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¹Chapter 7**Remembering the Victims of Political Repression: the Purges in Mordoviya**

Melanie Ilic and Christopher Joyce

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been a renewal of interest in historical research and a significant growth in publication about the purges, and Stalinist political repression more broadly, both in Russia and in the west. In recent years, the focus of some of this research has moved away from the ‘high politics’ of the Stalinist leadership in Moscow and the relationship between the central state authorities and regional party bosses.¹ Aided by the publication of extensive listings of the names of those caught up in the whirlwind of political repression in the 1930s in the various ‘books of martyrs’, we are now able to examine more closely the extent and impact of the terror in its various forms in different regions of the Soviet Union, and to offer a more detailed analysis of the social background of its victims.

¹ For recent publications on political repression and the purges, see, for example: J. Arch Getty and O. V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (Yale, 1999), which provides a useful collection of documents; B. McLoughlin and K. McDermott (eds), *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Basingstoke, 2003), which includes sections on the politics of repression, the role of the NKVD and ‘victim studies’; and S. Wheatcroft, ‘Towards Explaining the Changing Levels of Stalinist Repression in the 1930s: Mass Killings’, in S. Wheatcroft (ed.), *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (Basingstoke, 2002) pp. 112-46; M. Yunge (Junge) and R. Binner, *Kak terror stal ‘bol’shim’: sekretnyi prikaz no. 00447 i tekhnologiya ego ispolneniya* (Moscow, 2003).

Even here, though, published research has so far concentrated on what may be considered to have been the more important political and economic regions of the Soviet Union, most notably Moscow and Leningrad, where, from a western perspective, the terror was more easily observed. We remain comparatively less well informed about the extent and impact of political repression in other regions of the country.² This article seeks to redress this imbalance by offering a preliminary analysis of political repression in the Republic of Mordoviya.

Mordoviya ASSR:

Administrative Status: The republic of Mordoviya lies to the south-east of Moscow in the Central Volga Region. Its capital, Saransk, located in the eastern half of the republic, is approximately 500 kilometres from Moscow (642 kilometres by rail, 850 kilometres by road), roughly the same distance from the centre of power as Voronezh, Mogilev and Novgorod. Mordova *okrug*, as an administrative region, was created on 16 July 1928 as part of the newly-established Sredne-Volzhskaya oblast' (Central Volga Region) and was intended to

² Recent regional studies include: N. Baron, 'Production and Terror: the Operation of the Karelian Gulag, 1933-1939', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, no. 1, vol. 43, 2002, pp. 139-80; J. R. Harris, 'The Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals Region, 1936-7', in S. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions* (London, 2000) ch. 9; O. Hlevnjuk, 'Les mecanismes de la "Grande Terreur" des annees 1937-1938 au Turkmenistan', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, no. 1-2, vol. 39, 1998, pp. 197-208; R. T. Manning, 'The Great Purges in a Rural District: Belyi Raion Revisited', in J. A. Getty and R. T. Manning (eds), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1993).

form the homeland for the Mordvin ethnic group.³ As part of the trend for the creation of nationality-based administrative-territorial regions, which spread across the Soviet Union during the period from 1930 to 1934, the Mordova *okrug* was upgraded on 10 January 1930 to become the Mordovskaya avtonomnaya oblast' (Mordovian Autonomous Region).⁴ The Mordova autonomous oblast' became the Mordovian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) on 20 December 1934.⁵

³ This oblast' was an amalgamation of the following guberniya: Samara, Ul'yanovsk, Penza, Orenburg and part of Pravoberezh'ya Saratov. This new territory was subdivided into the following *okrugi*: Buguruslansk, Buzuluksk, Kuznetsk, Mordova, Orenburg, Penza, Samara and Syzransk (the latter was subsequently downgraded to a raion in the summer of 1930). A. P. Kopylov, *Istoriya industrializatsiya srednego povolzh'ya, 1926-1941gg.: dokumenty i materialy* (Kuibyshev, 1973) p. 8.

