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The Forgotten Five per cent: Women, Political Repression and the Purges

Melanie Ilic¹

In her study of *Daughters of Revolution*, Barbara Clements, writing in the early 1990s, correctly pointed out that

As yet there are no systematic studies of how the political persecutions of the Stalin years affected women as a distinct group, but it appears that this Terror was primarily a slaughter of men by men, in which women became involved largely by their proximity to men swept up in it.²

Over a decade later, the first part of this declaration still remains the case. Since 1991 there has been much interest in investigating the mechanics of, and the motivations behind, the 'Great Terror', but we are only now coming to a more detailed study of its victims. We also have available a considerable amount of literature concerning women and the Gulag, arising from both detailed archival investigation into the Soviet forced labour system and oral history projects amongst survivors of the camp network.³ Yet our knowledge of women's direct experiences of the Great Terror, and of the broader waves of political repression under Stalin, remains extremely sketchy. This chapter aims to fill the gap in the literature and historiography of Soviet political repression and the purges by offering an examination of the evidence currently available. This chapter also examines a sample of evidence to test the commonly held assumption that the female victims of the purges were predominantly the wives and other relatives of men who were arrested and executed. Particular reference is made to the social and demographic profiles of women who were executed during the years of the Great Terror in 1937 and 1938.

The impact of the Purges

The various waves of political repression in the 1930s and 1940s, and particularly the Great Terror of 1936–38, had repercussions not only for those who were arrested, but also indirectly, and often with serious consequences, for those left behind. A limited amount of evidence is available for how the arrest of men had an impact on their wives and families during the years of the Great Terror. In material terms, households were deprived of an important source of income; immediate family members, and other more distant relatives, could lose their jobs and even their homes. Yelena Dmitrievna Stasova's letter to the Party Control Commission, dated 9 November 1937, included in Getty and Naumov's recent collection of documents on *The Road to Terror* (document 174), provides a glimpse of such economic hardships:

With the arrest of the men, we have naturally ceased to issue stipends to their families, and they remain without any funds. For this reason, we have recommended that local chapters of our organization help these wives find work. But when they began helping them to find work, the local soviet organizations told them that the International Organization for Rendering Assistance to Fighters for the Revolution (MOPR) had no business getting involved.

I would like to request your instructions as to whether the chapters of our organization should be involved in helping the wives of political émigrés under arrest find work.⁴

Stasova (1873–1966) was herself an Old Bolshevik who had joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) on its foundation in 1898. She had been imprisoned and exiled before the revolution because of her involvement in underground activities. From October 1917 she was a loyal supporter of the Soviet regime.⁵ In 1934 she was involved in the establishment of the World Committee of Women Against War and Fascism.⁶ In 1936, however, she fell under suspicion, charged with Trotskyite associations. She was investigated by the NKVD on a number of occasions, but managed to extricate herself from the charges. With the arrest and imprisonment of close friends and colleagues around her, she withdrew from her role as head of MOPR in 1938 to take up a less politically sensitive post.⁷ Her secretary, Elizaveta Sheveleva, however, was arrested and sent to the camps.

High-profile wives

In addition to the hardships suffered by the families left behind, women were also the direct victims of the purges. The belief that the women who were caught up in the various waves of political repression were mostly the female relatives of men who were persecuted arises largely from what we have known for some time about the high-profile cases of the various leadership elites and Stalin's 'inner circle' in the 1930s. The lives of the high-ranking men who

were purged and executed during the Great Terror have often been recalled in Soviet histories; the arrests and deaths of their wives have so far received little attention. In his study of the Great Terror, Conquest pointed out that Stalin 'had no objection to killing or imprisoning women – in fact "wife" is mentioned as a normal category for execution'.⁸ We also now know that a special order was published at the height of the terror setting out the conditions for the repression of the wives and children of 'traitors of the Motherland'. It is evident that the wives, along with other close female relatives, of many Soviet political and military leaders, as well as leading cultural figures and renowned revolutionaries, lost their party cards, were exiled, arrested and sent to the camps in the 1930s. Many survived their ordeal, but many others did not; they were executed, died during their incarceration or committed suicide.

In addition, women were the victims of repression independently from their husband and their familial connections. Medvedev has noted that

The NKVD and Stalin made no distinction between men and women. Hundreds of thousands of women who had worked for the Party, trade unions, government, and Komsomol, in scientific institutions, the educational system and publishing houses, were arrested and subjected to the same tortures as the men.⁹

On the treatment of purge victims, more recently, Rayfield has pointed out that 'Women Trotskyists shared exile with male Trotskyists, and the wives of Stalin's real or imaginary political opponents were subjected to measures only a degree or two milder than were their husbands, unless they had renounced or divorced them.'¹⁰

For many of the more prestigious female victims of the terror, the purges were a drawn out process, and some approached their fate with a level of inevitability. They had already witnessed the arrest of their husband, other family members, friends and colleagues; they may already themselves have fallen under suspicion and been denied party membership. The very fear of arrest imposed a kind of terror in itself.

Many of these 'politicals' (that is, those who were not specifically identified as criminal elements) were detained in prison – in the Lubyanka, Lefortovo or Butyrka prisons in Moscow, for example¹¹ – before being sent into internal exile, sometimes travelling freely and openly to their chosen destinations. After arrest, either in their usual place of residence or in exile, they were often again held in prison for the duration of their interrogation.¹² After sentencing, they were taken to transit camps (such as the one in Sverdlovsk or Potma; transit prisons also existed, such as the ones in Mariinsk and Saratov), transported directly to the Gulag (with an initial sentence of a period between five and eight years), or executed. In the labour camps, interrogations continued and sentences could be increased (to anything up to a maximum of 25 years). Any children remaining behind were left in the care of relatives or friends, or they were sent to NKVD-run children's homes.

A special transit camp, Potma, was set up in Mordoviya in 1937 to accommodate the wives and female relatives of 'enemies of the Motherland'. Conquest notes that 'Two former wives of Tukhachevsky's, together with Feldman's wife, are reported in a special "Wives and Mistresses" section of Potmalag – a camp area strict as to discipline, but comparatively mild as to living conditions.' He estimated that the camp housed around 7,000 women before it was broken up.¹³ Women were rumoured to have been treated here in accordance with the political importance of their husband (or relative). One of its inmates has described in her memoirs her impressions of arrival at the camp:

Women from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk and other cities were put in the first barrack, to the left of the gates. In the second barrack, which was parallel to the first, they put only Georgian women. To the right of the gates were two more barracks. One was occupied by women from other cities, and in the second one was a kitchen and a big canteen.¹⁴

She estimates that there were 'about five thousand women at the camp', and these included 'many doctors, actresses, singers, and even ballerinas'.¹⁵ The women's section of the camp was broken up around 1940 and the inmates were dispersed to other camps.

