work out for him. She wrote to him, and then…I don't remember the rest of the story, and his whole life was ruined just because those censors didn't let his letters through. His mother didn't get [any] either, for years on end. Once a year a letter would go through, and again nothing. But I understand how family members felt, when there's no news of you, what's happened to you. Well, someone will mention in some way that you're still alive. That's why he declared those hunger strikes; on several occasions, he went to sort out relations with the censor, with that woman.

In the following discussion of his relationship to that censor, Serebrov refers to Andrei Siniavskii, a Russian writer arrested in 1965. He and Iulii Daniel were convicted for

anti-Soviet activity in a show trial in 1966. Their case represented a critical turning point in post-Stalinist developments partly because it prompted an active and public protest by Soviet intellectuals, which was to characterize the dissident movement till the end of the USSR.[29]

> But with [that censor] I had [a different relationship]…So, the censor summons me, or some kind of messenger comes, or, somehow [I go to her]. "Here's your letter. What is this?" She doesn't destroy my letter, she asks. And I patiently explain to her. If she doesn't understand, I give a preamble about the letter. We have a discussion, like we're talking now, I'd chat with her. It's all about how literate they are. Judging from those conversations I had with her, I can say that she probably finished secondary school, but not brilliantly, she read nothing; and she really liked reading our letters, because we were all masters, of course, at writing letters, we were writing works of literature. Not just Siniavskii. They could have been published. Unfortunately, my letters have all been lost, the ones I wrote [to send] here, they weren't kept.

Here, he mentions the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel All the King's Men*, by Robert Penn Warren. Published in the United States in 1946, it came out in serialized form in a Soviet journal some 25 years later. Discussing the novel in their letters, Serebrov and his wife were able to cloak more personal communications without alerting the censor. As we saw with Tsivirko (chapter 5), prisoners typically used Aesopian language to fool the censor by concealing the real intent of their messages with seemingly innocuous statements.*

> So I write to my wife that at the moment I'm reading the novel *All The King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren, and in the letters I retell [the story], and she and I start talking about that novel. And the letters are full of this, and of course it's elementary to put something else in among it. That is, first I need to make the censor understand what's being talked about, get [her] used to it, and then when she doesn't understand, she calls me in and asks. She says, "You write such interesting letters!" She's so interested, she simply read our letters like artistic literature…She didn't immediately confiscate my letters [as she did with other inmates], she'd call me in and ask, "And what is this here [in your letter]?" I had to tell her what it was. She doesn't know elementary things, and if you use some kind of idioms in any language, she doesn't understand, so I had to teach her the culture of language, of literature; she doesn't know. If I use some kind of proverbial expression, she doesn't know it…So that she doesn't take away my letter, I explain to her patiently and very obligingly that there isn't anything hidden behind this, it's in some fable by Krylov, it's from there. "Ah!" she says with [apparent] understanding, and she doesn't poke her nose into it again. Wherever she doesn't understand, she can say that there's a veiled reference, and that's it, the letter's lost.

Serebrov next recalls his treatment when he was about to be sent into internal exile, after finishing his final term in the camps in 1986.

> So before they exiled [you], they had this process—it's called "leading out"—they led [you] out of the zone to the hospital, the central hospital for three zones of the camp . . . And before they sent you off they led you out to the hospital and force-fed you. They prescribed some kind of diet so you wouldn't come out so emaciated. I have pictures from my own case where I'm like that: completely, well, frightening. But there they fed [you] up, and then they're not ashamed to show you anywhere, if people suddenly come from the television news to the place where you're exiled, who knows who it might be, and if some [foreign] correspondents come. And they were afraid. It's strange, [the authorities] were afraid of things from all sides.

Throughout the interview Serebrov says very little about his family. When asked, toward the end of the interview, he talks briefly about his father, who was also repressed. Since the younger Serebrov was just a small child when his father was arrested, he essentially grew up without a father—an experience shared by millions in the Stalin period. The ten years the father spent in the camps, coupled with the multiple imprisonments of the son, made them strangers to one another. Serebrov found his father in 1963—25 years after the man's arrest, and two years before his death. The elder Serebrov, despite his own torture and imprisonment by the Stalinist regime, retained his faith in Communism. This was not uncommon. For a life-long Communist, who contributed to the founding of the Soviet state, such continued allegiance may have been the only way his life could continue to have meaning. This mentality probably formed another barrier to the younger Serebrov's knowing his father. Such rifts and disruptions in families were common: it is one of the reasons the Gulag has had long-lasting effects in Soviet and post-Soviet society.

> My father was a pretty big Communist; he spent ten years in Kolyma himself, stayed alive by some miracle, and then was rehabilitated, as I remember, and recognized as a pensioner with all-union status, who got some kind of huge compensation, a place to live, and some other things. But I only looked him up very late . . .
>
> What's more, after all that, all those camps, he was still teaching Marxism-Leninism. He was that kind of true believer. And he was one of the first; he was a Party member from 1918, if not even earlier, when he was still really young. He participated in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt, the so-called mutiny; I think he was one of the first to get a combat medal there, it was the Red Banner . . . He studied in the most ideologized department [at the Institute of Red Professors][30]—the Filfak, the Philosophy [Department] . . . [A]fter his second year, they sent him (this was in the 1930s) to open up *kolkhozy*. And

they dispatched him; he was the head of the political division of a machine-tractor station.[31] That kind of thing never happened at all later. [That position] was higher up than the secretary of the *raikom*,[32] [with] that kind of responsibility. And then, just for good measure, they put him in prison. When they were interrogating him, they put his hand in the door; on one of his hands he was missing a bone, several bones probably. He stayed alive, but he spent ten years in Kolyma. He served out his term in 1948 and by some miracle he was able to leave there, although in those years it was impossible to get out. He managed to get out. He wasn't a dumb guy, evidently. I just don't know him at all. He was sent to prison when I wasn't even five. What's more, I was living with my mother in Moscow, and he stayed there. When I found him, he was in a state of profound depression.

PART FIVE

Documents: Survivor Accounts and Letters

CHAPTER 11

I So Desired Death

Czesława Greczyn[1]

Translated by Katherine R. Jolluck

A Pole, Czesława Greczyn was 32 years old, living in the city of Stanisławów, when the Red Army invaded eastern Poland in September 1939.[2] As the wife of an officer of the Polish army, Greczyn herself was considered a "dangerous element" by the Soviet authorities, and was "administratively exiled" from her home, along with her 20-month-old son, on April 13, 1940. On that night, tens of thousands of Polish citizens were taken from their homes and loaded onto trains for deportation eastward. This operation, one of four that sought to remove "unreliable" or "dangerous" persons from the Polish territory annexed by the USSR in 1939, affected mainly women and children—families of individuals who had previously been arrested or taken prisoner of war, who fled abroad, or went into hiding.[3] Captain Greczyn, her husband, had apparently fled soon after the invasion. Employing the notion of "collective responsibility," the Soviet government decided to deport the family of this man. Like the other civilian deportees, Czesława Greczyn was not charged with any crime or subjected to a trial; her relationship to someone considered an enemy of the Soviet Union was enough to condemn her to banishment to the harsh environment of an outlying region of the USSR. Her story—like those of Balashina, Ianke, Ramazanov, and Lappo-Danilevskaia (chapters 1–4)—provides an example of life not in the camps but in the "prison without bars."

Greczyn describes the emotions accompanying her seizure and transport deep into the USSR. She and her son Leszek ended up in the Kustanai oblast *of*

Kazakhstan (Map 1), joining millions of other victims of involuntary resettlement, from all parts of the Soviet Union. Yet this was not just a Russian, or even Soviet, phenomenon. Non-Russians from countries invaded and annexed, in whole or in part, by the USSR also found themselves caught up in the Stalinist system of terror. Thus, the Soviet invasions of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Romania all resulted in the arrest and deportation of outsiders, of which Greczyn represents just one example. For such individuals, unfamiliar with the Soviet system and the ubiquity of Stalinist repression, the sudden and completely unexpected inclusion in the world of the Gulag was especially traumatic. Greczyn uses Polonized Russian words (left in quotation marks and translated below) to denote phenomena she considers uniquely Soviet and, typically, abhorrent. By this use of language, she distances herself from that world.

She was able to write about her experiences after being evacuated from the USSR by the Polish army, a consequence of the Sikorski-Maiskii Pact of July 30, 1941. This treaty, between the Soviet Union and the Polish Government-in-Exile, announced an amnesty for Polish citizens detained in the USSR, and called for the formation of a Polish army from among the ex-prisoners there to fight the Nazis, who had invaded the USSR in June. Known as the Anders Army (after its commander, General Władysław Anders), it was subsequently evacuated to Iran, and managed to take some civilians with it, including Greczyn. Along with tens of thousands of others, she wrote her account at the request of Polish authorities in Iran, who sought to document the fate of Polish citizens at the hands of the Soviet regime and to locate those individuals, particularly army officers, still missing.[4]

While Greczyn recounts some facts of her existence in Soviet exile, including living conditions, relations with locals and other deportees, and treatment by the NKVD, she is preoccupied above all with the fate of her family. Nearly half of the ten legal-sized pages she wrote about her time in Soviet exile—a period of more than two years—is devoted to the sickness and death of her only child, which unfolded over several weeks. The format of her reminiscences—an open-ended report on her experiences since the Soviet invasion of Poland—allows her to focus on what was most significant and traumatic to her. Other travails and episodes are completely overshadowed by the loss of her son. The fact that she wrote her statement only months after his death endows her document with both detail and rawness often lost when events are recounted years later. Her language reflects this: she writes breathlessly, frequently using only dashes or ellipses for punctuation, pouring out her story and emotions as they overwhelm her. Her account reads not only as an indictment of the Soviet system, but also as an emotional release.

Greczyn's situation bears comparison with that of Lappo-Danilevskaia (chapter 4): both were young mothers of sons of roughly the same age, and both were exiled to Kazakhstan. Yet their experiences were very different.

The NKVD came for Greczyn, as it did for most subjects of repression, at night. She begins her account as follows:

> On the 13th of April 1940, at 2 A.M., seized by a strange feeling, I woke up and heard loud steps outside the house, then the ring of the doorbell . . . I knew what it meant. There were two of them, officers of the NKVD, and a soldier with a rifle . . .
>
> [T]hen began the tragic farewell to my family—at the moment when I was saying goodbye to my mother—I was already completely dressed—several of them came in and brutally tore me from my mother and ordered me to take my child, the pleas of my sister, who told them that he was her son, didn't help at all, one of them threatened her with a revolver and gave me two minutes to dress the child—of course, I took nothing with me, neither clothing nor food. At last, holding my child by the hand, and amidst the cries and screams of my family, I went out under guard.

"Administratively exiled," Greczyn suffered one of the "lighter" Soviet sentences. She was not incarcerated in a prison or a labor camp. And unlike "special settlers," who were also forcibly deported, she did not live under NKVD supervision, nor was she forced to work or to live in designated quarters. Still, she was forbidden to leave the village to which she was taken for a period of ten years, and was subjected to NKVD interrogations. Additionally, though it tore her from her home and livelihood, the Soviet government did not provide her with a place to live, a job, or the basic necessities of life, leaving her to fend for herself among people impoverished and, for the most part, hostile. Deposited on the steppe, Greczyn was forced to find a place to live among the local Kazakhs and Russians. She survived mainly from packages and money sent from relatives back at home, a practice that continued until the Nazi-Soviet war broke out in mid-1941. Besides the poverty, filth, and lack of hygiene in Kazakhstan, Greczyn was disturbed by the propaganda efforts of the local NKVD. These officials repeatedly told the deported Poles they would never go home, and advised her to marry a Soviet man, as she would never see her husband again. They also sought to reeducate her young son, to turn him into a loyal Soviet subject—a process they both resisted.

> [T]hey insisted that Poland had fallen forever—that's what the Party members, Komsomol members, and the young people in general announced. They often told my little one that he would go to Soviet schools and become a Communist—then the 3-year-old child answered, "I am Leszek Greczyn, a little Pole." Others tried to make us believe that we had come there voluntarily, to get to know this "paradise," etc. Among them, however, were people like my landlady . . . who was hostile to Communism and fervently desired a revolution and change of regime. These were mainly old people who remembered the old days.

Above all, Greczyn was horrified at the mortality rate among the deportees, particularly the children. The poverty, harsh weather, difficult living conditions, and lack of

medical care led to a high death rate among the deportees, especially after the amnesty. The rest of her document details the devastating loss of her own child.