⁴ M. S. Bukin, *Obrazovanie i razvitie mordovskoi avtonomnoi oblasti (1930-1934)* (Saransk, 1980) pp. 3, 7. The upgrading of the region was accompanied by some redistribution of territory. Several centres of population, which primarily contained ethnic Russians, were transferred to Ryazan' *okrug* (Moscow oblast'), Arzamsk *okrug* (Nizhegorod *krai*) and Penza *okrug*. In return, the Mordova autonomous oblast' was given parts of the Poretskoe and Alatyr' raiony (Chuvash ASSR), Ichkalovsk, Bolshe-Boldino, Teplo-Stansk and Naruksovsk raiony (Arzamas *okrug* – Nizhegorod *krai*). See L. G. Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya i likvidatsiya kulachestva kak klassa', p. 166, in Yu. S. Kukushkin (ed.), *Istoriya sovetskogo krest'yanstva Mordovii. Ch. 1, 1917-1937* (Saransk, 1987) pp. 162-75.

⁵ Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya', p. 164. With this renaming of administrative regions, MASSR was now surrounded by Arzamas oblast' (to the north), Ul'yanovsk oblast' and Chuvash ASSR (to the east), Penza oblast' (to the south) and Ryazan'

Population profile: According to census data, the MASSR was an overwhelmingly rural autonomous republic, with less than seven per cent of its population living in urban areas even at the end of the 1930s.⁶ The major ethnic groups in Mordoviya ASSR in the 1930s were Russians (60 per cent), Mordvins (34 per cent) and Tartars (4 per cent).⁷

The Gulag in Mordoviya: During the 1930s the Mordovian penal system was dominated by a single camp structure, Temlag, which was created in 1931. It remained an important camp until the dissolution of the Gulag network in 1960.⁸ Temlag's population fluctuated between 15,000 and 30,000 inmates. It was spread across much of western Mordoviya, in particular Temnikovskii and Zubovo-Polyanskii *raiony*. Pot'ma, the transit women's camp for wives and relatives of enemies of the Motherland, formed part of the Temlag network. Throughout the 1930s Temlag was an important supplier of firewood to Moscow, providing 30 per cent of all of the capital's firewood in 1934. Prisoners were also employed in various manufacturing and agricultural activities and were involved in the construction of the second track of the

oblast' (to the west). *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, tom 28 (Moscow, 1954) p. 286 (hereafter BSE).

⁶ *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1939 goda: osnovnye itogi* (Moscow, 1992) p. 25 (hereafter 1939 Census).

⁷ *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1937g.: kratkie itogi* (Moscow, 1991) p. 90 (hereafter 1937 Census); and 1939 Census, p. 67. Small numbers of Ukrainians, Belorussians and 'other' ethnic groups are also recorded in the returns.

⁸ In 1948, Temlag was reorganised. It became a Special Camp (Osoblag) and was renamed Dubrovlag. M. B. Smirnov, *Sistema ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960* (Moscow, 1998) pp. 478-9.

Ryazan'-Pot'ma railway and the Unzhe-Vetluzhskaya branch line.⁹ A locally-administered camp system was established by the Mordovian NKVD in 1937, but the number of prisoners never exceeded 4050, and its activities were continually overshadowed by the presence of Temlag.¹⁰

The Mordoviya *Pamyat'*:

This 'victim study' of Mordoviya is based on *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000), from which we have taken the title of this study. The printed handbook was compiled from the data accumulated during the processes of rehabilitation conducted in Mordoviya from 1989 to 1999, and was edited by the then Procurator of the Republic of Mordoviya, P. E. Sen'kin. As part of the rehabilitation process in 1989-99, 8142 archived criminal files were opened for investigation, and 9310 individuals were rehabilitated by the procurator.¹¹ A number of other individuals listed in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* had been rehabilitated earlier, bringing the total number of entries in the published volume to 9380. According to its summary table, the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* lists the names of 1177 individuals who were subject to the 'highest order of punishment', that is execution. Those who were executed, therefore, accounted for around 12.5 per cent of those subject to political repression in the Mordoviya region during the entire period covered by the volume (1918-62).¹²

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 535.

¹¹ For a preliminary analysis of the number of victims of political repression in Mordoviya by *raion*, sex, social status, organisation responsible for the repression, and sentence, see P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000) p. 681.

¹² Sen'kin, *Pamyat'*, p. 681. Our totals differ slightly from those offered in the published source.