We know already of the arrests of the wives and female relatives of some of the leading party members and government personnel during the Great Terror and during the broader course of political repression under Stalin. One of the more notable amongst these is the case of Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov's wife, Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina (1897–1970). Zhemchuzhina first fell under suspicion in 1939, but was not charged at that time. She faced interrogation from 1948 and was finally arrested on 21 January 1949, sent to prison and then to the Gulag, supposedly for her connections with the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee.¹⁶ Zhemchuzhina was released, following a heart-rending plea from Molotov after Stalin's death, in 1953. Having willingly separated from her husband when she first fell under suspicion in order to save her family, Zhemchuzhina (according to one account) initially refused to reconcile with Molotov after her return from the camps on the grounds that he had not

fought strongly enough against her imprisonment. Molotov, a key political figure throughout the Stalin period, in interviews conducted by Chuev in 1986 that formed the basis of his memoirs, was unrepentant. He claimed that it had been necessary to arrest the wives and families of those who were repressed in order to isolate them from the rest of society and to prevent them from spreading complaints and negative attitudes.¹⁷

Despite the fact that Zhemchuzhina was arrested a decade after the height of the Great Terror, in examples such as this, Medvedev has argued that 'The careful calculation in Stalin's crimes is also apparent in those cases where he arrested the wife or some other close relative of a leader, but kept the leader in his important job and continued to meet him both officially and socially.'¹⁸ He cites the further examples of the arrest of the wives of the Soviet president, Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin; Finnish journalist and Comintern activist, Otto Vilhelm Kuusinen (1881–1964); defence ministry operative, Andrei Vasil'evich Khrulev (b. 1892); and Stalin's personal secretary, Aleksandr Nikolaevich Poskrebyshchev, whilst their husbands remained at liberty, as well as the arrest of Anastas I. Mikoyan's two sons and Grigorii (Sergo) K. Ordzhonikidze's brother.

Yekaterina Ivanovna Kalinina (1882–1960) was arrested on 25 October 1938. She was released shortly before her husband's death in 1946, but was then subsequently exiled from Moscow. Aino Andreyevna Kuusinen (1886–1970), also a Comintern official, was arrested on 1 January 1938 whilst her former husband remained at liberty. She was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment, which she spent at Vorkuta until her release in December 1946. She was subsequently rearrested, and spent five years in Potma until her release in 1955. She later published her reminiscences of life in the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Bronislava Poskrebysheva, of Polish-Jewish origin and a sister of Trotsky's daughter-in-law, was executed. When Poskrebyshchev protested against Bronislava's arrest, Stalin offered to find him 'another wife'. Poskrebyshchev himself was not dismissed by Stalin until February 1953.

For those female party activists, like Zhemchuzhina, sometimes arrested independently of their marriage and family connections, Clements has noted that 'middle-class origins, a career in the economic sector and an arrested husband' were a 'dangerous combination'.²⁰ She also points out that 'some wives may have been arrested chiefly to keep them quiet'.²¹ As noted above, Zhemchuzhina's husband was never arrested, but she had been one of the last people to speak with Stalin's wife before her suicide in 1932. She played an important role in Soviet perfume production, and was a highly placed official in the food industries commissariats in the later 1930s. She became People's Commissar for the Fish Industry for a short period in 1939, and was elected as a candidate member of the Central Committee.²²

Rayfield points out that, after the revolution, it was a common practice that 'Wives of leading revolutionaries were placed in inconspicuous but crucial government and party posts'; yet by the 1930s, Rayfield claims rather simplistically that 'Stalin removed women from power as assiduously as he dismissed Jews'.²³ Clements cites the further example of Anna V. Reiman, a trade union activist after the revolution, who was herself denounced as an 'enemy of the people' in 1936, and successfully appealed her expulsion from the Communist Party. However, after the arrest of her husband, Alexander Putyn, she was again expelled from the party, arrested and sent to the camps, this time as a 'wife of an enemy of the people'. She was released in 1946 and rehabilitated in 1955.²⁴

The wives and female relatives of other leading party figures were in many other ways less fortunate. Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin's third wife, Anna Mikhailovna Larina, was separated from her infant son, Yury, when she was exiled and arrested in 1937. On her detention in June 1937, Larina was given a choice of five places to live (Aktyubinsk, Akmolinsk, Astrakhan, Semipalatinsk and Orenburg). She was exiled to Astrakhan, where she was subsequently arrested on 20 September 1937. She was sentenced in 1938, initially to 15 years' imprisonment. She was released from the camps in 1945, but after that remained in exile until her rehabilitation. She did not see her son again until 1956. Anna Larina's mother, Yelena Grigoryevna, was arrested in January 1938. Larina's memoirs detail the meetings she had with other wives and relatives during her own long years of exile and internment.²⁵

The families of Stalin's first wife (Yekaterina Svanidze, m. 1905, d. 1909) and his second wife (Nadezhda Sergeyevna Allilyueva, m. 1918, d. 1932)²⁶ were not spared.²⁷ Yekaterina's sister-in-law, Maria Svanidze, was arrested; Nadezhda's older sister, Anna Sergeyevna Redens (Allilyueva), and sister-in-law, Zhenya Allilyueva, were arrested sometime after her suicide in 1932. Anna Larina notes that Anna Sergeyevna Redens 'returned from exile half-mad'.²⁸ In the case of his own children, a woman rumoured to be Stalin's illegitimate daughter, Praskovya (Pasha) Georgievna Mikhailovskaya, was rounded up and sent to the camps in the 1930s.²⁹ Stalin's daughter-in-law, Yulia Mel'tser, a Jew and mother of Stalin's first grandchild, was imprisoned for two years from October 1941 after his son, Yakov, had been captured (and later shot) by the Germans.

Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaya (1869–1939), and his two surviving sisters, Anna Il'ichna Ul'yanova-Elizarova (1864–1935) and Mariya Il'ichna Ul'yanova (1878–1937), however, weathered the storm; all three appear to have died of natural causes. Indeed, Krupskaya and Mariya Il'ichna are reported to have petitioned Stalin directly on several occasions about the arrest of their colleagues, but were mostly rebuffed. Lenin's personal secretary, Lidya A. Fotieva, also survived unharmed.