> There was a tremendous death rate also among children (diphtheria, measles, scarlet fever, dysentery). Mothers were losing several children each. And the finger of God touched me as well, and I lost my only child. I lived through a complete Gehenna—I'm surprised that I'm still alive. But I'll start from the beginning: three months after the announcement of the amnesty, that is, in November 1941, we decided to make our way south. I struggled for a long time over whether we should go, as I trembled with fear about my child, but it was impossible to stay, I had nothing to live on. We left at night by car to Kustanai . . . The rest of the way we went by train—we got to Novo-Troitska, where we waited 3 days in horrible conditions, in a waiting room packed with crowds of people. At last we moved further by transport. In the train car it was cold, there was ice on the walls—there was in fact a little stove, but to burn something in it we had to steal fence boards and snow barriers along the way. We lived mainly on bread that we brought with us. From time to time we obtained some kind of warm dish, and even rolls for the children. Having frozen in Siberia, we dreamed of sun, warmth, but even that came to nothing. On top of all that, from the "*lagierniki*" [camp inmates][5] travelling with us we got lice—we picked them off by the dozens. After a week my child fell ill, developed a high temperature. My heart broke, looking at this little one severely ill, swarming with lice (I couldn't take his clothes off because of the cold), I was helpless. He begged me, he wanted to go back to "*Babushka's*" [grandmother's] (that's how he called our last landlady). I trembled seeing how, in the train cars, they took lifeless children from their mothers.

Though the Poles were supposedly free after the amnesty of July 1941, Soviet authorities sought to constrain their movement. Though Greczyn, after much difficulty, was able to leave her place of exile, she encountered a common problem: Soviet officials routinely diverted trains of amnestied Poles in search of the Anders Army, routing them to collective farms in Kirghizia and Uzbekistan for continued forced labor. Finally, Greczyn ended up near the Kirghiz capital of Frunze (Map 1).

> Here I managed right away to get to a doctor, who diagnosed diphtheria and ordered us to get to the hospital in Frunze immediately. Exhausted from the travels, weak, I barely dragged myself to the hospital—after an exam of my child, they immediately cut his golden hair—I was overcome by bad feelings but I concealed them. They didn't let me in there—only mothers with infants were allowed to be in the hospital. I saw him only through the window. He begged, "Mama, come here." In spite of being racked by pain, I was so happy that he was lying in a clean, white bed, that he was warm—I left, I had to return

to the train car. Unfortunately, there was no one left there—my acquaintances, along with my things, went to a "*kolkhoz*"—I had to search for them. Luckily, I met Mrs. Tresler, who likewise left her daughter at the hospital, sick with scarlet fever—so the two of us felt safer. We went in search of our people and after 2 days we found them at the "*kolkhoz*" Palapta. After a week Mrs. Tresler and I managed to get to Frunze. My little one felt better, he was sitting up, he had an appetite. With my last money I bought milk, butter, an apple, sweets (paying an enormous sum), and watched with joy as he ate them. Only he was very sad, he looked at me, almost with a look of reproach, and asked me to wrap him up in a fur coat and take him to the train car. And what was I to do, God alone knows. The doctor told me to come back to get the child in a week . . . When I came back at the appointed time, I learned that they had moved him to another building, where he came down with the measles and pneumonia (I think that he was infected in the hospital). And again I saw him only through the window—he was lying there emaciated, weak, didn't want to eat, didn't even look at me, just moaned in a hoarse voice, "Mama." The doctor comforted me, saying that he'd get through the illness as he had a strong constitution. Of course I didn't return to the "*kolkhoz*." The money was gone, so I sold my watch for 300 rubles. It's hard to describe how I lived, alone, among enemies in that big city (my companion had already taken her daughter from the hospital), with that terrible uncertainty and worry about the life of the being that was the closest to me. I lived like a wild person, dirty, teeming with lice, my whole body blood-stained from scratching (even now, I have the scars), in rags, my coat had fallen apart completely, my snow boots as well—day and night I had wet feet, I slept wherever I could, either on the stairs of the so-called "*Gostinitsa*" [hotel] (where they accepted people who had proof that they had been to the "*bania*"—real culture!—without that proof, or the so-called "*spravka*" [certificate] one couldn't travel by train), kicked by passersby, or at the bazaar under a meat counter, and then again under the guard of the police (at the station). At last I managed to get a corner in a house near the hospital. I slept on a trunk. Many times there were entire days when I had nothing in my mouth, there were moments when out of hunger I wanted to steal bread. When after standing in "*ocheredi*" [lines] for hours, pushed and shoved, I made it into the cafeteria, I had again to wait, either for a plate or for a spoon—the result was that I left hungry—it was hard to eat one's fill on a couple pieces of goulash. I lived this way for 3 weeks, but would happily have suffered even longer, if my little one had lived, but things turned out differently. In the meanwhile they moved him for the second time to another building—I saw how they carried him—and again I heard only the hoarse little voice: "Mama." In the new building they put him on the [second] floor so I couldn't even see him through the window. I could feel from the words of the doctor that his condition had worsened, he now had a runny ear infection—his temperature jumped unbelievably. He was a true little

martyr. They poked him with injections, tortured him with *banki* [cups].[6] I did what I could, I obtained various powders that they didn't have in the hospital, which took the place of the injections. He now ate nothing, he only drank milk. Apparently the whole time he talked with the doctor and nurses he asked them not to stick him. The doctors had no words for him. With all my energy I tried to get to my child—I went to see the head doctor, he refused, I asked the main doctor of the hospital, she said that nothing would help him and with the word "*nyet*" [no] slammed the door. With money it would have been possible to do everything, but unfortunately I had none. And meanwhile my unhappy little one was dying. The day before his death they showed him to me through the window. He smiled at me with his whole mouth—I'll never forget that. I knew then that he wouldn't live—he looked like a little angel. Apparently he asked for me to come and, dying, wailed, "Mama," and those Soviet brutes did not let me in. The next morning when I came the name of my son was crossed off the list that was on the hospital doors, and I saw how they carried off the little mattress on which he laid. That was 14 January 1942. I learned that they had taken him to the main hospital attached to the Institute of Medicine. I ran there on foot, fearing that they would bury him without me—and then . . . I saw him. The caretaker there brought in his arms his naked, emaciated, inert corpse, it was good that they had written his name on a bracelet because I don't know if I would have recognized him. And nothing happened to me—my heart did not burst—I was alive, but I so desired death then.

The caretaker advised me just to wrap the child in rags and bury him, so it wouldn't cost a lot—I categorically forbade that.

And here once again, I met a noble-hearted Russian, the wife of an agronomist, whose daughter had been in the same room as my little one. She took care of me and helped with everything—thanks to her I got 30 rubles from the Soviet authorities for a coffin and a cart. So the next day I dragged the casket to the hospital on a sledge. My little one was brought down—in the lab they must have done an autopsy because when I was dressing him, blood dribbled from his neck—I laid him on shavings, put a medallion on his neck, arranged his hands—put a little wreath on his little head, bade farewell, kissed his poor stiff corpse, and with my guardian went to the cemetery. Along the road, I stopped at a photographer's to have a final keepsake. Here I should recall what the coffin looked like—ordinary, made from badly hewn boards, full of gaps, and on top of that too short, as there weren't any boards to make another one—so the poor little soul had to draw up his legs. And I had to leave in that hateful land that which had been the most dear to me, that which was everything in the world for me. My golden sun, which had shone for me through the hard days and dark nights spent in exile, was extinguished for me forever.

I returned aching, simply unconscious from pain, to the *kolkhoz,* to the terrible conditions, to misery.

> I didn't live in poverty very long, however. Two months after my child's death, I received 1,200 rubles from my husband—what irony![7] What did I need it for now? In this "damned country" I couldn't even put up a stone at his grave because there were no materials. So I had made an ordinary cross and a tablet, on which was written, "Here rests Leszek Greczyn, 'a little Pole.'" I carried that cross myself to the cemetery (8 km) on Good Friday—I made a real way of the cross. That's all I could do for my only son.

A few months later, Greczyn reached the Polish army, and in June 1942 she was evacuated to Iran. Though she had long dreamed of leaving the USSR, she writes that crossing the border did not make her happy: "I was returning alone, with great pain and despair in my heart." It is not known what happened to Greczyn or her husband after 1942, even whether they were reunited. It is highly unlikely that either of them returned to their hometown—which was incorporated into Soviet Ukraine—or to their native country, which was taken over by the Communists after the Second World War.

CHAPTER 12

Fragments

Anna Cieślikowska[1]

Translated by Irena Czernichowska

A young Polish Catholic woman, Anna Cieślikowska lived in the city of Lwów when it was occupied by the Red Army in September 1939. Finding life under the Soviets intolerable, she applied to a commission to move to the German-occupied part of Poland.[2] When officers of the NKVD came to her home one night in June 1940, they told her she was going westward. Instead, they deported Cieślikowska to a settlement in the Novosibirsk oblast *(Map 1). By applying to leave Soviet-occupied Poland, she had, in the eyes of the Soviets, demonstrated her disloyalty, and was therefore a dangerous person. Deported as a "special settler," her status mirrored that of the so-called* kulaks*, like Balashina (chapter 1).*

The excerpts below describe Cieślikowska's life in an NKVD-supervised settlement, which was located near a labor camp. She first describes the communal bath she was forced to take, an experience many female memoirists of the Gulag recall, due to the humiliation of having to bathe in front of male staff and guards.[3] Women do not typically discuss such embarrassing episodes in their interviews. The intimacy of face-to-face communication probably makes it difficult to raise issues connected with their sexuality. Furthermore, the interviews in this volume were made decades after such incidents, which, over time, may have lost their sting and faded in importance in the overall narrative. Intimate details are frequently lost in accounts of epic events, as the subject often feels that they are personal, and therefore not important. Several

circumstances make Cieślikowska's case different and allow her to recount this experience, and the emotions she felt at the time, with openness and detail. First, her account was written not long after the experiences—not more than two years later, meaning the memories were still quite fresh in her mind. Second, writing, particularly for an anonymous audience, allows for more freedom to discuss some personal and often taboo topics. It matters also that Cieślikowska was Polish: she presents the male-staffed baths as evidence of the low level of culture of her nation's enemy, the Russians. Cieślikowska had the added advantage of writing beyond the borders of the USSR in the 1940s; Soviet citizens had much less freedom to write about their experiences, at least until the late 1980s.

In another difference from many Soviet accounts, Cieślikowska's narrative lacks fatalism. Like Greczyn's narrative (chapter 11), it is filled with sarcasm. Exiled Poles did not identify with the system and resisted accommodating to it; unlike many Soviet citizens, even those who suffered greatly under Stalin's regime, they did not internalize its values. These Poles refused to accept any of the conditions or treatment they endured as necessary or normal. As foreigners, they had a perspective from which to criticize the system; as evacuees, they had the freedom to voice these criticisms.

The first excerpt begins with the arrival of Cieślikowska's transport in the USSR:

> Novosibirsk: A beautiful, modern railway station, but defaced by red banners. The train stopped and it was announced that we had to go to the baths because the next day the journey would end.
>
> First went the men, and after a few hours the women were called in. Groups of 40 people took their turn being sent to the "*bania*." Finally, it was my group's turn. Because the bath was to take place in the town's bathhouse, we had to walk through several streets to get there. I will not forget the feeling of being led through the middle of the streets like criminals. We were ordered to put our hands behind our backs and look down. It was forbidden to look around and talk. This somber march was brought up in the rear by the "*strielok*" [guard] with a bayonet on his rifle. Insults, invectives, and lumps of dirt were thrown at us by a vulgar mob. But what topped everything was what we found in the baths. The personnel was all male. You had to overcome the shame and humiliation, clench your teeth and control yourself, to endure the dirty jokes calmly and not spit at those hideous faces, or punch them between the eyes.
>
> Fortunately, their comedic act did not last long. After the bath, we had to wait a while for our clothes, which had been taken to be disinfected. This period of waiting was the worst, as a band of *Moskale* [Russkies] was bustling about in the hallway attending the bathroom. Our guards also came in under the pretext that one of us might attempt to escape.
>
> I don't know where I got the strength to calmly bear all of this humiliation. I was half-conscious from helpless rage. I felt that if one of those ruffians came

up to me, I would pour boiling water on him or choke him with my own two hands. Finally, our clothes were brought back to us. Deliriously, I returned to the train and for a long time I couldn't calm down.

Cieślikowska describes her living conditions in exile. In terms of accommodations, hygiene, forced labor, and food rations, her life as a "special settler" bore striking similarities to that of the camp inmates working alongside her.