In a few cases, Sen'kin points out, only the names of the individuals involved were evident and it proved impossible to reconstruct any details about their background or lives for the published volume. There are a number of other limitations to the data listed in the publication. Some individuals were arrested and released without charge on the same day.¹³ Others (possibly through editorial oversight) are listed twice in the source for the same offence.¹⁴ Some of the entries list two or more offences by one individual.¹⁵ Not all of the entries provide the date of conviction. Occasionally, the *Pamyat'* includes the names of those arrested before Stalin came to power or after his death.¹⁶

Source content and limitations:

The Mordoviya *Pamyat'* details the following information in its fullest entries: name; date of birth (from which we are able to calculate age at the time of conviction); place of birth and residence; party membership; occupation (by which we are able to determine social status); marital status and number of children; date of conviction; organisation responsible for conducting the trial; statute of the criminal code under which the individual was charged; sentence; and date of rehabilitation.

¹³ See, for example, the entry for Boris Sergeevich Akaf'ev, p. 10.

¹⁴ See, for example, the entries for Yakov Samsonovich Kuz'michev, p. 105.

¹⁵ See, for example, the entries for Mariya Semenovna Grushevskaya and Yakov Konstantinovich Gubanov, p. 607. For cases such as these, two separate records were made in the database.

¹⁶ See, for example, the entry for Aleksandr Pavlovich Chugunov, p. 673. In view of the nature of our selection criteria, all of the entries in this category included in the database for analysis are women and/or were executed.

Our study of political repression in Mordoviya ASSR has been undertaken partly in light of the earlier analysis conducted of the Leningrad region, which used the first two volumes of the *Leningradskii martirolog*.¹⁷ It is important to note here, however, that the source bases for these two studies incorporate a number of differences. The listing for the Mordoviya region, because it covers a broader time span, offers significantly more detail about the general course of Soviet ‘political repression’, although it includes far fewer names. The multi-volume *Leningradskii martirolog* lists only those individuals who were actually executed at the height of the Yezhovshchina during the early months of the second wave of the Great Terror, that is during the period of the mass repressions from July 1937 to January 1938. The mass operations were not finally halted until November 1938. It is the period of the ‘Great Terror’ from 1936 to 1938 that we most often associate with political repression in the Soviet Union.

The Mordoviya *Pamyat*’, however, has a far more extensive coverage of political repression, allowing us to track the various waves of the purges in the Soviet Union from the Civil War, to the collectivisation drives of 1929-33 (largely those who were identified as kulaks), at the height of the ‘Great Terror’ in 1936-38, through the war years (including the persecution of ‘bourgeois nationalists’) and up to the death of Stalin in 1953. It includes the names not only of those who were executed, but also those who were subject to a range of other punishments, including imprisonment, exile and forced labour. A number of those listed in the source were released without charge. However, the Mordoviya *Pamyat*’ is more limited

¹⁷ M. Ilic, ‘The Great Terror in Leningrad: a Quantitative Analysis’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 52 (2000), pp. 1515-34; reprinted in Wheatcroft, *Challenging Traditional Views*, pp. 147-70. For a complementary analysis, see also D. Kozlov, ‘The Leningrad Martirology: a Statistical Note on the 1937 Executions in Leningrad City and Region’, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. XLIV, nos. 3-4, 2002, pp. 175-208.

in comparison with the *Leningradskii martirolog* because it does not note the nationality of individuals included in the listing. It is far less amenable, therefore, to an analysis of the impact of the various ‘national operations’ in Mordoviya ASSR. It also does not provide information that would allow us to determine the length of time between arrest and trial, or between trial and sentence, sentence and execution. In identifying Communist Party members, the *Pamyat*’ provides no indication of the length of party membership. It does, however, offer some detail about the marital status and number of children of the victims.