Conquest points out that ‘there are many other cases of Old Bolshevik women surviving’.³⁰ A number of leading *Bolshevichki* – such as the surviving former heads of the Communist Party’s Women’s Department, the Zhenotdel,³¹ Klavdiya Ivanovna Nikolaeva (1893–1944)³² and Aleksandra Vasil’evna Artyukhina (1889–1969), and a number of its staffers, including Lyudmila Nikolaevna Stal’ (1872–1939) – seem to have survived the round up of Old Bolsheviks that took place in the 1930s. Even the Soviet Union’s best-known ‘Bolshevik feminist’, Aleksandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, herself feared arrest in 1937 and 1938. Like many others in her position, she was kept under surveillance in her diplomatic post as Soviet ambassador to Sweden, but survived the purges to die a natural death in 1952. There are many examples also of the politically active wives of victims of the Great Terror surviving the round-up of family members. For example, when the People’s Commissar for Justice from 1936, Nikolai V. Krylenko, was arrested and executed in 1938, his wife, Yelena Rozmirovich, continued in her post in the party archives. Central Control Commission functionary E. Yaroslavsky’s wife, Klavdia Kirsanova (1888–1945), rector of the Leninist School of the Comintern, also escaped arrest, despite falling under suspicion and being dismissed from her job in 1936.³³

Other *Bolshevichki*, however, did suffer. For example, Ol’ga Vladimirovna Pilatskaya (1884–1937) joined the RSDLP in 1904. She worked in Moscow after revolution as a Cheka operative, and then moved to the Ukraine in 1922, where she headed the Ukrainian Zhenotdel from 1926 to 1930. She was arrested in 1937. Polish-born Ruzia Yosifovna Chernyak (b. 1900; née Todorskaya) joined the Bolsheviks in 1917 and conducted political work in the Red Army after the revolution. She was arrested in 1937, and died in prison.

The arrest of family members

The practice of arresting relatives because of their association with individuals engaged in counter-revolutionary activities was not specific to the Stalin era, but measures were introduced in the 1930s that formalised this process. Female relatives had fallen victim to the various rounds of arrest and persecution that took place against counter-revolutionaries, political oppositionists and the so-called *kulaks* (rich peasants) during the Civil War of 1918–20, the various non-Bolshevik activists during the 1920s, and in the years of collectivisation and dekulakisation from the late 1920s. Many of those arrested during the early years of Soviet rule were forced into internal exile, labour colonies and resettlement camps. This practice continued into the late 1930s and early 1940s with the forcible uprooting and resettlement of various national and ethnic groups in the immediate pre war period – partly in connection with the annexation of the Baltic States – and in the early years of the Second World War.

The formal criminalisation of ‘members of the family of traitors of the Motherland’ was first introduced on 8 June 1934 against the relatives of serving military personnel who had fled abroad. Family members remaining in the Soviet Union could be detained in the labour camps for a period of time between five or ten years, or sent into exile in Siberia for five years.³⁴ Commenting on the application of these regulations, Medvedev has argued,

Both in letter and in spirit the law applied to the families of people who were beyond the reach of the courts because they had fled abroad. Even in such cases it was unjust to punish not the traitor himself but his relatives, most of whom were quite innocent.³⁵

The pressure on otherwise innocent family members was increased in the wake of the assassination of the Leningrad party boss, Sergei Mironovich Kirov, on 1 December 1934. Thousands of people (or, using Soviet parlance, ‘former people’ – members of the aristocracy, clergy and the bourgeoisie, for example) were expelled from Leningrad in the aftermath of the murder.³⁶ Junge and Binner state that 11,702 Leningrad residents were expelled between 28 February and 27 March 1935.³⁷

The pressure on family members increased even further with the staging of the show trials from 1936. Medvedev, in identifying ‘Other Causes of Mass Repression’, argues that, ‘Another reason the repression of 1936–38 became so massive was the practice of arresting relatives of “enemies”, especially wives, grown children, and often brothers, sisters, and parents.’³⁸

It is now evident that by May 1937, after the second show trial, plans were being put in place to extend the scope of the terror. Our knowledge of these events is enhanced by recently released documents from the Russian presidential and FSB (security services) archives. According to one of these recently published documents, a ‘top secret’ memorandum of 22 May 1937, signed by Yezhov, estimated that more than 4,000 individuals, who had previously been expelled from the Communist Party for their involvement in ‘Trotskyist-Zinovievite activities’ or participation in ‘anti-Soviet activities’, were still living in Moscow. There were also 2,500 family members of people who had been ‘repressed’ for their involvement in ‘Trotskyist-Zinovievite, terrorist and espionage activities’ still resident in the city. Amongst these there were more than 300 individuals who had earlier been employed in party

and government organisations, or in the economic and trade union apparatus, who, having lost their jobs, were now suspected of having connections with 'anti-Soviet elements' and in involvement in activities against the party. A similar pattern was identified for other organisations in the running of the national economy and educational and cultural institutions. Moscow was also experiencing the 'uninterrupted inflow' of people expelled from other towns. Of the 4,000 'Trotskyists and Zinovievites' living in Moscow, around 1,150 were not in paid employment. It was feared that these people, and those in other cities, constituted the basis for enemy activities against the state.³⁹

On 23 May 1937 the Politburo introduced a decree that ordered the expulsion from Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev of all those who had been excluded from the Communist Party because of their associations with opposition groupings, and expression of hostile opinions and disseminating them in the press. Under the terms of this decree, family members of 'Trotskyists, Zinovievites, Rightists, former Democratic Centralists (*Detsistov*), and members of other anti-Soviet terrorist and espionage organisations' could be tried and sentenced to five or more years of loss of freedom and sent to an alternative place of residence. Consideration was also being given to their designated place of exile.⁴⁰ A Politburo decree of 8 June 1937 'on the exile of family members of Trotskyists and Rightists' ordered the transfer of exiles from the Azov-Black Sea *krai* to 'one of the regions [*raion*] of Kazakhstan'.⁴¹

Within a matter of days, by 15 June 1937 Yezhov had drawn up another instruction ordering the exile of those expelled from the ranks of the Communist Party, along with their families, from six cities: the three named in the May decree, plus Rostov, Taganrog and Sochi. The designated places of exile were in Central Asia, Bashkiriya, Krasnoyarskii *krai*, and the Northern, Kirov, Orenburg, Omsk and Chelyabinsk regions. In most instances, the new place of residence was to be determined by the NKVD. Once the decision was made, families were given five days to pack up their things and to make their own way to the new place of residence. The period from 25 June to 25 July 1937 was indicated for the implementation of this instruction, and action was taken exclusively against those who had been expelled from the Communist Party.⁴² On 19 June 1937, Stalin ordered the immediate expulsion from Moscow of the wives of the following 'convicted leaders': Tukhachevskii, Kork, Uborevich, Yakir (from Kiev), Gamarnik, Rudzutak, Eideman, Fel'dman, Magalif, Yagoda, Lifshits, Radek and Bukharin.⁴³

It is evident from the above that the period from May to July 1937 was crucial in the build up to the period of 'mass repression'. The Politburo decree 'on anti-Soviet elements' was introduced on 2 July.⁴⁴ The now infamous '*kulak* order', Order No. 00447 'on the punishment of former *kulaks*, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements', dated 30 July 1937, became operational from 5 August.⁴⁵ The *kulak* order stated that, as a rule, family members of those convicted under its terms were not to be subject to arrest. The exceptions to this were families deemed capable of anti-Soviet activity, who were to be sent to the Gulag or to labour colonies; the families of those subject to execution under the terms of the Order, living in border regions, were to be relocated to the interior regions; the families of those executed under the terms of the Order, living in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tbilisi, Baku, Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog and the districts of Sochi, Gagry and Sukhumi, were to be relocated to regions of their choice, except near the borders. The families of all of those subject to execution or confinement were to be registered and placed under systematic surveillance. Over the next year and a half, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested, and many of these were sentenced to execution.