We were placed in huge wooden barracks. Apparently, a few days before our arrival other prisoners had deserted these same barracks. There was litter in every corner. The floor was incredibly filthy. But the worst and most surprising thing was the bedbugs. Millions of them were crawling on the walls, on the bed covers, and on the floor. They were falling like raindrops from the ceiling. There was no shelter from them. They climbed down from every direction and attacked. I never imagined that there could be so much of this wretched stuff in one place. We all decided that we refused to live in such conditions. In unison, we took our baggage and went outside. The threats and the yelling of our "guardian angels" didn't help. The bedbugs frightened us more than the NKVD. We didn't return to the barracks, which were locked until the next day to be disinfected…

Rough days had begun. Every day at five in the morning we had to walk several kilometers to the sawmill. We worked until seven in the evening. Because the prisoners from the neighboring camp worked there as well, we went and returned together.

The work was extremely difficult. We had to arrange heavy blocks of wood or carry heavy planks and load them into the cars. It wasn't even taken into account that a woman is weaker than a man. The norm for the labor was the same for everybody. The norm of the bread, however, was not proportional to the workload.

So often, after a hard day's work, one would return to the camp, stand in line in front of the bread stand, and after a long wait receive only 300 grams of black, sticky bread: "The norm had not been met…"

Cieślikowska discusses sharing information, during work hours, with Soviet prisoners from the neighboring labor camp. She describes learning about the famine of 1932–1933, and the mass arrests—whose number she exaggerates.

Now nothing differentiated us from our "colleagues" from the neighboring camp. Hand-in-hand we went with them to work with one "*strielok*" [guard] leading us [Fig. 8]. They learned many Polish words and found out "what it's like in Poland." At first they didn't want to believe that there was such a country where not only did bread ration cards not exist but where one could buy

Illustration 8 Drawing of Gulag guard and convicts, by Anna Cieślikowska

whatever one wanted and in unlimited quantities. Like children, they asked about everything with the greatest curiosity.

We, on the other hand, found out the truth from them about Soviet Russia: about the atrocious hunger that predominated in 1933, when people were dying on the streets from emaciation, when parents, to save themselves from starvation, ate their own children, and grains rotted on the fields because there was no one to harvest it, horrific sufferings of 35 million people put in prisons and camps.

Everyone's hair stood on end during those tales, and sometimes they were so graphic that it was difficult to believe them.

Under NKVD supervision, the special settlers, like camp inmates, relied on the officials for their news. For the detained Polish population, word of war between the Nazis and Soviets was welcome, as it brought the only hope that they might be freed from Soviet domination.

Finally, we were told that the Germans invaded Russia, that a war was going on, and that anyone who became an enemy to the "*Soiuz*" [Soviet Union] would be threatened with death. Every hostile move would be treated as sabotage, and the guilty person would not escape punishment.

Then the hard period of uncertainty and uneasiness began. Somewhere deep in our hearts there was a flicker of hope. We waited…

When the amnesty for Poles was concluded at the end of July 1941, the NKVD told them to wait—the regime needed them to stay and work. Unwilling to do that, Cieślikowska and a small group of deportees left the settlement on their own in August. Headed for the headquarters of the new Polish army, located in Buzuluk (in the southern Urals region, Map 1) the group traveled to Tashkent. There, Soviet officials diverted the Poles to kolkhozy *in Uzbekistan. Eventually, Cieślikowska found one that would employ her, but the poverty of the region could not sustain the newcomers.*

Again a period of uncertainty and anxiety came. We found ourselves with no means of survival, with no roof over our heads, among Uzbeks, whose language we did not comprehend. We were sent from one *kolkhoz*, to another, everywhere overcrowded. Swarms of people were released from prisons and camps and surged south to towns and villages. There was no work. Hunger, disease, and death constantly took new victims. Destitution…

The work was very hard. We did not earn any money. The reward for our labor was foodstuffs, but not in sufficient quantities. We were completely starved and weakened. The Uzbeks were friendly toward us, but they also suffered from destitution and lived in unbearable conditions.

> The boys started to get sick. Due to malnourishment, the scurvy returned and they also suffered from avitaminosis [lack of vitamins]. It was getting worse. The time finally came when we had to eat a dog.

This period of Cieślikowska's exile ended in January 1942, when she finally reached the Polish army in the USSR. She joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and was later evacuated with the army to Iran.

CHAPTER 13

Disgusting and Hopeless

Maria Norciszek[1]

Translated by Katherine R. Jolluck

Born in 1912 in the city of Sosnowiec, in southern Poland, Maria Norciszek was 27 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939. Before the war, she worked for several military organizations in the city of Katowice. After learning of her impending arrest by the Gestapo, she fled to the city of Lwów, in eastern Poland, which had been invaded by the Red Army. There she joined the Union for Armed Struggle [Związek Walki Zbrojnej]*, the underground army formed after the two invasions. Alarmed at the arrests taking place in the Soviet zone, she fled, along with her husband, in April 1940. They were betrayed near the Romanian border and turned over to the NKVD. "From that moment," she writes, "began the terrible gehenna of my life." Her time in Soviet captivity included confinement in four different prisons and a labor camp in Mariinsk, in the Novosibirsk* oblast*, where Tsivirko and the mother of Ibragimova (chapters 5, 8) were also incarcerated (Map 1).*

Norciszek describes the conditions in her cells and treatment by guards, interrogators, and fellow prisoners with unusually graphic detail. Recording her memories on paper, she is able to discuss topics and use words that were generally taboo in both Polish and Russian society. Quite likely, the intimate details she recalls, particularly those relating to female sexuality, would not have been shared in an interview. Like Cieślikowska (chapter 12), she describes the baths staffed by male guards; she also intimates a rape attempt, and recounts the sexual exploits of fellow inmates. The offensive guards and interrogators, as well as the prostitutes and lesbians she describes, are Soviet; the desire to show their "otherness" probably helps Norciszek to break the

taboos. We cannot verify the accuracy of these descriptions; the brutal and degraded atmosphere in the Gulag, along with the notoriety of the hardened female criminals there, make them plausible. Even if Norciszek exaggerates, her account speaks volumes about her attitude toward the Soviet people; she focuses on gender to signal their perceived deviance.[2]

Like her compatriots represented in this volume, Norciszek had no sympathy for Communism. She is unambiguously critical of the system, calling it criminal, and extends her scorn to much of the population of the USSR. Like Greczyn and Cieślikowska (chapters 11, 12), she was evacuated to Iran with the Anders Army, and was free there to express such sentiments.

In the initial excerpt, Norciszek describes the first prison she was in:

> There were thieves and prostitutes, who in the most disgusting way started to slander us and snap at the Poles. The prison staff was made up exclusively of men, we were stripped naked and once a week escorted to the bath; the bathroom was so dirty and infested with bugs that after each washing you had more lice than before the bath; anyway, one went to the bath only to get a piece of soap, as it was only given out at the bath. In prison I was accused of spying, I was there 7 weeks and in that time I was interrogated 6 times, interrogated mostly at night and interrogations lasted till morning, they wanted to exhaust me. The interrogating NKVD agent did not spare me any epithets, starting with prostitute, lady of the night, and in the most shameless manner, again undressed himself completely, took off his long underwear, and behaved himself like the most shameless pig. The end of the interrogation was conducted by an NKVD agent named Mrozov [*sic*], this woman finished the interrogation with a beating, and her favorite weapon was a long boot, which she removed from her foot.

Norciszek was transferred to another prison, where she was stripped of her clothing and possessions and put in a basement cell. Like countless other prisoners, she endured dismal conditions: hunger, sleeping on the cold floor, vermin, and the use of the stinking parasha *[latrine bucket]. She and her cellmates desperately tried to inhale air through cracks in the walls. Unlike Rodina (chapter 6), who was practically returned to life by the kindness of prostitutes imprisoned with her, Norciszek has nothing good to say about such women.*

> As if the horridness was not enough, they brought, as if out of spite, several prostitutes and thieves…What the Soviets didn't do, these women finished, they started to have shameless orgies only to spoil the young girls, and when we turned to the guards for some kind of help, those women talked to the guards in their own way, called us bourgeois Poles[3] and in the most shameless way made our lives disgusting and hopeless.

At this prison Norciszek received her sentence: five years in a labor camp. She was then moved to another prison in Ukraine; next she endured a five-week transport to a labor camp near Mariinsk, in Western Siberia. Like many other former Gulag inmates, Norciszek decries the hardened criminal women, whose behavior shocked her for its brutality and depravity.[4] *She refers to them as* szalmanki*, a word she, or other Poles, seems to have made up from the Russian word* shalman*, which means both a low-class bar and a "den of thieves."*

> To our transport they added Soviet women, so-called *szalmanki*, women shamelessly degenerate, masturbators, extracting pubic lice from themselves, and with laughter and self-satisfaction [they] threw them at us, saying that for us Polish women they have a special kind. These women were so terrible, that even the guards yielded to them. Once there was such an incident that 2 of them played cards to determine who would gouge out the other's eyes and at the end of the game straight away, without any scruples, carried it through. They stole everything they could; I didn't take off my boots for six weeks so they couldn't steal them.

Norciszek's contingent included 65 Polish women, who banded together in the camp for support and protection from these other women, who continued their harassment.

> [T]he worst was that they put the crazy *szalmanki* in the barracks; they were, it is true, in a separate room, separated only by boards. These women were so dangerous that for protection they put a guard in our room—a convicted dangerous criminal. It was not possible to go to the toilet alone, only in fives. Those women were infected with various venereal diseases and during baths smeared us with their infected secretions. Their exploits were generally beyond description. The camp authorities looked on all of this indifferently. When we asked that those disgusting women be separated from us, they answered shortly that we have the same rights as they and they can't make any exceptions . . . There can be no talk of medical care or any kind of hygiene, there was in fact a doctor, a well-known criminal, who performed an operation on a boil on one of my girlfriends with an ordinary piece of glass from a broken bottle. You couldn't expect anything good from the director of the camp, as he himself was a criminal.

Like other accounts from Gulag survivors, whether written or oral, Norciszek's describes the two main preoccupations of their days in captivity: hard labor and hunger.

> Hunger predominated to such an extent that whoever managed to catch a cat ate it, and ate even rats . . . When I observed the livestock I came to the realization that the livestock had it better. My friends and I often thought that it would have been better for us in Russia if we were not people, as the pigs were

> regularly fed, often given even bread and tea, and when we were given a little warm water we didn't know what to do with it, wash ourselves or drink it. It was useless to turn to the Soviet authorities for help, they were completely silent, either they ignored it and gave nothing or one heard a whole stream of brazen insults.

Norciszek was released in September 1941, after the amnesty for Poles, and, like Cieślikowska, joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps of the Anders Army.

CHAPTER 14

We Will Surely Die

Letter from Irena Grześkowiak to Her Father, Andrzej[1]

Translated by Katherine R. Jolluck

The letter below is one of several hundred contained in the archives of the Anders Army, the Polish army formed in the USSR as a result of the Sikorskii-Maiskii Pact of July 30, 1941. These letters—many of them unopened—were written by Poles deported from their homes after the Soviet invasion, typically children, women, and elderly individuals, seeking help in getting out of desperate conditions in the USSR. Though technically free after the amnesty granted by the pact, many of these exiles lacked the wherewithal to leave their former places of detention. Soviet authorities frequently blocked their departure, wanting to keep them for forced labor. Women with small children and elderly relatives under their care did not have the money, food, documents, or strength to journey in search of outposts of the new Polish army. In some cases, men left their families to join the army, hoping to be reunited with them later. Many young children were stranded after such departures or the death of parents, who succumbed to the prevalent poverty, hunger, and disease.

Here, Irena Grześkowiak writes to her father Andrzej. The letter contains no information about her age or when her family was forcibly "resettled." She wrote her letter in Mamliutka, located in Northern Kazakhstan, a region to which many Poles were deported in 1940–1941. Two scenarios are likely. Her father may have been arrested and sent to a labor camp, and then went off after the amnesty to find the

Polish army. Or he may have been deported with his family and left them to join the army, planning to send for them later. The fact that the letter was found in the archive suggests that it never reached its addressee. Nothing is known of the subsequent fate of the Grześkowiak family.

The youth of the girl is reflected in the childish handwriting and composition. Her letter lacks punctuation, and the sentences run together. Though still a child, she has assumed responsibility for her family because of her mother's illness. Above all, the letter conveys, in both its appearance and content, its author's despair (Figure 9). In life-threatening conditions, with nowhere else to turn, the girl expresses her anxiety and dire need for assistance. This may be the voice of one of the many deportees who did not survive her Soviet ordeal.