Despite the presence of Temlag (a major Gulag camp) within the region, the Mordoviya *Pamyat*’ does not contain any significant details of those arrested who were already serving a custodial sentence. Only four prisoners are listed. These are all women, three of whom were from corrective labour colonies run by the Mordovian NKVD, and the other was from Temlag. All four were arrested during 1941-42. The most obvious explanation for the omission of any prisoners from the listing, particularly during the ‘Great Terror’ period, is that victims from within the penal system may not have been included in the local targets and reports, but would more likely have been part of the numbers allocated to the centrally-controlled Gulag.¹⁸

Methodology:

For our study of the Mordoviya region, we have adopted a methodology similar to that used earlier in the analysis of the Great Terror in Leningrad. A database of 7396 entries was constructed (equal to approximately three quarters of all those included in the published listing), based on the following criteria for selection:

¹⁸ NKVD Order No. 00447 (1937) allocated a target to each region for the number of individuals to be repressed. The Order also included an allocation to the Gulag, which was not included in the regional totals.

all of the entries for convictions taking place in the years from 1929 to 1933 (to cover the period of collectivisation and dekulakisation):

4244 records, including 183 executions and 542 women;

all of the entries for convictions taking place in the years 1937 and 1938 (to cover the height of the ‘Great Terror’ and the ‘mass repressions’):

2441 records: including 773 executions and 221 women;

all those who were executed throughout the period covered by the source:

1188 records, including 79 women;

all of the female victims of political repression throughout the period covered by the source: 1271 records, including 79 executions.¹⁹

Our analysis of the Mordoviya *Pamyat*’ in this chapter is based on these four categories of data. Given the chronological focus of the first two categories, we pay only limited attention in this study, therefore, to the processes of political repression in Mordoviya that took place before Stalin came to power or during and after the Second World War.

1929-1933:

In this section we analyse the data available in the Mordoviya *Pamyat*’ about the victims of political repression during the years of collectivisation and dekulakisation. The Central Volga region, which included Mordoviya, was considered to be one of the most important grain-

¹⁹ The summary table contained in the Mordoviya *Pamyat*’ gives the total number of female victims of political repression as 1280. It is evident that a number of other unresolved discrepancies remain as part of this study arising from both the compilation of the original source and the construction of the database to support our analysis.

producing districts in the Russian republic. However, by the late 1920s agricultural production in the region had still not returned to its pre-revolutionary levels of economic activity and Mordoviya was viewed as an under-developed region that lacked any substantial industrial base. Even within the broader regional context of low economic development, Mordoviya was considered to be a particularly backward area. It suffered from considerable rural over-population and the only industry that existed was based almost exclusively on agricultural materials and timber processing.²⁰

²⁰ See Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya', p.163.

Collectivisation and Dekulakisation in Mordoviya: In early 1930, the interwoven campaigns of collectivisation and dekulakisation swept across the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1930s, the pace of collectivisation in Mordoviya was consistently lower than that achieved at both the national and regional levels.²¹ The slow progress of collectivisation throughout the areas on the right bank of the Central Volga region, and particularly Mordoviya, has been attributed by Soviet historians to the backwards nature of the population, and the lack of a local working class and proletariat to encourage the peasants to move to the kolkhozy.²² The slow rate of collectivisation in Mordoviya ensured that the level of peasant opposition was not as strong as elsewhere in the Central Volga region. As a result, Mordoviya avoided the worst excesses of the dekulakisation campaigns in the region. In February 1930, the Central Volga kraispolkom (territorial soviet executive committee), in response to the SNK and TsIK USSR decree calling for the liquidation of the kulaks as a class (1 February 1930), issued a

²¹ The pace of collectivisation in Mordoviya tended to lag behind the All-Union rate by eighteen months. In January 1937 the proportion of peasant households collectivised in Mordoviya was 80.4 per cent, a level that had been achieved across the Soviet Union by June 1935. See N. A. Ivinskii, 'Kollektivizatsiya i raskulachivaniya v nachale 30-x godov', in Yu. N. Afanas'ev (ed.), *Sud'by Rossiiskogo krest'yanstva* (Moscow, 1996) pp. 265, 294, and G. S. Baevskii (ed.), *Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaistvo v srednem povolzh'e (1927-1937): dokumenty i materialy* (Kuibyshev, 1970) pp. 478, 500, 557-8.