Order No. 00486 'On the Repression of Wives'

Recent research on the purges, and particularly the period of the 'mass repressions' (July 1937 to November 1938), has revealed that specific campaigns were directed against selected sections of society, although their impact was almost certainly wider than that intended by the original legislation. In comparison with the *kulak* order and the various nationalities campaigns initiated during the period of mass repression,⁴⁶ however, Order No. 00486 'On the Repression of Wives of Enemies and Traitors of the Motherland, of Members of Right-Trotskyist Espionage-Sabotage Organisations Sentenced by the Military Collegia and by Military Tribunals' has received very little attention.⁴⁷ Even Getty and Naumov's detailed documentary study of *The Road to Terror* makes no direct mention of this particular order. Given the paucity of literature on Order No. 00486, it is worth examining the background to it and its terms in some detail.

Having secured the exile of wives from the major cities, the Politburo and the NKVD turned their attention to what to do with them. On 5 July 1937, the Politburo issued a decree recommending the implementation of measures proposed by the NKVD to confine the wives of convicted enemies of the motherland, and members of Rightist-Trotskyist espionage-sabotage organisations, to the labour camps for a period of between five and eight years. The decree recommended the establishment of special labour camps for this purpose in the Narymskii *krai* and Turgaiskii *raion* of Kazakhstan. The NKVD was to take measures to imprison the wives and to house their children.⁴⁸

Operational Order No. 00486, dated 15 August 1937, required the 'repression' of the 'wives of enemies of the

Motherland', who had been arrested since 1 August 1936 (under the terms set out in the title of the Order). The Order required the investigating bodies to compile a dossier on family relatives, which was to include information on the head of the family (usually the individual who had already been put on trial), his wife and children over 15 years of age, and also his parents. The information was to be forwarded to the republican level NKVD, and to leading NKVD personnel at *krai* and *oblast'* level, who were then to sanction the arrest and interrogation.

The Order applied to both legal and common-law wives. It applied also to divorced wives, who had associations with the counter-revolutionary activities of their former husband; who had helped him in evading arrest; and who knew of his counter-revolutionary activities, but failed to report him to the authorities. The Order for arrest was not to be applied to wives who were pregnant or breastfeeding; who were seriously ill, or had a contagious disease; or who were of an advanced age. These women were to give an undertaking that they would not change their place of residence, and they were to remain under close observation. The Order for arrest also did not apply to a wife who had denounced her husband and reported him to the authorities, leading to the investigation and subsequent arrest of the husband.

Simultaneously with the arrest, a search was to be made of the place of residence and the removal was sanctioned of the following objects: weapons; ammunition; explosive and chemical substances; military equipment; copying equipment; counter-revolutionary literature; correspondence; foreign currency; precious metals in the form of ingots, coins and pieces; personal documents; and financial documentation. All personal possessions on the individual at the time of the arrest (with the exception of necessary linens, outer and underwear, shoes and other essentials carried with them) were to be confiscated. Their living quarters were to be sealed. If underage children, parents or other family members remained at the place of residence, then essential personal property (furniture, and so on) could be left behind for their use.

After the interrogation was completed, the wife was to be transported to a place of detention (prison).⁴⁹ The case was then handed over to the Osoboe Soveshchanie (Special Commission) of the NKVD USSR. For those not sentenced by the Osoboe Soveshchanie, the case was forwarded to the NKVD of the Far East and Krasnoyarsk *krai*, and Western Siberian *oblast'*, who were to inform the family by telegram of the outcome of their investigations and to provide details of the wife's place of detention (labour camp). According to this Order, wives could be classified as 'socially harmful' elements and were subject to detention for between five and eight years. The Osoboe Soveshchanie was to report on the numbers of arrests to the higher NKVD agencies, and case files were to be stored in the NKVD archives. The women were to be detained in specialist labour camps for the 'wives of enemies of the Motherland' (*zhen izmennikov rodiny: ZhIR*). The Order specifically named the Temnikovskii correctional labour camp, but other camps were also used.⁵⁰ Those wives who were investigated but not arrested because of incapacity, and so on, were to be arrested and sent to the camps immediately on recovery. Similar regulations were applied to nursing mothers and elderly women. The process of arrests put in place by Order No. 00486 was due to be completed by 25 October 1937. The order was signed by Yezhov in his capacity as head of the NKVD.

The terms of Order No. 00486 were subsequently applied also to the various nationalities campaigns in the early period of the mass repressions. Petrov and Roginskii's recent study of the 'Polish Operation' demonstrates that the application of Order No. 00486 placed excessive pressure on the NKVD, the labour camps and colonies, and the children's homes. They argue that 'the flood of new prisoners ... turned out to be far greater than expected, prison space was scarce and the orphanages of the secret police were also overcrowded'.⁵¹ According to this study, faced with such pressure, Yezhov was forced to cancel the Order on 21 November 1937, directing instead all further detainees to exile rather than the camps.

From 22 November 1937 it does seem to be the case that the NKVD authorities were trying to keep closer tabs on the numbers of wives and children arrested under Order No. 00486 and the various national operations. On this date, Yezhov's deputy, Mikhail P. Frinovskii, sent out a telegram saying that the original terms of Order No. 00486 should be extended only to the families of those tried by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Soviet. The arrest of wives of those repressed under the Polish, *Kharbintsy* (Harbin re-emigrants) and Romanian operations were to be discontinued. In future, these wives were to be resettled. The telegram called for statistical data to be forwarded on the numbers of women and children involved in these operations.⁵²

The information was soon forthcoming. On 28 November 1937, S[tanislav] F. Redens reported on behalf of the Moscow *oblast'* that 540 women had been arrested: 320 in connection with convictions by the Military Collegium, and 220 in connection with the Polish and Harbin operations. A total of 389 of these had been convicted: 264 and 125 respectively. In addition, 151 wives were being held in prisons, and a further 910 wives were to be exiled from Moscow in connection with the various listed national operations.⁵³

A 'top secret' memorandum to Frinovskii dated 1 December 1937 noted that 454 wives had been arrested in Chelyabinsk *oblast'*. Of these, 41 had been tried and convicted. The investigations in a further 333 cases had been completed and forwarded to the Osoboe Soveshchanie, and 80 cases remained under investigation. 190 wives were being detained at their place of residence: seven had been tried and convicted; investigations were completed and

forwarded to the Osoboe Soveshchanie in 40 cases; and 143 remained under investigation. A total of 242 wives of those tried by the Military Collegia and military tribunals were liable for arrest, and there were a further 500 wives of Harbin deserters in the region.⁵⁴