[Written in yellow pencil on black paper]

Mamliutka, 8 Aug 1942

Dear dad how are you why don't you write anything to us we are worried that we haven't had any letters from you for three months i write and get no answers back I don't know what has happened to you things are going very badly for us because mom is sick again we don't know what I should do. Dear dad I write again and again to you do you know we got a new address a little while ago . . . When winter comes we will surely die for they give us nothing no aid no clothes in general nothing so it's surely good-bye for us because we are completely [illegible] a lot of families left us after the certificates[2] and now the departures stopped a wire came from Iangi-Iul[3] for two we don't have [enough] Dear Dad I sent you a photo I look very bad because of the total lack of bread in general we live [illegible] We are in for a horrible death. Send us money a little at least [illegible] They drive me to work [illegible] we are not afraid of work one must work. Dear Daddy write back immediately a few words so we'll know you are alive and healthy. So goodbye I end with a few words, I kiss my beloved daddy and little Edzinek kisses your hands your daughter Irka

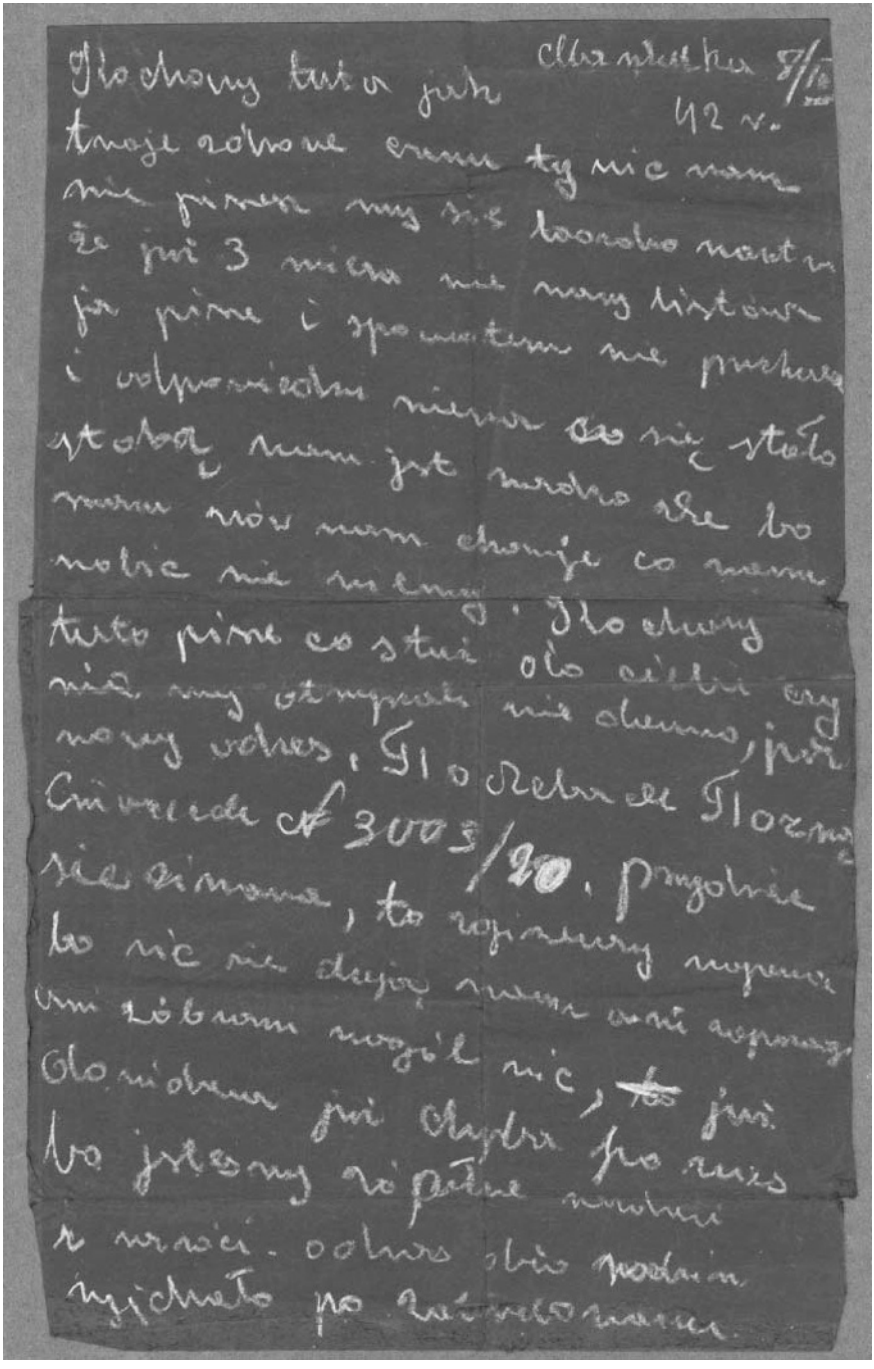


Illustration 9 Letter from Irena Grześkowiak to Andrzej Grześkowiak

CHAPTER 15

Why Did He Ruin Our Happiness?

Letter from Franciszka Dul to Her Husband, Stanisław Dul[1]

Translated by Irena Czernichowska

The author of the following letter, Franciszka Dul, was probably arrested and sent to a labor camp after the Red Army invasion of Poland in 1939. The envelope records her address in the Akmolinsk oblast *in Kazakhstan (Map 1), the site of many penal camps for women. She writes to her husband, in care of the Anders Army, the Polish army in the USSR. This letter was found in the archives of the army, which contain, scattered in different boxes, at least four others that she wrote to him. We must assume that he never received them. In another of her letters, written on a page torn from a book in the Kazakh language, Dul laments, "I have already sent you 15 letters and received none from you."[2]*

Her letter, like Grześkowiak's (chapter 14), contains little punctuation, and in some places is written as stream of consciousness. Highly emotional and emphatic, the letter reveals Dul's desperation. She conveys her material situation less overtly than did Grześkowiak: through her inability to find paper or to reach a doctor, and reference to a past warning from her husband not to take her daily bread for granted (Figure 10). Unlike the Russian letters in this volume (chapter 16), Dul's does not try to hide her difficulties and assure the recipient that she is fine. Rather, both Polish authors, Dul and Grześkowiak, spell out their situation and beg for intervention, because they had somewhere to turn—the Polish army. Soviet citizens had no such hope for assistance.

Dul makes clear that her days are typically filled with laboring for the Soviet state. More than anything else, Dul's letter conveys the agony wrought by the destruction of her family—a tragedy endured by millions in the Stalinist period. Her intense longing to be reunited with her husband, whom she has not seen for three years, is palpable. Moreover, she reports learning that their children had been placed in a Soviet orphanage, whose location remained unknown. Dul's letter provides a counterpoint to the accounts of Faifman and Ibragimova (chapters 7, 8), who tell this story of separation from the perspective of children.

Dul's letters all went through the regular Soviet mail. The envelopes bear Soviet postage and are stamped as inspected by the War Censor. It is therefore possible that when she places the blame for her family's tragedies on one man, she names Hitler, but means Stalin.

[Written in Polish across pages ripped from a Russian-language novel]

Dearest Staszek!!

Dear husband, I write you a letter every day, I don't know if you will be able to read it? Written on a book; unfortunately I can't get paper anywhere, so I write on this, dear husband! I can't wait for an answer from you, as time drags on horribly for me I am restless, when will the moment come when we will be happy again together in our own land. Dearest Staszek! How much will I have to talk about for all those long three years that we have been separated, how many tears and unhappiness during that time that I've lived through I shall tell you about when again we are together. Today I am home I didn't go to work because I had an upset stomach, my head hurts and I'm throwing up, but there is no doctor within 30 kilometers in the district so that's why I am writing you a letter and on days when I work I don't have time to write because I come home and it is already dark, and my hosts already are sleeping they don't turn on the light, they are saving, yes, dear husband! . . . And now, dear husband, maybe you will be better able to find our children, because when I was in the Urals mama wrote me that they had been taken to the *Detdom* this means that they should be here, and therefore you, my love ask around to find out who knows about such placement and where one has to write to find them.

But in the meantime take me with you, it will always be easier to live through these hard times together, oh Staszek!! How many times a day do I remember your sacred words, they came so true, remember? How many times you said not to sin, because the time might come when I would crave even bread. When will this war finally end, how much misery in the world because of one man, I will always curse Hitler, why did he ruin our happiness

I kiss you uncounted times, always loving you your wife Frania I wait with impatience for your answer.

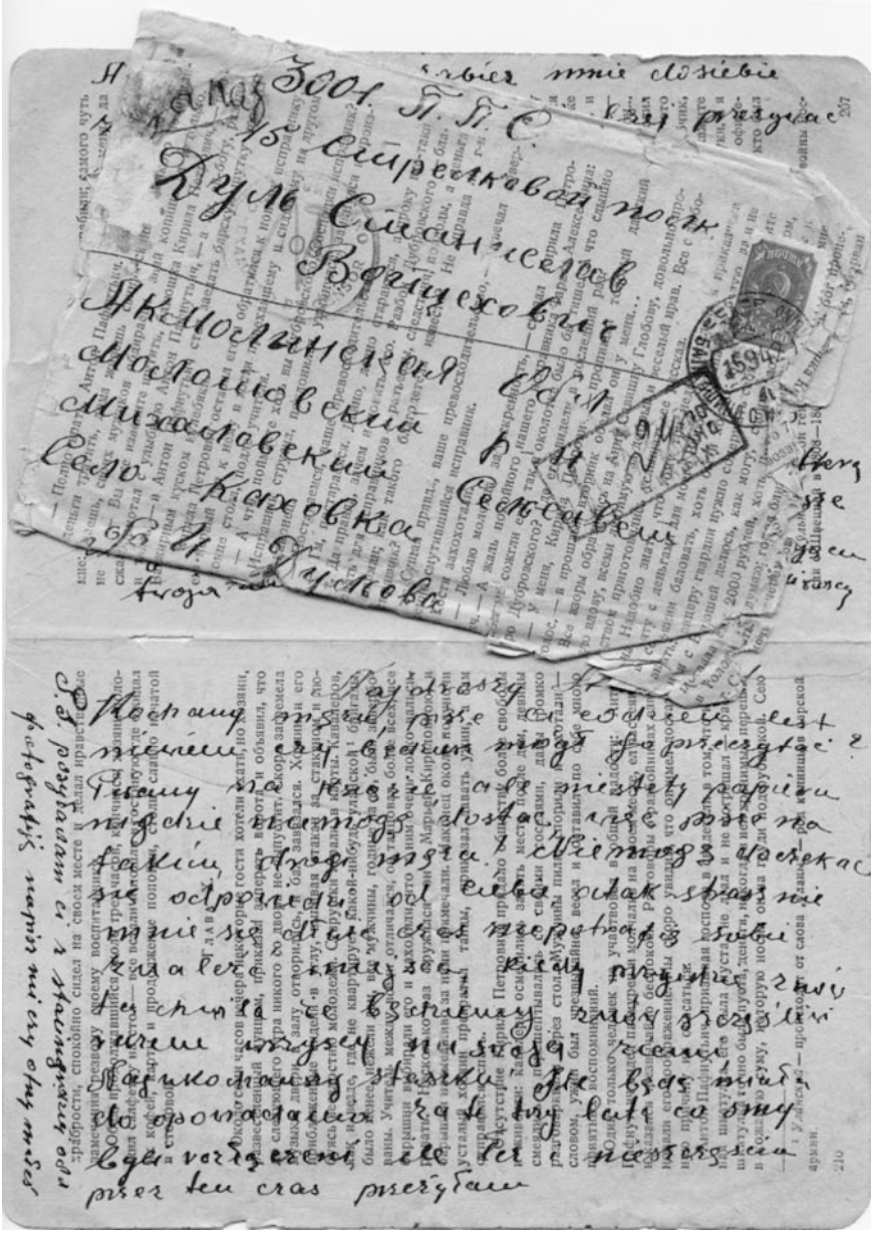


Illustration 10 Letter from Franciszka Dul to Stanisław Dul

CHAPTER 16

Fare Thee Well

Excerpts from the Camp Correspondence of Valentin Tikhonovich Muravskii and Rozalia Iosifovna Muravskaia[1]

Translated and introduced by Emily D. Johnson

Born in 1928, Valentin Tikhonovich Muravskii has a life story that reflects many of the most tragic episodes in twentieth-century Russian history. His father, Tikhon Romanovich Muravskii-Kocherga, a senior inspector for the Leningrad radio broadcasting system and the director of a short wave correspondence school, was arrested and executed as a counter-revolutionary in 1937. Shortly thereafter, Muravskii, his younger sister Dina, and his mother, Rozalia Iosifovna Muravskaia, a doctor and, for a time, the head of the Health Department of the Vyborg region of Leningrad, were all exiled to Uzbekistan. Allowed to return home at the end of 1940, the family faced new tragedies during the Second World War, including the blockade of Leningrad, evacuation from the city, and life under German occupation. By 1943, all three members had been rounded up by the Nazis and sent to perform forced labor. Muravskii ended up in Austria, and his mother and sister in Germany. Although both Muravskii and his mother returned to Leningrad after the war, his sister married an American officer and made her way to the United States. In 1947, Muravskii was arrested for corresponding with her and given a three-year term in the camps under Article 58. His mother received a ten-year sentence for the same reason in 1948.