²² Baevskii, *Kollektivizatsiya*, p. 508; Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya', pp. 169-70. The only local proletariat within Mordoviya were the railway workers on the Moscow-Kazan' Railway line. In particular, workers at the railway junctions of Kovytkino, Krasnyi uzel and Ruzaevka were considered an important localised source of possible propagandists.

decree calling for the deportation (*vyselit'*) of 6000 peasant households from the region during the period from February to April 1930. The decree specified that 4470 households were to be chosen from the left bank of the Central Volga region and 1530 from the right bank, which included Mordoviya.²³

In fact, according to our database, during these months only 65 individuals (including 7 women) were exiled from Mordoviya. However, an additional 632 people were arrested and imprisoned, of whom 600 received sentences of three or more years and would, therefore, have been transferred to labour camps throughout the Soviet Union.²⁴ Elsewhere in the Central Volga region it soon became apparent to the central Soviet authorities that local officials were implementing the dekulakisation campaign rather too vigorously.²⁵ In Mordoviya, however, many local Communist Party organisations denied that any kulaks lived in their region.²⁶ Despite the cautious nature of collectivisation and dekulakisation in Mordoviya, numerous officials and regions were singled out for criticism after the

²³ Baevskii, *Kollektivizatsiya*, p. 14.

²⁴ The low level of dekulakisation in Mordoviya compared to the remainder of the Central Volga region is also apparent from another decree of the Central Volga kraikom (dated 20 January 1930) that called for the arrest of 3000 people by 5 February. See Ivnitskii, 'Kollektivizatsiya i raskulachivaniya', p. 284. According to our database, during this period only 26 people were arrested.

²⁵ Ivnitskii, 'Kollektivizatsiya i raskulachivaniya', p. 285.

²⁶ Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya', p. 166. In Ruzaevskii raion they admitted to having some *serednyaki* (middle peasants), but nothing worse!

publication of Stalin's article entitled 'Dizzy with Success' in *Pravda* on 2 March 1930, which brought about a temporary lull in the campaigns.²⁷

From July 1930 to the end of the main collectivisation and dekulakisation period (that is, the end of 1933), the number of arrests listed in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* remained consistently low with the exception of six non-contiguous months when the number of people arrested suddenly exceeded 100. For the whole of this period the distribution of arrests across Mordoviya remained fairly random, although Ichalkovskii raion appears to have been targeted in August and December 1931.²⁸ The high number of people sentenced in January 1931 was dominated by the work of the Troika, which over a period of two days (10 and 11 January 1931) sentenced 307 people.²⁹

Table 7.1

1929-1933: Summary of Dates of Sentencing

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
January	2	65	376	17	42
February	9	111	33	12	79
March	16	420	14	62	43
April	15	258	1	27	155

²⁷ The following *raiony* were singled out for straying from the party line: Torbeevo, Zubova Polyana and Kovylnino. Communist Party *raikom* secretaries were removed from their posts in the following areas: Atyashevo, Achadovo, Dubenki, Zubova Polyana, Romodanovo and Rybkino. See Filatov, 'Nachalo massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniya', pp. 174-5.

²⁸ In August 1931, 47 arrests were made in Ichkalovskii raion, and a further 80 arrests were made in December 1931.

²⁹ The total number of people sentenced in January 1931 was 376. Of the 307 sentenced by the Troika in this two-day period, 36 were exiled, 229 were imprisoned and 42 were executed. The only other extraordinary day for executions in this latter period of dekulakisation was 27 April 1933, when 133 people were sentenced by the Troika.

May	8	282	13	43	29
June	13	72	96	7	193
July	13	12	15	12	36
August	89	35	129	50	26
September	68	48	87	23	12
October	100	54	20	115	7
November	192	49	20	34	40
December	255	52	103	27	8
TOTAL	780	1458	907	429	670

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Analysis of the Database for 1929-33:

Our listing for the years 1929-33 includes a total of 4244 entries in this dataset. This is equivalent to almost 46 per cent of the entries in the printed source, and 57.4 per cent of our database.

Sex ratios: Most of those convicted in these years (3702 individuals) were men. The 542 women listed in this dataset constitute 12.8 per cent of the entries. The relatively high numbers and proportion of women convicted in these years in comparison with 1937-38 (see below) is probably best explained by women's well-documented resistance to the collectivisation campaigns, as well as the continued existence of a greater number of religious communities in the early years of the Stalinist regime.

Age: The date of birth is available for 4221 entries of this dataset. The ages of those sentenced ranged between 15 and 81 years. The mean age for both men and women taken together was 45.8 years. Over two thirds (69 per cent) of those included in this dataset were over 40 years of age. 15.6 per cent (657 individuals) were over 60 years of age.