From Kiev, Leplevskii reported in another top secret memorandum to Frinovskii dated 1 December 1937 that 1479 wives of those convicted by the Military Collegium for 'Right-Trotskyist' activities and military conspiracy were being kept under surveillance. A further 4493 wives of those arrested under the Polish, German, Romanian and Harbin operations were also being kept under surveillance; 4,151 children had been taken away from them and in most cases placed in children's homes; 12,349 wives (and 18,951 children) had already been subject to resettlement.⁵⁵

Lavrushin reported on behalf of Gor'kii *oblast'* on 2 December 1937. Here, a total of 102 wives had been arrested in connection with the various national operations: 47 Poles, 28 *Kharbintsy* and 13 Germans; plus a number of women being detained at their place of residence: six Poles, seven *Kharbintsy*, and one German. A further 146 women had been repressed as wives of enemies of the Motherland, members of Right-Trotskyist organisations, or had been arrested along with their husband and were awaiting the outcome of investigations.⁵⁶ In a statement to Yezhov, dated 11 December 1937, Dmitriev noted the arrest and investigation of 822 wives of those repressed as enemies of the Motherland in the Sverdlovsk *oblast'*.⁵⁷

In Ivanovo, Radzivilovskii reported that a total of 102 wives had been arrested under Order No. 00486 by 9 January 1938. A further 37 cases were awaiting a decision, where the wife had not yet been arrested, but had given an undertaking not to change address. In addition, 17 cases were liable to arrest, some coming from other areas of the country. Under the Polish, Harbin and German operations, 65 wives had been arrested (along with 58 children and 13 non-working family members); 47 children had been returned to their mothers. This memorandum specifically noted that no 'errors' or 'excesses' had been reported in this region.⁵⁸

By the early autumn of 1938 the mass operations were beginning to wind down, and they were halted altogether at the end of November. An informational memorandum to Stalin, dated 15 October 1938, noted that more than 18,000 wives had been arrested under the terms of Order No. 00486 since its introduction in August 1937. More than 3,000 of these were from Moscow, and around 1500 were from Leningrad. The memorandum recommended the downscaling of the operation.⁵⁹

Formal amendments to Order No. 00486 were introduced on 17 October 1938. Order No. 00689 'on the 1937 operational order of the NKVD SSSR "on the system of arrest of wives of enemies of the Motherland as Right-Trotskyist spies"' was signed by Yezhov and Beria.⁶⁰ Henceforth, not all wives of those tried as enemies of the people were to be arrested, but only those who were themselves directly involved in counter-revolutionary work alongside their husbands, or assisted them in this. For future arrests, the NKVD was required to have available details of the wife's anti-Soviet sentiments and opinions, and that these should be of such a nature to deem her as a 'politically questionable' or 'socially harmful' element.

The NKVD was to 'take all necessary measures' to improve its intelligence on the wife's (and other family members') opinions and behaviour, recruiting the wives of other accused and arrested 'enemies of the people' to provide this aid in the provision of such information. Parents, friends, work colleagues, neighbours and other acquaintances (at their place of work, or in their housing complex) were also to be used to provide intelligence. In the first instance, the wives of the 'most, active and malicious enemies of the people, traitors to the Motherland and Right-Trotskyist spies' were to be cultivated for this work. The appropriate organ of the NKVD was to make decisions about the arrest and repression of wives based on this intelligence, the degree to which the wife was involved in her husband's counter-revolutionary activities, how long they had been living together, and so on. The requirement to arrest the wife of a suspected enemy of the people at the same time as her husband, as set down in point 36 of Order No. 00486, was revoked and the terms of the revised Order were now to be applied. Other procedures set out in the original Order, however, were to remain unchanged.

It is not yet known exactly how many women were arrested, interrogated and imprisoned under the terms of Order No. 00486 – as noted earlier, an estimate of 18,000 was made in October 1938 – or to which camps or places of exile they were sent; it is not yet known how many were executed. And we do not know how many women were similarly treated under the terms of other decrees and orders. A recent publication by Memorial lists 7259 women who were sent to the Akmolinsk women's labour camp at Karaganda, mostly in the period 1938–40.⁶¹

Database analysis

It is evident from the eyewitness testimonies available to us that the forced labour camps were overcrowded with the 'wives' (ZhIR) and 'family members' (ChSIR) of 'enemies of the people' by the late 1930s and in the 1940s. The vast majority of those who survived the Stalin years had been released by the 1950s, and most were subsequently rehabilitated. Official estimates place the total number of people (men and women) who were executed in the

period from 1921 to 1939 at 747,772. Of these, 681,692 executions took place in the two years of 1937 and 1938 alone.⁶² Executions continued into the 1940s. A more detailed and nuanced analysis of the available data on the female victims of the Great Terror is now warranted.

Of particular interest to this study are the ordinary women who were arrested and executed under the full spectrum of charges employed by the authorities during the Great Terror, and particularly during the months of the mass operations. The shift in interest from the mechanics of the terror to the profile of its victims, as well as the economic and social impact of political repression, now makes a more detailed analysis of 'women and the purges' possible. This study is aided by the many regional listings of purge victims that have been published in Russia and the former Soviet republics since 1991. The analysis provided in this section is based on evidence of arrests, trials and executions drawn from the following regions: Alma-Ata; Bashkirostan; Khanty-Mansiiskii autonomous *oblast'*; Komi; Leningrad; Mordoviya; Moscow; Tyumen'; Ul'yanovsk; and Voronezh.

My preliminary study of the impact of the Great Terror in Leningrad provided an insight in to the numbers and social categories of women who were executed in the city and region in the early phase of mass repression (mostly October and November 1937).⁶³ From datasets constructed for this study from the first two volumes of *Leningradskii martirolog*, I pointed out that 'Very few women were victims of the purges. From the larger dataset under analysis here it seems that less than 4 per cent of those executed were women.' Rayfield also points out that '95 per cent of those sentenced to the camps or to death for counter-revolutionary activity were men', and, on the basis of estimates taken from 47,000 cases detailed in the 'Leningrad Martyrology', '95 per cent of those shot were men'.⁶⁴ In his study of the impact of the Great Terror in the Donbas, Kuromiya also pointed out that 'men were far more likely to be repressed than women'.⁶⁵

If my preliminary estimates are taken as giving a rough proximity of between 3.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent of all executions, this would mean that somewhere between around 24,000 and 30,000 women were shot in the years of the Great Terror. A calculation of 5 per cent gives a total of approximately 34,000. Who were all of these women?

As part of the earlier Leningrad study, I also advised that

... by far the largest single 'occupational' category of women who fell victims of the terror were former or active religious personnel, mostly nuns but also a few individuals who were recorded as church elders and psalm readers. These tended to be older women who did not work and, presumably, had no family or maternal responsibilities.⁶⁶

It is not clear from the majority of the regional listings of the victims of political repression if the women who were executed during the years of the Great Terror were arrested under Order No. 00486; it is probable, given their social profile, that many were not. The evidence to suggest that many of the women who were executed during the period of mass repression were *not* the 'wives of enemies of the Motherland' can be summarised as follows: they were disproportionately single; some were already in detention for their own political affiliations; many others had connections to former and surviving religious organisations or communities.