The three documents published here represent examples of a kind of camp writing that to date has received relatively little attention from scholars: the letters that camp inmates exchanged with friends and family members through the official Gulag postal system. Although many eye-witness accounts of life in Stalinist labor camps, including Solzhenitsyn's monumental Gulag Archipelago *and Varlam Shalamov's memoirs, have derided this channel of communication as largely non-functional, in fact a fair number of prisoners seem to have exchanged letters with loved ones at least sporadically.*[2]

Each of the excerpts from the Muravskii family correspondence included here is remarkable in a different way. The first one, written by Muravskaia to her son in 1948, represents a rare example of correspondence that passed between two separate places of confinement through the legal camp mail system. Although regulations during the Stalinist period theoretically allowed inmates to correspond with close relatives serving sentences in other places of confinement, in practice such inter-camp communication rarely occurred. Inmates often had trouble learning where other family members were held; censors doubtless viewed correspondence mailed between camps with particular suspicion. In a 2006 interview, Muravskii suggested that he managed to defy the odds and exchange letters sporadically with his mother during the years in which they were both in Soviet labor camps at least in part because the censor in his camp found his youth and the emotional tone of his mother's letters sympathetic: she personally informed Muravskii when new letters arrived.[3]

Written on mass-produced stationery that probably arrived in camp in a package or letter addressed to an inmate, Muravskaia's 1948 letter to her son is indeed moving. Crossing out the name Byron below a pre-printed romantic epigraph and boldly substituting the word "Mama," Muravskaia claims and addresses to her son all the sentiment in the first lines of the British poet's "Fare Thee Well." In her letter, Muravskaia notes one of the chief difficulties of labor-camp correspondence: inmates often did not receive notification of when and why letters were confiscated by censors or, for that matter, even an official explanation of the basic rules of correspondence. As a result, many letters never reached addressees, and correspondences often broke off unexpectedly.

Muravskii composed the second letter after his release from the camps in 1950 and conscription into the navy. Writing from the town of Izmail (Map 3) in May 1953 to his mother in the Karaganda labor camp (Map 1), Muravskii describes his visits with the daughter of one of his mother's fellow inmates and also inserts a greeting for his mother's comrades in camp, suggesting the ways in which friendships forged in camps sometimes also led to connections with and between family members on the outside. Muravskii added a second note to this document five years after composing the original letter. By this time, his mother, who was released from the camps and rehabilitated in 1956, had died. By adding this note, Muravskii seems to express the hope that the same worn piece of paper that had once carried his words to a labor camp world often described by inmates as equivalent to Hades might also now literally pass beyond the grave and convey new sentiments to his deceased mother.

The final letter written by Muravskaia to her son in 1953 is a traditional New Year's greeting and, like many holiday notes mailed by Gulag inmates, constitutes

a kind of hand-made card, embellished with a painstakingly drawn and colored illustration.[4]

LETTER 1

To my dear, beloved Valik *[in pencil]*
"Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well!"
Byron [*printed text on stationery; author's name crossed out in pencil*]
Mama *[added in pencil]*

December 7, 1948

Hello, my dear, my very own darling son, Valiushenka.

Sweetheart, I was expecting a letter from you, but then I heard that if you don't write a return address on the envelope, your letter never reaches its destination. I've been writing you letters, but I don't recall if I wrote my address. Darling, I am healthy, strong, and am hoping for a good work assignment. I will probably be leaving here soon—I don't know where I'll be sent. I would like to get some word from you before I leave. I wrote a letter to Raia and Katia, but I didn't get any answer.[5] I probably didn't put a return address on the envelope when I wrote to them either. How frustrating! Well, my darling, how is everything? How are you doing with work? Don't pine, don't let yourself miss me too much, don't worry about me. Remember, if this is how things are, then it just must be my fate. Take care of yourself, my darling, my dear and beloved son. Be honest and good there even if you don't have your mother by your side. How I long for some news from you! Does anyone at all come to visit you? Darling, I bless you for the rest of your life. Be happy, my dear. My sweet son, I send you big hugs and tender kisses.

Mama

LETTER 2

May 6, 1953

Hello, my dear, beloved, darling mother. I received your letter number 27 a few days ago, but I couldn't find the time to write to you until today.[6] Everything here is pretty much the same. We celebrated the 1st of May recently, but I didn't have much time off. On the evening of the 1st I ran over to see Ksana for two hours, and then on the 3rd I went back for a longer visit.[7] On the 1st, she had guests over when I came, a few people she knows pretty well. On the 3rd, we were alone with the children. Kostia stayed awhile and then went off to the officers' club. We had a really nice evening and had a heart-to-heart talk. We told each other about our past, our current lives, and our hopes for

the future. In general, I really enjoy spending time at their place. Mama, on the 30th, Ksana sent a small package. I am really sorry that I couldn't add too much to it, but things will be okay. Mama, we don't have so long to wait; soon everything will be different. We are sure of that. I will send you my photograph in a while, Mama. Right now I have no way to get it printed. You asked about the camera. It isn't mine yet, but I think that soon I will own it completely. Mama, I'll close here. I send you big hugs and kisses. Say hi to Lesia, Zhenia and all your friends.[8] Write to me often.

Your Valentin

[Added to the top of the letter five years later in different ink]

June 3, 1958

My darling, beloved, mama. I will never, ever forget you. No, it is not possible. You are with me always and everywhere, in both times of joy and in sorrow. Only you will understand [illegible] and understand me. My darling, how empty everything is now. I am so alone. Dina remembers, but she is so far away and things aren't easy for her either. My sweet, good, darling, nearest and dearest sister. Kisses to you, my darling mother.

Valia, who will not forget you.

LETTER 3

Karaganda, 1953

My beloved, darling son, Valentin, happy New Year's to you for 1954. I wish you lots and lots of happiness, good health, and great success in life.

I wish you, my darling Valechka, a life free of all sorrow and everyday adversity! May 1954 bring you much joy and happiness. May 1954 reward you for all your concern and bring you closer to a reunion with me!

I hope you meet a pure, good, kind and lovely young woman who will enrich your lonely life with her kindness, love, attention, and concern!

I send you big hugs and tender kisses, my darling, beloved son, Valechka!

To you I also direct all the New Year's greetings I would like to send my dear daughter Dina, who I also wish happiness, health and the very best family life. I hope that she will be joyfully reunited if not with me, then at least with you some day! Lesia, Inna Georgievna, and O. N. also all wish you the very best.[9]

Tell your comrades that I send my greetings and wish them a happy holiday.

Kisses yet again, Mama.

Notes

Introduction

1. Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 2.
2. The secret police (then OGPU) began controlling a large percentage of the prison system in 1928–1930; in 1931 they began to oversee "special settlers." Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 50.
3. The system was evolving as early as the 1923 establishment of the proto-Gulag camps on the Solevetskii Islands, and arguably earlier.
4. Other categories of exiles existed, but, unlike the special settlers, they were neither subject to forced labor nor under the surveillance of the secret police. J. Otto Pohl, *The Stalinist Penal System* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1997), 55.
5. Exact figures will probably never be known. According to NKVD documents, nearly 1.4 million of those arrested were convicted, and more than half of them executed. See J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–39* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 588–89; Khlevniuk, *History of the Gulag*, 289–90.
6. Applebaum, *Gulag*, xxxiv.
7. Pohl, *Stalinist Penal System*, 5.
8. Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), xxxi.
9. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 510.
10. For compelling visual images and narrative accounts of daily life in the Gulag, see gulaghistory.org.
11. Steven A. Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).
12. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 190–95.
13. *Gulag Boss*, the memoir of a camp official, provides an important new perspective on these officials' lives, making it clear that choices made by Gulag guards were often made under intense pressure. Fyodor Mochulsky, *Gulag Boss: A Soviet Memoir*, trans. Deborah Kaple (Oxford University Press, 2010).
14. Edwin Bacon, *The Gulag at War: Stalin's Forced Labour System in the Light of the Archives* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), *passim*; Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (London: Pimlico, 2008), xviii; Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror,* 590–94; Steven Rosefielde, "Incriminating Evidence: Excess Deaths and Forced Labor under Stalin—A Final Reply to Critics," *Soviet Studies* vol. 39, no. 2 (1987): 292, 304; Stephen Wheatcroft, "More Light on the

Scale of Repression and Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union in the 1930s," *Soviet Studies* vol. 42, no. 2 (1990): 355–59; 366.

15. Personal communication between Jehanne Gheith and Iurii Brodskii, July 2005.
16. Nanci Adler, "Return of the Repressed," in Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch, eds., *On Living Through Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge, 2004), 215.
17. Nanci Adler, *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 27.
18. Kathleen E. Smith, *Remembering Stalin's Victims: Popular Memory and the End of the USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 137.
19. Adler, *Gulag Survivor*, 263.
20. Adler, *Gulag Survivor,* 31.
21. Daria Khubova, Andrei Ivankiev, and Tonia Sharova, "After Glasnost: Oral History in the Soviet Union," in Luisa Passerini, ed., *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, Vol. 1, *Memory and Totalitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 89.
22. Stephen Jones supports this point: "Soviet propaganda creates a chasm between official and popular reality. Under these conditions, official history, as part of official reality, becomes suspect, and personal memory becomes the 'truth.' In Western pluralist systems, history as conveyed by historians and the media, is seen, on the whole, as more trustworthy than personal memories." Stephen F. Jones, "Old Ghosts and New Chains: Ethnicity and Memory in the Georgian Republic," in Rubie S. Watson, ed., *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994), 153–54.
23. Khubova, Ivankiev, and Sharova, "After Glasnost," 95–96.
24. Adler, *Gulag Survivor*, 40.
25. Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 48.
26. Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (New York: Routledge, 1998), xii, xiii.
27. Khubova, Ivankiev, and Sharova, "After Glasnost," 95–96; Bertaux, Thompson, and Rotkirch, *On Living,* 10.
28. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, trans. Yuri Slezkine (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3–4; Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, "Innocent Victims and Heroic Defenders: Children and the Siege of Leningrad," in James Marten, ed., *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 288.
29. See, for example, Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*, trans. Keith Gessen (London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2005); Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia* (New York: Penguin, 2000) and *Ivan's War.* Stephen Jones also alludes to this aspect of memory in the USSR. Writing on Georgian national identity, he suggests that the USSR's attempt to destroy certain kinds of memory (such as those of the national minorities) actually made those memories stronger: there was a powerful reason to remember. Jones, "Old Ghosts," 160–64.
30. Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

31. Khubova, Ivankiev, and Sharova, "After Glasnost," 96.
32. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 2.
33. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 60.
34. Adi Kunstman has recently called for scholarship of the Gulag to "provide a more careful and informed reading of the memoirs' silences, and question the very formations of humanness in the memoirs." Adi Kuntsman, "'With a Shade of Disgust': Affective Politics of Sexuality and Class in Memoirs of the Stalinist Gulag," *Slavic Review* vol. 68, no. 2 (2009): 328. Although the oral histories presented here rarely directly address the questions of "disgust" and maintenance of boundaries that Kuntsman describes, they do provide important additional perspectives on the memoirs' silences.
35. Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), x–xi, 15, 57, and *passim*.
36. Solzhenitsyn conducted interviews of Gulag survivors before the 1980s as did Irina Sherbakova. Although they did not publish transcripts of these interviews, their works provide sources that can be referred to in thinking about how time period affects the shaping of memory and narrative. See Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Irina Sherbakova, "The Gulag in Memory," in Passerini, *International Yearbook of Oral History,* 103–15. Readers may also want to look at the post-perestroika interviews (in Russian) online at orlandofiges.com.
37. This is one of the central arguments in Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
38. Examples include: Adler, *Gulag Survivor*; Applebaum, *Gulag*; Barnes, *Death and Redemption*; Figes, *The Whisperers*; Skultans, *Testimony;* Cathy Frierson and Simeon Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
39. All of the American interviewers in this volume obtained oral or verbal consent from interviewees in compliance with U.S. federal requirements on research with human subjects as administered by the Institutional Review Board of their respective universities (Cathy Frierson, University of New Hampshire; Jehanne Gheith, Duke University; Emily Johnson, University of Oklahoma).
40. Iosif Segal, "Mnogolikaya Vishera," in *Zemlya Rodnaya. Vishera. Zametki, ocherki, stat'i* (Perm', 1995), 85, cited in Judith Pallot, "Forced Labour for Forestry: The Twentieth Century History of Colonisation and Settlement in the North of Perm' Oblast'," *Europe-Asia Studies* vol. 54, no. 7 (2002): 1056.