Marital Status: Data are available on the marital status of 3092 of the entries in this dataset. 86.6 per cent of all those convicted were married. A considerable difference between the sexes is notable in terms of the marital status of those convicted. Nearly 94 per cent of

men were married (or are noted in the database as married because they had children), and just under six per cent were listed in the source as single. However, only one third (32.5 per cent) of the women who were convicted were married (or are presumed married), and almost two thirds (61.9 per cent) were single. 20 women (of the 360 for whom data on marital status are available) were listed as widows. This is equivalent of 5.6 per cent of all of the women who were arrested in this period, whereas only 0.4 per cent of men are recorded as widowers. Marriage and motherhood appear to have offered women a substantial degree of protection in these years. 2221 individuals in this dataset are listed as parents. Three of the women are listed as single parents. Five widows and two widowers were also parents, with a total of 13 children between them.

Number of Children: The arrests made during this period had considerable further repercussions. A total of 7628 children were directly affected by the arrest of at least one of their parents. Some may have been affected by the arrest of both.

Residency: According to the data available on residency, arrests were made throughout Mordoviya. However, the highest single proportion of convictions (8.7 per cent) was of those listed as *inogorodnie* (non-permanent residents). These were people who had come to Mordoviya from outside of the republic. The regional capital, Saransk, was home to only 1.6 per cent of the victims. Political repression in Mordoviya in the years 1929 to 1933 was an overwhelmingly rural phenomenon.

Communist Party membership: In this dataset, only four people are listed as being members of the Communist Party. These were all male students of between 20 and 25 years of age. They were all sentenced on the same day (10 January 1931) under Article 58-11 of the criminal code, used against those who were charged with being members of counter-revolutionary organisations. All of them were imprisoned, with sentences ranging from one to eight years.

Social Status: Data on social status is not available for 347 entries of this dataset. Of the 3897 individuals for whom data are available, 3386 were men and 511 were women. Taken as a whole, almost three quarters (73.95 per cent) of those convicted were recorded in the printed source as being independent peasants. By contrast, only 2.62 per cent were recorded as collective farmers. The second largest social group (11.6 per cent) were former or active religious personnel. This pattern was reflected amongst the women, but in different proportions. Most of the women who were convicted were either listed as independent peasants (59.1 per cent) or as religious personnel (22.9 per cent). Just over one in ten of the women arrested was in white-collar employment, with the majority of these of these (45 individuals) listed in the source as ‘housewife’.

Table 7.2

1929-33: Summary of Social Status of Purge Victims

Occupation code:	Social status	1929-33 no.	Dataset %	Adjusted no.	% of 3897
0	No entry in source	347	8.18		
1	blue-collar	137	3.23	137	3.52
2	white-collar	231	5.44	231	5.93
3	kolkhoz peasantry	102	2.40	102	2.62
4	cooperative kustar	16	0.38	16	0.41
5	Non-cooperative kustar	18	0.42	18	0.46
6	independent peasantry	2882	67.91	2882	73.95
[7] including:	Miscellaneous	[509]	[11.99]	[509]	[13.06]
7a	temporarily unemployed	39	0.92	39	1.00
7b	religious personnel	452	10.65	452	11.60
7c	military personnel	9	0.21	9	0.23
7d	prisoner, exile, deserter	0	0	0	0
7e	pensioner	1	0.02	1	0.03
7f	student	8	0.19	8	0.21
8	‘unemployed’ in source	2	0.05	2	0.05
Total		4244	100.00	3897	100.00

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen’kin, *Pamyat’: zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Sentencing: Data are available on the sentencing body for 4177 entries in this dataset. The vast majority of those convicted in these years were sentenced by All-Union bodies, external to the region. The ‘troika’ was responsible for 70.15 per cent of all convictions from 1929 to 1933. The Mordovian judiciary was responsible for only 7.8 per cent of cases. The OGPU collegium sentenced 9.67 per cent and the Osoboe Soveshchanie 12.4 per cent of the cases listed.