Marital status

Few of the regional listings record the individual's marital status, but where data are available – as in the case of Mordoviya, for example⁶⁷ – a far higher proportion than would generally be expected are recorded as 'single'; a few others are listed as 'widow'. Marriage and motherhood do appear to have offered at least some degree of protection to ordinary women during the purges.

Political affiliation

From the limited amount of data available relating to political affiliation, it is highly probable that some of the women who were executed suffered this fate because of their own party connections, not those of their husband. Many wives did opt to follow their husband into exile; other female political oppositionists married whilst in exile. Communist Party – full and candidate – members, as well as members of the Jewish Social Democratic organisation, the Bund, and the party's youth section, the Komsomol, were amongst the victims of the purges, especially during the years of the Great Terror.

The most well-known opposition groups recorded in the listings are the former Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs, both Left and Right), most of whom had already been placed on trial and exiled in the 1920s, the Mensheviks and its youth organisation, Georgian Communists, and former 'Trotskyites'. Other smaller and less well-known opposition groupings are also listed in the sources. These include *Dashnaks* (members of the Armenian Nationalist

Party) and ‘anarchists’. A trial of former Mensheviks was held in March 1931. A further round-up of the Left SRs took place in February 1937 (see the case noted below), before the introduction of Order No. 00486. Many of the surviving political oppositionists were executed after the outbreak of war in 1941. Rayfield notes that ‘From Oriol prison, reserved for prominent political prisoners ... 154 were taken into the forests and shot. They included an unusual number of women, among them Trotsky’s sister Olga Kameneva and the legendary Social Revolutionary Mariia Spiridonova.’⁶⁸ The Socialist Revolutionary activist Ye. Olitskaya has left an account of her imprisonment experiences.⁶⁹ The Menshevik organiser Eva Broido, arrested on her return to the Soviet Union in 1927/28, is also believed to have been executed in (June?) 1941.⁷⁰

There is very limited information on political affiliation available in the sources of data used for the analysis in this chapter, but it is worth citing a few examples here. Sof’ya Arkad’evna Bogoyavlenskaya-Lunina (b. 1892) was already living in exile, as a former member of the Left SRs, at the time of her arrest in Khanty-Mansiisk on 8 February 1937. She was tried on 5 August 1937, and executed five days later.⁷¹ Likewise, Yelena Mikhailovna Gendel’man (b. 1910) was also already living in exile, because of her membership of the Menshevik youth organisation, at the time of her arrest in Tobol’sk on 8 February 1937. She was sentenced on 5 August 1937 and executed two days later.⁷² Anna Aronovna Sangorodetskaya (b. 1894) was living in exile, as a ‘member of an anarchist party’, at the time of her arrest on 21 March 1937. She was also tried on 5 August 1937, and was executed on 12 August 1937.⁷³

Religious associations

A significant proportion of the women who were executed have an occupational listing in our databases as serving or former religious personnel. These women are listed as nuns (*monashka*; *monakhinya*), Mothers Superior (*igumen’ya*),⁷⁴ church attendants (*prisluzhnitsa tserkvi*), churchwardens (*tserkovnyi starosta*) and psalm readers (*psalomshchitsa*). Others are listed more simply as members of secret religious sects or cults (*skrytnitsa-sektantka*; *sluzhitel’nitsa kul’ta*).⁷⁵ Some were simply listed as former church members (*byv. chlen tserkov*). Some former nuns have a secondary listing as ‘housewife’ (see below). It may be assumed from this data that many of these women were unmarried. On a very few isolated occasions a woman was listed as the wife of a priest (*popad’ya*).⁷⁶

In examining the social status of the female victims of Soviet political repression more closely, it seems that many women fell into what could be considered to be economically non-productive groups. These included not only religious personnel (as noted above), but also housewives (*domokhozyaika*) and those who were recorded in the data as ‘not working’ (*ne rabotala*; *nerabotayushchaya*) or in some other way were identified as ‘unemployed’ (*bez opredelennykh zanyatii*). Other, we may assume, economically dependent groups occasionally found in the listings are pensioners (*pensionerka*) and invalids (*invalid*).

Another determinant of the level of economic contribution could be an individual’s age. Of seven women executed in Voronezh in 1937 and 1938, only two were under 50 years of age, and one of these was 48. The eldest was 71 years old. The mean age for these seven women was 57 years. This pattern was followed in other areas of the country. Where sampled, for Moscow and Leningrad, the average age of women who were executed in major urban areas appears to have been lower. Even in the metropolitan centres, though, a significant number of women who were executed fall into the ‘60 years plus’ age cohort. The ages of many of the women who were executed ranged into the seventies, and on rare occasions the eighties.

In regions that were used as places of exile and incarceration – such as Komi and Tyumen’ – exiles (*ssyl’naya*), special settlers (*spetposelenka*), labour camp inmates (*trudposelenka*) and prisoners (*zaklyuchennaya*) often appear in the listings. We may assume that many of these women made no or only a limited contribution to the local economy. These were also people who had already obviously fallen foul of the Soviet system. Women also placed themselves outside the propagated norms of Soviet social and economic behaviour by continuing to farm their own land independently of the *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*. Women independent peasants (*krest’yanka edinolichnitsa*) were particular targets of political repression.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought to the attention of scholars of the purges the experiences of many of the female victims of political repression in the Soviet Union under Stalin, particularly in the 1930s. It has outlined the processes by which ‘wives’ and other female family members came to be arrested during the period of the mass operations in 1937 and 1938 (and later) by offering a detailed study of the background to the introduction of specific decrees aiming to do just that. In this respect, the foundations for mass repression can be traced back as early as 1934, and its impact was certainly being felt after November 1938. The charges of ZhIR and ChSIR were still being used against women arrested in the early years of the Second World War. The chapter has also provided a detailed outline of the content and terms of Order No. 00486.

In addition, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that many of the female victims of ‘Stalin’s terror’ were not, in fact, the wives, or other family members, of men who were purged, as has been widely supposed up to now. Most of the ‘ordinary’ women who were arrested and executed can be identified as individuals who in one way or another did not correspond with the new Soviet way of life in the 1930s, through their own religious or political affiliations, or through their failure to contribute in some way to the socialist economy, for example. It is mainly these women that history has forgotten.