I A Life in the Forest

1. Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.
2. Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 2.
3. Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 196.
4. James R. Harris, "The Growth of the Gulag: Forced Labor in the Urals Region, 1929–1931," *The Russian Review* vol. 56, no. 2 (1997): 270–273.

5. Harris, "Growth of the Gulag," 277.
6. Stephen Kotkin, "Coercion and Identity: Workers' Lives in Stalin's Showcase City," in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 279.
7. On the rights and duties of *kulaks*, and abuses by commandants, see Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 91–113.
8. Balashina mistakenly refers to the Tagil *oblast*—it was an *okrug* (county), a geographic unit that was later eliminated.
9. In 1928 the Ministry of the Interior founded an experimental camp in the Urals where repeat criminals were sent to process timber. Plans for similar colonies were already in the works when a decree, in July 1929, called for the establishment of logging camps in remote areas, where the labor of prisoners would be exploited. This was deemed necessary as workers did not move to these harsh areas voluntarily, and the development of the timber industry was crucial to the regime's industrialization plans. Peter H. Solomon, "Soviet Penal Policy, 1917–1934: A Reinterpretation," *Slavic Review* vol. 39, no. 2 (1980): 208–9.
10. On the famine, see Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *Industrialization of Soviet Russia: Years of Hunger* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). On the famine among the exiled *kulaks*, see Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 132–49.
11. Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 155–59.
12. Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 170.
13. Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 98.
14. Paul McDaniel and Paul Schmitt, *The Comprehensive Guide to Soviet Orders and Medals* (Arlington, VA: Historical Research, 1997), 229, 240, 310.
15. One ruble equals 100 kopecks.

2 Soviet but German

1. On deportations during the First World War, see Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 23–24.
2. Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 96–97. See also Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 311–12, 328–33.
3. J. Otto Pohl, *The Stalinist Penal System* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1997), 72; Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 337–43.
4. Pohl, *Stalinist Penal System*, 76.
5. The settlement existed until the 1970s.
6. Pohl, *Stalinist Penal System*, 89. In 1972, ethnic Germans deported from the Volga region were permitted to return. Polian, *Against Their Will*, 203.
7. Article 56, to which Ianke refers, deals with probation and parole. *The Penal Code of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic* (London: Foreign Office, 1934), 21–26.

8. Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin: Profiles in Power* (Harlow: Longman, 2005), 103. Some historians estimate the number of victims at less than 5 million. See Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 112.
9. Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 70-79.
10. Elena Osokina, *Our Daily Bread: Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin's Russia, 1927–1941*, trans. Kate Transchel and Greta Bucher (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 121–27.
11. Osokina, *Our Daily Bread*, 122.
12. He refers to Lavrentii Beria, head of the secret police from 1938 till 1953.
13. Anastas Mikoyan, a member of Stalin's Politburo, was a member of the State Defense Committee and oversaw the transport of food and supplies during the war.
14. Boris Yeltsin came to power as head of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in 1990, and in 1991 became the first democratically elected president of the Russian republic. In that same year, he banned the Communist Party and oversaw the dissolution of the USSR. As the first president of the new Russia, he launched radical economic reforms.

3 Under Two Dictators

1. Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), 5–9, 20–34; Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 101–2.
2. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 104.
3. On Nazi attitudes toward and treatment of the Crimean Tatars, see Alan W. Fisher, *Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 150–59.
4. Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 152.
5. On life in the special settlements, see Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, 116–27.
6. Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, 118; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 103.
7. Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 429.
8. See for example Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, 111–18; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 102–3.
9. Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, 115–16.
10. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 105.
11. Iosif Segal, "Mnogolikaya Vishera," in *Zemlya Rodnaya. Vishera. Zametki, ocherki, stat'i* (Perm', 1995), 85, cited in Judith Pallot, "Forced Labour for Forestry: The Twentieth Century History of Colonisation and Settlement in the North of Perm' Oblast'," *Europe-Asia Studies* vol. 54, no. 7 (2002): 1056.
12. The town of Krasnovishersk is often referred to as Vishera.
13. Note that Ramazanov reports being housed in a school in Krasnovishersk in the summer, and he reports living in Zabatskii for nearly a year before being moved to

Volynka in spring 1945. All of this suggests his inclusion in the main deportation in May 1944.

14. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 100–1; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, 105–8; Fisher, *Crimean Tatars*, 132–33, 136–38, 140–49.
15. Donald A. Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization: The Consolidation of the Modern System of Soviet Production Relations, 1953–1964* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70.
16. Donald A. Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 32. Pavel Polian also refers to such non-repressive migrations as "voluntary-compulsory." Polian, *Against Their Will*, 45–47.
17. Pallot, "Forced Labour for Forestry," 1060–74.
18. According to Judith Pallot, the Perm *oblast* (now *krai*), "occupies fourth place in the Russian Federation for the relative size of its prison population, 1,320 per 100,000 inhabitants, and it is also near the top of the list for the absolute number (38,000–40,000)." Pallot, "Forced Labour for Forestry," 1059. See also Michael McCarthy, "Thousands of Russian Prisoners Are Still Suffering in Gulag Archipelago," *The Independent (UK),* 4 January 2002, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6005-1.cfm.
19. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 101–3.
20. Polian, *Against Their Will*, 29–33.

4 A Mother in Exile

1. Informally, Soviet citizens referred to what is now Kyrgyzstan as Kirghiziia. Formally, it was the Kirghiz SSR from 1926 to 1991. Its capital, now Bishkek, was called Frunze then.
2. The city of St. Petersburg (renamed Petrograd during the First World War) was renamed Leningrad by the Bolsheviks in 1924. The name reverted back to St. Petersburg in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
3. The Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1921 was fought to establish the boundaries of Poland and the USSR. The Polish side won a decisive victory in 1921, and the borders thus set lasted until 1939.
4. The Izmailovskii Regiment was one of the oldest and most prestigious guard divisions of the Russian Imperial Army. Established in 1730, it was housed in St. Petersburg until it was disbanded after the Bolshevik Revolution.
5. The February Revolution occurred between March 8–12, 1917 (February 23–27 in the Julian calendar, used in Russia until 1918). Tsar Nicholas II abdicated, and the Provisional Government, an alliance of liberals and socialists, was established. This government was overturned by the Bolshevik (October) Revolution (October 25 in the Julian calendar, November 7 in the Gregorian calendar).
6. Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia, reigned from 1894 to 1917. The Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church refers to him as St. Nicholas the Passion Bearer.
7. Mathilda Kshesinskaia was a prima ballerina of the Imperial Russian Ballet, and a mistress to Nicholas II; legend has it that he gave her the palace. Lappo-

Danilevskaia probably refers to a meeting Lenin called there of the representatives of the Petrograd Proletariat in June 1917.
8. The famine of 1919–1921 was caused by disruptions in agriculture created by war and revolution, compounded by a drought in 1921. Approximately 5 million people perished.
9. Oerlikon was a German firm, well known for making cannons and other weapons that were widely used in the First World War.
10. By Soviet law, a civilian witness was required to be at all searches conducted by the NKVD.
11. Zina Arshakovna Muradian was the director of the State Public Scientific-Technical Library of the USSR in Moscow.
12. Lappo-Danilevskaia did not give any more information about Annenkov; from the context it is likely that he was a Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.
13. As part of Stalin's policy of exiling nationalities, Chechens were deported to Central Asia and Siberia in 1944. Polian states that 387,229 Chechens were exiled. Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 147.

5 Surrounded by Death

1. Rodina (chapter 6) also refers to this well-documented law. See Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 124; Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, trans. Vadim A. Staklo (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 168–69.
2. *Ekspeditsiia podvodnykh rabot osobogo znacheniia* [Special Purpose Underwater Expeditions]. This organization, founded in 1923, closed in 1941. Its primary duty was to salvage sunken ships and submarines.
3. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 1–26.
4. Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007). This is a central point in the book; see especially 4, 8–11, 20.
5. Tsivirko's last name begins with a Russian letter that is transliterated into English with two letters (Ts).
6. Nazi Germany invaded the USSR on June 22, 1941. Most former Soviet citizens consider that date as the start of the Second World War, rather than September 1, 1939, the date of the invasion of Poland and the beginning of the war in the West.
7. Krasnodar is a city in southern Russia on the Kuban River, northeast of Novorossiisk (Map 3).
8. Nikolai Morozov was a revolutionary who worked with "The People's Will" [*Narodnaia volia*], a group that advocated terror as a way to achieve social reform. Morozov was arrested and imprisoned in St. Petersburg.
9. It is not true that there was only one prison in Leningrad, although it is the case that the *Bol'shoi dom* on Liteinyi Prospect evokes a particular fear for Soviet (and post-Soviet) citizens.

10. Ibragimova here refers to some well-known people who were incarcerated in Siblag. Marshal Tukhachevsky, a senior officer in the Red Army, was arrested and shot in 1937, and his wife and sisters were imprisoned there as "members of the family."
11. The term *vol'nye* [free people] has various meanings, including: (1) those who were forced to settle in a particular place with no set term of exile and without deprivation of their civil rights; and (2) prisoners who were allowed to live with their families outside the camp compound in order to engage in shock labor. See Jacques Rossi, *The Gulag Handbook: An Encyclopedia Dictionary of Soviet Penitentiary Institutions and Terms Related to the Forced Labor Camps*, trans. William A. Burhans (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 53.
12. Figes, *Whisperers,* 362–63.
13. See Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 164–75.
14. Svetlana Allilueva is Stalin's daughter. She defected to the United States in 1967. In 1982, she moved to England; she returned to the USSR in 1984, but left again in 1986. A writer, she has moved back and forth between England and the United States in the past 25 years. There is no evidence that she has ever lived in a convent.
15. The Politburo was the main governing body of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
16. Nikolai Yezhov was head of the NKVD in 1937–1938, which is considered the deadliest period of the purges. While the details of his death remain unclear, Yezhov was probably shot in 1939. Lavrentii Beria replaced Yezhov as chief of the NKVD.
17. The Third or Communist International, known as the Comintern, was an association of world Communist parties formed in Moscow in 1919. Its stated goal was world revolution, but in fact the Comintern was mainly a way for Soviet leaders to maintain control over international Communism. Many foreign Communists came to Moscow in the interwar period and became targets of Stalin's purges, ending up in the Gulag or facing execution.

6 It Wasn't Life

1. Bogdan Khmel'nitskii led the Dnepr Cossacks in the Ukrainian war against Polish rule in 1648 and became a symbol of Ukrainian liberation.
2. Given severe restrictions on travel, it is extremely unlikely that more than a handful of people were able to escape the Gulag by leaving the USSR. Yet Ginzburg and others note that it was possible to avoid arrest by "dropping out of circulation"—that is, leaving the location where one was to be arrested. Eugenia Semyonovna Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967), 21–23.
3. In Russian, a person's second name, or patronymic, comes from his or her father's first name. In order for Rodina to name her daughter Zoia Mikhailovna, she had to marry a man named Mikhail.
4. This is an abbreviation for *Babushka*—grandma.

5. In August 1937, it became law that if a person was arrested as a political prisoner, his (usually his) family members could also be arrested as "members of the family." Operational Directive of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 00486, "On the Operation of Repressing Wives and Children of Traitors to the Motherland," August 15, 1937. S. S. Vilenskii, A. I. Kokurin, G. V. Atmashkina, and I. Iu. Novichenko, eds. and comps., *Deti GULAGa 1918–1956. Dokumenty* (Moscow: International Democracy Fund and Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 234–38.
6. Soviet security police often did not execute pregnant women, but waited until after the women had given birth.
7. Iaroslav the Wise was a renowned Kievan prince (c. 978–1054). He is known for deposing Sviatopolk, who had killed two of his brothers; thus, Katriusa's desire to name her son Iaroslav had political overtones.
8. Rodina uses diminutives throughout this section (e.g., *pelenochka* instead of *pelenka* for diaper), thus highlighting the intimacy of this moment.
9. In Russian *krepost'* means fortress, strength; *krepostnoi* means serf.

7 Three Death Certificates but No Grave

1. In 1991, October 30 was officially designated the Day of Victims of Political Repression.
2. This is located further north of Vologda, on the White and Barents Seas.
3. This is an expansion of the 1991 law "On Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression" (see Introduction). S. S. Vilenskii, A. I. Kokurin, G. V. Atmashkina, and I. IU. Novichenko, eds. and comps., *Deti GULAGa 1918–1956. Dokumenty* (Moscow: International Democracy Fund and Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 555–59.
4. The patronymic is an official part of one's name in Russia, used in government documents. Changing Faifman's patronymic made it extremely difficult for him to track down information on his family.
5. Since the Communist regime was officially atheistic, it banned the celebration of religious holidays, such as Christmas. The New Year became a holiday of great import, celebrated with many traditions taken from Christmas, including decorating trees and giving presents.
6. This holiday commemorated the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.
7. Located in eastern Siberia, the city of Krasnoiarsk was an important manufacturing center.
8. Document reproduced in Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 169. According to one scholar, some 50,000 new orphans entered state institutions in 1937, the first year of the Great Terror. Corinna Kuhr, "Children of 'Enemies of the People' as Victims of the Great Purges," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* vol. 39, no. 1 (1998): 217.
9. According to NKVD figures, 681,692 persons were executed in 1937–1938; the figure is not broken down by gender. See Khlevniuk, *History of the Gulag*, 165, 288–91. Women made up 6.1 percent and 8.1 percent of the labor camp population in 1937 and 1940, respectively. By 1944, they accounted for 40 percent

of the people prosecuted by the courts. J. Arch Getty, Gabor Rittersporn, and Viktor Zemskov, "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-war Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence," *American Historical Review* vol. 98, no. 4 (1993): 1025.

8 Enumerated Units

1. Kh. Gainullin, *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 2, ed. A. A. Serkov (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1965), 42.
2. Beginning in the 1940s, there were two types of "closed cities"—cities with strict travel and residency restrictions—in the USSR. The first type, like Obninsk, severely limited access to most Soviet citizens and to foreigners because of sensitive military, industrial, or scientific sites; the second type, like Perm (because of Soviet tank production) was closed to foreigners (unless they had special permission) but was accessible to Soviet citizens. Obninsk, a small city near Moscow, established in 1954, is the site of the first atomic electro-station in the USSR. Obninsk now bills itself as the first science city in Russia. It is a city with a myth: a city whose name every educated person knows.
3. Vasily Pavlovich Aksyonov (1932–2009), a well-known and controversial writer since the late 1950s, left Russia in 1980 and soon afterwards was stripped of his Soviet citizenship. He later lived in the United States, where he taught at various universities and continued to write and publish fiction.
4. *Ugolovnyi Protsessual'nyi Kodeks* [The Criminal Procedural Code].
5. The so-called Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of medical personnel to kill prominent government Party members during the last years of Stalin's rule; it was an anti-Semitic campaign. It is widely accepted that Stalin planned to use the doctors' trial as the beginning of a purge of the Party, but he died before this could happen.
6. The next section is taken from the July 1998 interview, until noted.
7. In the summer of 1917, Lenin, in order to escape arrest, was hiding from the Provisional Government in Sestroretsk (near St. Petersburg). Here, he claimed, while sitting on a stump, he wrote one of his most famous works, *The State and Revolution*. This story about Lenin was widely circulated and was included in elementary school textbooks.
8. We move back here to the first interview in May 1998.
9. The Regional Committee hospitals provided some of the best medical care one could get in Soviet Russia.
10. Ibragimova uses the word *nadoumit'*, a verb that, in this context, is slightly ironic and includes more than a hint that they let him know whom he needed to bribe in order to get the information.
11. For more information on the *raspredeliteli,* see the introduction to the interview with Boris Faifman (chapter 7).
12. From now on, the material is from the first interview in May 1998, until otherwise marked.
13. The title "*Zasluzhennyi vrach*" ["Honored Doctor"] is awarded to those who have worked for 25 years, and comes with some privileges.
14. Without the word "rehabilitated," Ibragimova was eligible only for some limited privileges.

15. Alexander Chaianov, a well-known economist, was arrested and shot in 1937. Nikolai Vavilov, a prominent botanist and geneticist, was arrested in 1940 and died in prison. Nikolai Timofeev-Resovskii, a distinguished biologist, emigrated to Germany in 1925; when he was forced to return to the USSR in 1945, he was imprisoned in the Gulag.
16. Closed institutes, sometimes called "Boxes," were scientific or scholarly institutions that dealt with secret information related to national defense. Contact with people in other cities or institutions was closely controlled.
17. MIFI, the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute [*Moskovskii inzhenerno-fizicheskii institut*] is a prestigious post-graduate institute, well known for its excellence in science.
18. The *Kandidatskaia* or Candidate's degree is roughly equivalent to a Master's degree in the American system of education.
19. It was possible to pay to have others write one's dissertation; Ibragimova is highlighting the fact that her son wrote his thesis himself.
20. This next section comes from the second interview.
21. At this point we return to the first interview (May 1998) until otherwise noted. In theory, the *doktorskaia* degree is granted by the age of 40. In practice, the granting of the degree often occurs later, usually by the age of 50. Personal communication with Elena Koshkareva (11 February 2010).
22. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 288–89.
23. *Blatnoi* refers to the rich language and culture of "thieves" in Russia and the USSR.

9 From Privilege to Exile

1. Operational Directive of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 00486 "On the Operation of Repressing Wives and Children of Traitors to the Motherland," August 15, 1937. S. S. Vilenskii, A. I. Kokurin, G. V. Atmashkina, and I. Iu. Novichenko, eds. and comps., *Deti GULAGa 1918–1956. Dokumenty* (Moscow: International Democracy Fund and Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 234–38.
2. After the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in March 1918, to end Russian participation in the First World War, the Left SRs protested the "imperialist" peace and German humiliation of Russia by assassinating Wilhelm von Mirbach, who had come to Moscow to represent Germany.
3. She probably refers to Field Marshal Hermann von Eichhorn (fon Aikhgorn, in Russian). In 1918, he became the German military commander and military governor of occupied Ukraine; he was assassinated by a Left SR in July 1918.
4. See Daniel Kowalsky, *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War* (ACLS E-Humanities Book; New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), chapter 5, para. 238–313.
5. The Mordovian ASSR lies southeast of Moscow (see Iavas, Map 1).
6. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on August 23, 1939, was a treaty of non-aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union. The announcement of the pact shocked people within and without the USSR, as before that point, the Nazi and Soviet governments excoriated each other's systems.

7. Viacheslav Molotov was Commissar of Foreign Affairs. He, rather than Stalin, made the first official announcement to the Soviet people about the German invasion. His announcement was broadcast on public loudspeakers throughout the USSR.
8. Kamyshin is on the Volga River, north of Stalingrad.
9. Bashkiria is located in the Southern Urals.
10. It was very difficult to secure permission to return from exile to Moscow. Because Gerlin and her nanny were not blood relatives of her guardian, who received his permit through his institute, they would have had low priority in a situation in which networks favored the privileged and connected. See Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station. Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 238–51.
11. Gerlin implicitly refers here to the riskiness of biology as a discipline in the late Stalin era, when Trofim Lysenko was the officially approved leader of the field of biology. Lysenkoism led to an assault against the inclusion of the gene in biology and led to the purging of many leading biologists. See David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
12. Gerlin describes a typical practice in the USSR of appealing to highly placed friends for assistance with official institutions.
13. Alexander Esenin-Volpin, a prominent poet, mathematician, and leader of the human rights movement in the USSR. He is the son of the poet Sergei Esenin.
14. Chernovtsy is a city in Western Ukraine.
15. Valerian is a mild tranquilizer.
16. These were actually separate items in the Criminal Code, but were so consistently applied jointly to children of "enemies of the people" in 1949 that survivors always refer to them as Article 7-35. Article 7 prescribed punishment for persons, "having committed socially-dangerous acts or representing danger because of their links with a criminal environment or their past activity." Article 35 provided details on punishments for such "socially-dangerous" elements.
17. Ol'ga L'vovna Sliozberg (later Adamova-Sliozberg) was arrested twice, in 1936 and 1949; she was released in 1954. For her memoir in English see "My Journey," in *Till My Tale is Told,* ed. by Semion Vilensky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1–88.
18. Kazgorodok is in northern Kazakhstan (Map 1).
19. Iurii Aikhenvald, the son of a well-known pre-revolutionary literary critic exiled by the early Soviet regime, later became a prominent member of the dissident movement. He died in 1993.
20. The Serbskii Institute for Social and Forensic Psychiatry was established in 1921. Many Soviet dissidents were incarcerated and punished there.
21. See introduction (p. 3) for information on the amnesty.
22. Gerlin refers to the Jewish "Doctors' Plot," which was fabricated at the end of Stalin's rule (see p. 232, note 5).

10 Bridging Separate Worlds

1. In March 1921, sailors from the Kronstadt naval garrison near Petrograd, who had formerly supported the Bolsheviks, rebelled against the Bolshevik government. The rebellion was put down by force.

2. Elena Bonner, *Alone Together* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 92–93.
3. Prikaz GUMZ RSFSR, No. 106, 5 October 1923, GARF f-r. 4042, op. 2, d. 5. l. 124; Tsirkuliar NKVD No. 99, 9 March 1942, GARF f-r. 9401s, op 1a, d. 127, l. 69.
4. Donbas, short for the Donets Basin, is an important coal-mining region in Ukraine.
5. Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 468.
6. Article 58-12 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (1934) stipulated a sentence of not less than six months for non-reporting of counter-revolutionary activity.
7. See Moskovskaia Khel'sinkskaia Gruppa, "Istoriia: Chleny MKhG (1976–1982)," http://www.mhg.ru/history/1B32497; Dissident Movement in Ukraine: Virtual Museum, "Dissidents: Grigorenko, Petro Hryhorovych," http://www.khpg.org/archive/en/index.php?id=1193438393.
8. See David Gillespie, ed., *The Life and Work of Fedor Abramov* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997).
9. Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 465–67.
10. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 484–505; Steven A. Barnes, " 'In a Manner Befitting Soviet Citizens': An Uprising in the Post-Stalin Gulag," *Slavic Review* vol. 64, no. 4 (2005): 823–50.
11. See Arvydas Anusanskas, ed., *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States* (Vilnius: Duka, Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 1999).
12. Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 164–68; John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Littleton, CO: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1980), 130–65.
13. Widespread looting and shipping of goods from Germany back home was encouraged by Soviet authorities. See Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 141–89; Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: The Red Army 1939–1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 277–82.
14. Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1972), 181, 240–41.
15. Jacques Rossi, *The Gulag Handbook: An Encyclopedia Dictionary of Soviet Penitentiary Institutions and Terms Related to the Forced Labor Camps*, trans. William A. Burhans (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 196.
16. Mirko Lamer, *The World Fertilizer Economy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 376.
17. On the different camp regimes, see the introduction to this volume, 5.
18. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, trans. Ronald Hingley and Max Hayward (New York: Bantam Books, 1963). The novel was published in the USSR in 1962, during Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign.
19. A *verst*, a Russian unit of length, equals 3,500 feet.
20. Anna Akhmatova, *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*, trans. Judith Hemshemeyer, ed. Roberta Reeder (Boston, MA: Cannongate Press, 1994), 384–94.
21. Valerii Fedorovich Abramkin, a nuclear scientist, served two three-year terms as a political prisoner (1979–1985). In 1988 he founded the Moscow Center

for Prison Reform. See Moscow Center for Prison Reform, Director of MCPR, http://www.prison.org/english/mcprdir.htm.

22. Z. I. Zubarev and G. V. Kuzovkin, "Issledovaniia: Pisateli-dissidenty, Pod"iapol'skii, Grigorii Sergeevich," http://www.polit.ru/research/2004/08/05/slovar_print.html; Leonard Ternovskii, "Grigorii Pod"iapol'skii," http://www.memo.ru/HISTORY/podjap/vosp25.htm.
23. Bukovsky was exchanged for the leader of the Chilean Communist Party, Luis Corvalan. See Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter*, trans. Michael Scammell (New York: Viking Press, 1979).
24. Rossi, *Gulag Handbook*, 267.
25. Robert Horvath, *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent: Dissidents, Democratization and Radical Nationalism in Russia* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 79–80, 84.
26. See Richard Lourie, *Sakharov: A Biography* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2002); Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs*, trans. Richard Lourie (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).
27. Leonid Nikitinskii, "Mikhail Kazachkov. Stremlenie k schact'iu. Tri popytki," *Novaia Gazeta* (03.08.2007), http://www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2007/color29/13.html.
28. The Strict Regime Barracks (BUR) were disciplinary barracks inside a labor camp; prisoners were locked inside when not working. Beginning in the late 1950s, cell-type facilities (PKT) were used for prisoners in "special-regime corrective labor colonies." Like a prison cell, they contained boards for beds, a latrine pail, and a covered window. And just as in the BUR, the prisoners were allowed out only to go to work. Rossi, *Gulag Handbook*, 367, 152, 308–9.
29. Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1980), 30–62.
30. The Institute of Red Professors was founded in 1921 to create Communist scholars. It was a graduate-level institution specializing in Marxist Social Sciences. See Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning Among the Bolsheviks, 1918–1929* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 21, 51, 62, 133–91.
31. Machine-tractor stations (MTS) were established in 1929 as part of the campaign to collectivize agriculture. As of 1933, they had political departments and became a tool for the regime's social and political control of the peasantry. Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 181–82.
32. *Raikom* is short for *raionnyi komitet,* district committee. The first secretary led the Communist Party at the district level.