Notes

1. I am particularly grateful to Mary Buckley and Elizabeth White for their helpful comments on this chapter.
2. B. E. Clements, *Daughters of Revolution: A History of Women in the USSR* (Illinois, 1994) p. 77.
3. For a useful introduction to women’s experiences of the Gulag that cites some of the archival sources and memoir literature, see E. Mason, ‘Women in the Gulag in the 1930s’, in M. Ilic (ed.), *Women in the Stalin Era* (Basingstoke, 1999) pp. 131–50. See also S. Vilensky (ed.), *Till My Tale is Told: Women’s Memoirs of the Gulag* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999); V. Shapovalov (ed. and trans.), *Remembering the Darkness: Women in Soviet Prisons* (Oxford, 2001); and the extracts contained in S. Fitzpatrick and Yu. Slezkine (eds), *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War* (Princeton, 2000).
4. J. Arch Getty and O. V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (London, 1999), pp. 485–6, citing RTsKhIDNI (now Rossiskoigosudarstvennyiarkhiv sotsial’no-polititicheskoi istorii [henceforth RGASPI]), 356/2/30, 1–3, 5.
5. For details of Stasova’s early career, see V. I. Berezhkov and S. V. Pekhtereva, *Zhenshchiny-chekistki* (Moscow, 2003) pp. 67–100. Stasova was known in the party as Comrade Absolute. In a row with Krupskaya, Stalin once threatened to name Stasova as Lenin’s official widow.
6. For more on Stasova’s career under Stalin and her involvement in the Comintern from 1935 to 1943, see her entry in the *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern* (Stanford, 1986).
7. For more on Stasova’s unpaid work as head of MOPR from 1928 to 1938, her own fate during the purges and reminiscences of political repression under Stalin, see B. E. Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge, 1997).
8. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties* (London, 1971) p. 120.
9. R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (London, 1976) p. 201, n 9.
10. D. Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen: an Authoritative Portrait of a Tyrant and Those who Served Him* (London, 2004) p. 257.
11. The Lefortovo military prison was rumoured to be a site of ‘horrific tortures’. See Anna Larina, *This I Cannot Forget: The Memoirs of Nikolai Bukharin’s Widow* (London, 1993) p. 245.
12. On rare occasions the NKVD investigating officer was female. Medvedev notes the example of Sonya Ya. Ul’yanova, who was ‘unprincipled, cruel’. See *Let History Judge*, pp. 218, 285.
13. Conquest, *Great Terror*, pp. 310, 461.
14. See the extract from Liudmila Ivanovna Granovskaia’s memoirs in Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, p. 247.
15. Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, p. 247. Granovskaia notes incidents of mental breakdown and suicide attempts in the camp.
16. Medvedev notes that, in the late 1940s, ‘Almost all members of the Jewish Antifascist Committee were arrested, and most were shot. (Academician Lena Shtern was exiled.)’ See *Let History Judge*, p. 484.
17. On the case of Zhemchuzhina, see L. Vasilieva, *Kremlin Wives* (London, 1994) chapter 10; for Molotov’s memoirs, see F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* (Moscow, 1986); and for Molotov’s own role in the purges, see D. H. Watson, *Molotov: A Biography* (London, 2005).
18. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 309. See also C. Hooper, ‘Terror and Intimacy: Family Politics in the 1930s Soviet Union’, in C. Kiaer and E. Naiman (eds), *Everyday Lives in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington, Indiana, 2005).
19. A. Kuusinen, *Before and After Stalin: A Personal Account of Soviet Russia from the 1920s to the 1960s* (London, 1974). Aino was Otto’s first wife.
20. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, p. 285. 21. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
22. For more on Zhemchuzhina’s arrest and involvement with the Jewish Antifascist Committee, see J. Rubinstein and V. P. Naumov (eds), *Stalin’s Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee* (London, 2001).
23. Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, pp. 90, 257.
24. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, p. 285.
25. For the memoirs of Bukharin’s wife, originally published in Russian during the years of *glasnost*’ under Gorbachev, see Larina, *This I Cannot Forget*.
26. Stalin and Nadezhda did not officially register their relationship until sometime after they started to live together; she committed suicide by shooting herself in 1932. The doctors who signed the report on her death were later executed.
27. Medvedev argues that the claim put forward by Svetlana Alliluyeva (the daughter of Stalin and Nadezhda Alliluyeva) that Beria was responsible for the arrest of her family members was ‘a deliberate lie’. See Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 197.
28. Larina, *This I cannot Forget*, p. 299. Anna Sergeevna’s husband, Stanislav Redens, was a senior official in the Moscow secret police in the early 1930s. He was responsible for much of the political repression in Moscow during the Great Terror and for the decimation of the party and government leadership in Kazakhstan in 1937. He was subsequently arrested and shot.

29. Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, pp. 13, 459, citing B. S. Ilizarov, *Tainaya zhizn' Stalina* (Moscow, 2002) pp. 284–6.
30. Conquest, *Great Terror*, p. 120.
31. Sofia Nikolaevna Smidovich (b. 1872) died in 1934.
32. Nikolaeva was one of only two women (with Krupskaya) to sit as full members on the 1934 Central Committee. She was also on the 1939 Central Committee, despite the fact that she was, according to Conquest (*Great Terror*, p. 121), 'an ex-Zinovievite'.
33. See her entry in the *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*.
34. Memorial, *Uznitsy 'ALZhIRa': spisok zhenshchin-zaklyuchennykh Akmolinskogo i drugikh otdelenii Karlaga* (Moscow, 2003) p. 7.
35. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 342.
36. Memorial, *Uznitsy 'ALZhIRa'*, p. 7.
37. For details, see M. Yunge [Junge] and R. Binner, *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim': sekretnyi prikaz No. 00447 i tekhnologiya ego ispolneniya* (Moscow, 2003) p. 186.
38. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 341.
39. 'Spetssoobshchenie N. I. Yezhova I. V. Stalinu "ob isklyuchennykh iz VKP(b) trotskistakh i pravyykh, prozhivayushchikh v Moskve"', in *Lubyanka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937–1938* (comps V. N. Khaustov, V. P. Naumov and N. S. Plotnikova) (Moscow, 2004) p. 186, citing Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (henceforth APRF), 3/24/305, 56–7.
40. Memorial, *Uznitsy 'ALZhIRa'*, p. 8, citing RGASPI, 17/162/21, 45.
41. *Lubyanka*, p. 216, citing APRF, 3/24/306, 170.
42. Memorial, *'Uznitsy ALZhIRa'*, p. 8, citing Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (RGANI), 6/13/3, 45–51.
43. 'Zapiska I. V. Stalina "ovysylkezhden osuzhdennykh rukovoditelei"', *Lubyanka*, p. 226, citing APRF, 3/24/309, 131–131ob. In her memoirs, p. 57, Anna Larina dates her exile from Moscow as 11 June 1937, which she indicates was also the time of the trial and execution of the military command.
44. For subsequent amendments and additions, see Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, pp. 470–1 (3 July 1937); and *Lubyanka*, p. 239, citing APRF, 3/58/212, 33, provides details of article 145 of the 5 July 1937 decree, and article 187 of the 9 July 1937 decree 'On Anti-Soviet Elements', concerning the establishment of regional *troikas*.
45. The text of the 'kulak order' was published in *Trud* on 4 June 1992. For the most detailed study to date, see Yunge and Binner, *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim'*. For a full English-language translation of the Order, see also Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, pp. 473–9.
46. For a useful study, see B. McLoughlin and K. McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Basingstoke, 2003).
47. The text of Order No. 00486 was first published in Memorial-Aspekt, no. 2/3, 1993. See also *Sbornik zakonadatel'nykh i normativnykh aktov o repressiyakh i rehabilitatsii zhertv politicheskikh repressii* (Kursk, 1999) pp. 430–7; and *Pamyat': zhertv politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000) pp. 699–710.
48. 'Postanovlenie Politburo TsK VKP(b) "vopros NKVD"', *Lubyanka*, pp. 238–9, citing APRF, 3/58/174, 107. See also Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, pp. 240–1.
49. The Order also gave details of what was to happen to children over 15 years of age who were subject to arrest.
50. Many of the specialist women's camps, for 'wives of enemies of the Motherland', were short lived.
 - Akmolinsk (ALZhIR) – part of the forced labour network in Karaganda (Karlaga) – 'barracks for three to four hundred people. Up to eight thousand women were jammed into the camp'. See Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 341, citing B. D'iakov, *Povesi' o perezhitom* (Moscow, 1966) pp. 180–1; another account suggests that 'At the end of the 1930s, there were about two thousand women prisoners in this camp.' See Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, p. 223.
 - Elgen, the women's disciplinary camp in the Kolyma area;
 - Kolyma, 'where tens of thousands of women did construction and agricultural labor' (Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 342). On Kolyma, see also R. Conquest, *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camps* (Oxford, 1979);
 - Magadan;
 - Potma women's camp was part of the Temlag network in Mordoviya. The statute is probably referring to this camp. Conquest, *Great Terror*, p. 461, states that some of the women originally sent to Potma were said to have been amnestied in 1945, after they had been dispersed to labour camps in other areas of the country in the early 1940s;
 - Tomsk – 'The Tomsk Camp for Family Members of Traitors to the Motherland was founded in December 1937 at Tomsk Transit Prison (Siblag). There were about twenty-five hundred prisoners in the camp ... The disbanding of the camp began in the summer of 1939 and was completed by October.' See Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, p. 238.
 - Yaya, part of the Siblag network, was also used to imprison women.
51. N. Petrov and A. Roginskii, 'The "Polish Operation" of the NKVD, 1937–8', in McLoughlin and McDermott, *Stalin's Terror*, p. 158.
52. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga: konets 1920-x – pervaya polovina 1950-x godov. Sobranie dokumentov v 7-mi tomakh: tom 1 Massovye repressii v SSSR* (Moscow, 2004) p. 295, citing Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Federal'noi sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (TsA FSB FR) (Central Archive of the Federal Security Services of the Russian Federation [FSB Archive]), 3/4/588, 22.
53. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, p. 296, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/588, 44–5.
54. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, pp. 296–7, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/588, 43.
55. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, p. 297, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/588, 49.
56. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, pp. 297–8, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/588, 38.
57. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, pp. 298–9, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/121, 312–14.

58. *Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga*, pp. 299–300, citing TsA FSB RF, 3/4/588, 25.
59. ‘Spetssoobshchenie N. I. Yezhova i L. P. Beriia I. V. Stalinu “ob arestakh zhen ‘izmennikov rodiny’”’, *Lubyanka*, p. 563, citing APRF, 3/24/366, 78–9.
60. See *Sbornik zakonadatel’nykh i normativnykh aktov*, pp. 437–8; and *Pamyat’*, pp. 713–14. Both cite as the original source, TsOAMBRF,66/1 (data not given for delo or list).
61. Memorial, *Uznitsy ‘ALZhIRA’*.
62. Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, p. 588, citing GARF, 9401/1/4157, 201–5.
63. M. Ilic, ‘The Great Terror in Leningrad: A Quantitative Analysis’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 52, no. 8, 2000, pp. 1515–34, and reprinted in S. G. Wheatcroft (ed.), *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (Basingstoke, 2002) pp. 147–70.
64. Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, pp. 257, 302.
65. H. Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge, 1998) p. 246. Of 371 entries in Kuromiya’s sample database, only four were women. Kuromiya also notes that a database of approximately 40,000 entries on the Ukraine (see also Chapter 6, this volume) compiled by Nikol’s’kii included 1,053 women arrested, of whom 61 were sentenced to be shot.
66. See the sections in the relevant publications relating to ‘sex ratios’ and ‘women’.
67. For more details, see Chapter 7, this volume.
68. Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, p. 388. Mariya Aleksandrovna Spiridonova (b. 1884) was executed on 5 September 1941. For an account of Spiridonova’s early life and political career, first published before her death, see I. Steinberg, *Spiridonova: Revolutionary Terrorist* (New York, 1971 [orig. 1935]). Spiridonova has received some attention more recently in the Russian historiography. See V. M. Lavrov, *Mariya Spiridonova: terroristka i zherstva terrora* (Moscow, 1996), and T. Kravchenko, *Vozlyublennaya terrora* (Moscow, 1998).
69. Ye. Olitskaya, *Moi vospominaniya* (Frankfurt, 1971) 2 vols.
70. See Vera Broido’s introduction to her mother’s memoirs: Eva Broido, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (Oxford, 1967) pp. xi–xii.
71. *Kniga rasstrelyannikh: martirolog pogibshikh ot ruki NKVD v gody bol’shogo terrora (Tyumenskaya oblast’)* tom 2 (Tyumen’, 1999) p. 72.
72. *Kniga rasstrelyannikh*, tom 2, p. 224. The source also has entries for Il’ya Mikhailovich Gendel’man (b. 1904), who was a member of the Mensheviks, and Fanni L’vovna Gendel’man (b. 1884). Both were arrested, sentenced and executed on the same days as Yelena Mikhailovna.
73. *Kniga rasstrelyannikh*, tom 2, pp. 356–7.
74. See the entry for Yekaterina Mikhailovna Vyatchenina (b. 1878) in Tyumen’, who was executed on 14 December 1937, in *Kniga rasstrelyannikh*, tom 2, p. 222.
75. These are particularly noted in the listing for Komi. For more on the purges in Komi, see Chapter 8, this volume.
76. See the entries for Klavdiya Aleksandrovna Burtseva (b. 1877), who was executed on 15 March 1938, and Lidiya Pavlovna Zaborovskaya (b. 1889), who was executed on 24 March 1938, in *Kniga rasstrelyannikh: martirolog pogibshikh ot ruki NKVD v gody bol’shogo terrora (Tyumenskaya oblast’)* tom 1 (Tyumen’, 1999) p. 315, and *Kniga rasstrelyannikh*, tom 2, p. 244. There are five Zaborovskayas in total listed in the source. The others, all born between 1872 and 1892, are listed as former nuns (*byv. monakhinya*), with a secondary listing as ‘housewife’ (*domokhozyaika*). They were all executed on 10 November 1937.