11 I So Desired Death

1. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 36, vol. 5, no. 1933.
2. The Nazi-Soviet or Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on August 23, 1939, was a treaty of nonaggression between Germany and the USSR. It also included secret protocols providing for the division of the Polish state between the two powers. On September 1, 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland, claiming their partition

and igniting the Second World War. The Red Army followed suit, invading Poland from the east on September 17. The Polish state, despite much resistance, quickly fell, its territory and people occupied and/or annexed by their conquerors. Significantly, the pact did not deter Hitler from sending his armies to invade the USSR on June 22, 1941.

3. See Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).
4. The Polish Government-in-Exile, located in London, expected the Second World War to be followed by a peace conference. It planned to present evidence there of Soviet breaches of international law and maltreatment of Polish citizens, in hopes of preventing the Soviet annexation of eastern Poland from becoming permanent. Additionally, the Polish Army was searching for some 20,000 of its officers and reservists, detained by Soviet officials in 1939, who were expected to report to duty after the amnesty. Unbeknownst to the outside world at the time, these individuals had been shot early in 1940 on the order of Stalin and Beria.
5. She refers here to the Poles, also freed by the amnesty, from labor camps; they too traveled south in hopes of reaching representatives of the newly-formed Polish army in the USSR.
6. Placing *banki*, hot jars or cups, on a sick person's chest or back is a common folk remedy in Russia.
7. Greczyn's husband was most probably in the Polish armed forces in Egypt, and was able to send money through the Polish army in the USSR. While she never explains what happened to her husband, she notes that, as an officer, he fled their home after the Soviet invasion. Thousands of Polish officers likewise fled Poland at this time, mainly through Romania. Some of them reached French-mandated Syria, where a Polish Independent Carpathian Brigade was formed early in 1940. When France succumbed to the Nazis, these Polish soldiers joined British troops in Palestine; later that year the brigade was moved to Egypt. At one point in her account, Greczyn notes that she received a letter from her husband from Egypt.

12 Fragments

1. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 42, vol. 9, no. 10754.
2. In late 1939, the Germans and Soviets agreed to repatriate refugees from their respective partitions of Poland. A total of 164,000 individuals applied to leave the Soviet-occupied zone for the German-occupied one. See Grzegorz Hryciuk, "Deportacje ludności Polskiej," in *Masowe deportacje radzieckie w okresie II wojny światowej*, ed. S. Ciesielski, G. Hryciuk, and A. Srebrakowski (Wrocław: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1994), 53.
3. See for example, Elinor Lipper, *Eleven Years in Soviet Prisons* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Co., 1951), 83; Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1949), 66; Paulina Wat, "A Selection from the Memoirs of Paulina Wat," in Aleksander Wat, *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 367.

13 Disgusting and Hopeless

1. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 41, vol. 8, no. 10059. Dated 25 March 1943.
2. See Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 245–78.
3. The Soviet regime denounced Poland as a country dominated by lords and the bourgeoisie, and proclaimed class warfare against the Poles.
4. See Eugenia Semyonovna Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967), 353–54; Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas Whitney (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 233.

14 We Will Surely Die

1. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 79, folder 16.
2. She refers to the certificates granted to amnestied Poles, allowing them to leave their places of detention. Without them, they could not legally move about the USSR.
3. Early in 1942 the headquarters of the Anders Army were moved to Ianga Iul, near Tashkent, Uzbekistan (Map 1). The family probably received permission for two of them to come to the army, but it would not have been sufficient, as Irena was with, at the least, her mother and a little brother.

15 Why Did He Ruin Our Happiness?

1. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 80, folder 2.
2. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection, Box 79, folder 16.

16 Fare Thee Well

1. Scientific-Information Center of Memorial, St. Petersburg, Fond 3, opis 33, delo 3.
2. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas Whitney (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 518; Varlam Shalamov, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: AST; Astrel': ASTOL, 2003), 225-26.
3. Interview with Valentin Muravskii conducted by Emily D. Johnson, summer 2006.
4. Much of the biographical information included here was graciously provided by the Scientific-Information Center of Memorial, St. Petersburg.
5. Relations presumably.
6. Like most inmates, Muravskaia tried to number the letters she sent, most of which have not survived.

7. The daughter of one of Rozalia Muravskaia's fellow inmates. Muravskii went to meet her on his mother's advice when he was posted to Izmail. Ksana's husband was, it turned out, the commander of Muravskii's battleship division. Interview with Muravskii conducted by Irina Anatol'evna Flige.
8. Inmates held in Karaganda along with Muravskaia. Muravskii met his mother's friends when he visited Karaganda following the end of his term of service in the navy.
9. Muravskaia's fellow inmates.

Glossary

ASSR—Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic; territorial division based on ethnicity.

Anders Army—Polish Army in the East (1941–1942) commanded by General Władysław Anders; formed on Soviet territory after the Nazi invasion of the USSR in summer 1941, subsequently evacuated to Iran.

Article 58—section of the Criminal Code outlining "counter-revolutionary crimes," used extensively during the Great Terror of the 1930s.

bania—Russian bathhouse.

Beria, Lavrentii—head of the secret police 1938–1953.

Bol'shoi dom—Big House; prison and secret police headquarters on Liteinyi Prospect in Leningrad/St. Petersburg.

Butyrskaia prison, Butyrka, Butyrki—major transit prison in Moscow, used primarily for pretrial investigations and executions.

Cheka—*Chrezvychainaia komissiia po bor'be s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem,* Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage; the secret police 1917–1922; superseded by O/GPU.

dacha—cottage located outside the city; access to one was a privilege enjoyed by families of Communist Party, scientific, and cultural elites.

dekulakization—the process of destroying the *kulaks* as a class, launched in 1929.

de-Stalinization—campaign initiated in 1956 by Khrushchev to rid the Soviet system of some of the ills and excesses of Stalin's rule.

detdom—short for *detskii dom*, orphanage.

Detskii priemnik-raspredelitel'—Children's Receiver-Distributor; administrative entities that took in orphaned children and sent them to their longer-term destinations.

Dubravlag—Dubravnyi camp complex, located in the Mordovian ASSR.

etap—the stages of being conveyed across the country to prison or labor camp.

kartser—punishment cell within prisons and labor camps.

KGB—*Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti,* Committee for State Security; the secret police 1954–91.

Khrushchev, Nikita—leader of the USSR after Stalin's death, ushered in a period of reform in 1956; ousted in 1964.

kolkhoz(y)—collective farm(s).

Kolyma—gold-mining region in the far northeast of Russia, site of a group of labor camps known for their harsh conditions and brutal regime.

Komsomol—*Kommunisticheskii souiz molodezhi*, Communist Union of Youth; organization that served to socialize youth (ages 14–28) into Soviet society.

kommunal'ka—communal apartment; former single-family residence with one family living in each room and all families sharing the kitchen and bathroom.

krai—territory; a territorial division in the RSFSR.

kulak—a supposed wealthy peasant, considered a class enemy.

lagpunkt—short for *lagernyi punkt*, a sub-section of a forced labor camp.

lapti—bast shoes; woven from the bark of a tree, primarily used by poorer people.

Memorial—organization founded late 1980s; provides practical and legal aid to Gulag survivors and their families, collects their oral histories, and advocates for survivors' rights.

Molotov-Ribbentrop (Nazi-Soviet) Pact—treaty of non-aggression between Germany and the USSR, signed August 23, 1939; included secret protocols providing for the division of Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe.

MVD—*Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del*, Ministry of Internal Affairs; the secret police 1946–1954; superseded by the KGB.

NKVD—*Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del*, People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs; the secret police 1934–1946, when it became the MVD.

Noril'sk—city in northern Siberia, center of the Norillag labor camp system.

norm—the output quota for work in a single shift.

oblast—region; territorial division, like a province.

O/GPU—*Ob"edinennoe/Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*, Joint/State Political Administration; the secret police 1922–1934; superseded by the NKVD.

okrug—county; territorial division eliminated in 1930.

osobye lagery—special camps; created in 1948 for political prisoners considered especially dangerous.

patronymic—the second part of an individual's name, made from his/her father's first name.

Pioneers—Young Pioneer Association; Communist Party organization for children aged 10–14.

Polish Government-in-Exile—the legally recognized government of Poland 1939–1945, located first in Paris and then London, following the Nazi and Soviet invasions.

prokurator—prosecutor (procuracy); primarily charged with prosecuting the accused.

raion—district; the smallest territorial division.

RSFSR—Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

Sikorski-Maiskii Pact—treaty signed by USSR and Polish Government-in-Exile on July 30, 1941; announced amnesty for Polish citizens detained in the USSR and the formation of a Polish army on Soviet territory.

sovkhoz—state-owned farm.

spetspereselentsy—special settlers, term used for people punitively exiled, including *kulaks*, Crimean Tatars, and the Poles.

spravka/-ki—official document(s) or certificate(s).

taiga—coniferous forests of the far northern regions of Russia.

Temlag—Temnikovskii camp complex, located in central Russia.

Thaw—period of political and cultural relaxation after Stalin's death, backed by Khrushchev, 1956–1964.

trudarmiia/trudarmeitsy—labor army/workers in the labor army; militarized conscription during the Second World War (usually to construction work), of people considered suspect, typically on the basis of their nationality.

Twentieth Party Congress—meeting of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, February 1956; Khrushchev delivered his "Secret Speech," denouncing some aspects of Stalin's rule.

Viatlag—Viatka Corrective Labor Camps, located in the Volga region of Russia.

vol'nye/vol'nonaemye—free people; individuals with some connection to a camp yet free to enter and leave (often because of their work); also refers to certain categories of exiles.

Vorkuta—a complex of labor camps located north of the Arctic Circle.

zona—zone; area enclosed by barbed wire, denoting a forced labor camp.

Measurement Conversions

gram—one hundred grams is the equivalent of 3.5 ounces
kilogram—one kilogram is equivalent to 2.2 pounds
kilometer—one kilometer is 0.6 of a mile
meter—one meter is a little more than 39 inches

Note on Contributors

Jehanne M Gheith is Associate Professor in the Slavic and Eurasian Studies Department at Duke University, where she is the director of International Comparative Studies. Her current book-length project, "A Dog Named Stalin: Memory, Trauma, and the Gulag," is based on her interviews with Gulag survivors. She has published an article on this research in *Mortality* and has related articles forthcoming in *Gulag Studies* and *Slavic Review*. She co-facilitates bereavement groups and has a Masters of Social Work with a focus on bereavement as a way to further explore connections between bereavement and narration.

Katherine R. Jolluck is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at Stanford University. She specializes in twentieth century Eastern Europe and Russia, particularly the topics of women and war, women in communist societies, nationalism, and human trafficking. Author of *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), she has also published articles on gender, nationalism, and anti-Semitism.

* * *

Cathy Frierson is Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire, where she has held the Arthur K. Whitcomb and Class of 1941 research professorships. She is the author or editor of six books on Russian history and culture, most recently *Children of the Gulag* (Yale University Press, 2010). She received support for the research and translation leading to the interviews in this volume from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, and the International Research and Exchanges Board.

Emily D. Johnson is Associate Professor of Russian language and literature at the University of Oklahoma. Her first monograph, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), won both the SCMLA book prize and the Likhachev fund's Antsiferov prize. She is currently writing a monograph about the correspondence of Soviet labor camp inmates, primarily during the Stalin period. Her work is supported by grants from the Oklahoma Humanities Council, the American Council for

International Education, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.

Robert Ramilevich Latypov is a historian and co-president of the Perm volunteer organization "Memorial for Youth." He directs the historical and educational project of volunteers "On the Rivers of Memory," which conducts expeditions in the places of former special settlements and labor camps with volunteers from all over the world. He has authored several articles dedicated to the history of the political repressions of the Soviet period in the Perm area and the preservation of memories about them. Two volunteers helped him conduct the interview with R. A. Ianke: Ines Udel'nov (Germany) and Svetlana Chashchina (Russia).

Index