A wide range of statutes was used to sentence those listed in the published source. No data on the statute used in the conviction is available for 50 of the entries in this dataset. The vast majority of cases (95.2 per cent) included some section of Article 58, which was used against those charged with counter-revolutionary activities. Only 199 entries do not include any section of Article 58.

Most cases resulted in the removal of the accused from their locality. Despite the apparent emphasis on exile during the dekulakisation campaigns, only 17.8 per cent of those sentenced were relocated to special settlements, of whom approximately one half were sent to Severnyi krai. The majority of individuals (72.3 per cent) received custodial sentences. 62.6 per cent of all of those who were sentenced in these years had to serve more than three years’ imprisonment, which usually entailed incarceration in a corrective-labour camp anywhere in the Soviet Union. The longest custodial sentence imposed was for 12 years. Sentences of ten or more years were given to 341 people. Not all cases resulted in imprisonment, however, and various other punishments were applied. 269 individuals were released without sentence. Of all those freed, 98 individuals had originally been given a custodial sentence, but were deemed to have already served their time in the period spent between arrest and sentencing.³⁰

³⁰ These 98 are included within the 3060 listed as receiving custodial sentences.

Capital sentences were handed down to 183 (4.3 per cent) people, of whom six were women. In addition, one person died in custody. The ages of those sentenced to execution ranged from 23 to 74 years, but the vast majority of people (85.2 per cent) were aged over 40. 24 per cent of those sentenced to execution were over 60 years of age.

The largest social group amongst those who were executed in the period from 1929 to 1933, as might be expected, was that of the independent peasantry, who constituted almost 68 per cent of the victims. For this group, though, the proportion of executions was slightly lower than the proportion of independent farmers amongst all of those who were arrested. In contrast, those classified as white-collar workers (nearly seven per cent) and religious personnel (20.75 per cent) were executed in significantly greater proportions than their weighting amongst the total number of those arrested.

Relatively few of these capital sentences were applied by either the OGPU (9.34 per cent of all death sentences) or the Mordovian judiciary (8.24 per cent). The Troika was responsible for the vast majority (81.87 per cent) of all executions. The pattern of capital convictions in Mordoviya in the years from 1929 to 1933 closely matches a national trend that peaked in the first half of 1930 and returned to pre-1930 levels in early 1931.³¹

Table 7.3

1929-33: Summary of Sentences

SENTENCE	No.	% of 4232
No data	12	
Died in custody	1	0.02
Executed	183	4.3
Imprisoned	3060	72.3
Corrective / forced labour	50	1.2

³¹ S. G. Wheatcroft, 'Towards Explaining the Changing Levels of Stalinist Repression in the 1930s: Mass Killings', in S. G. Wheatcroft (ed.), *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (Basingstoke, 2002) p. 116.

Exile	754	17.8
Restricted residency rights	8	0.2
Public reprimand	2	0.04
Fined	2	0.04
Released	172	4.1
TOTAL	4244	100

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

1934–1936:

During the so-called 'three good years' from 1934 to 1936, the rate of economic development in the Mordoviya autonomous republic consistently fell below both national and regional levels. Numerous industrial construction projects were initiated, but they were primarily for the expansion of secondary industries dedicated to the processing of local raw materials. Although agriculture remained the bedrock of the MASSR economy, both the local and regional authorities struggled to implement the Soviet 'modernisation' model of collectivisation. Regular calls were made by the Central Volga Communist Party district committee to increase the rate of collectivisation and to improve the quality and breadth of mass-agitation work, particularly amongst those peasants who continued to operate outside of the collective and state farm systems. Such demands were not helped by the steady decline in the number of Communist Party members both in the republic and across the Soviet Union, which was only halted in 1939.³² Collectivisation was particularly slow in those areas

³² In 1933 there were 10,627 Communist Party members in Mordoviya. By 1938 this figure had fallen to 6,217. This decline of 41.5 per cent in Party membership in Mordoviya was actually lower than the national rate of decline of 46 per cent for the same period. See *Mordovskaya partiinaya organizatsiya v dokumentakh i tsifrakh (1918-1972gg.)* (Saransk,

populated by Moksha Mordvins, whereas the rate of collectivisation amongst Erzya Mordvins was only slightly below the regional average.³³

Table 7.4

Ethnic Variations in Rates of Collectivisation in MASSR

(percentage of households collectivised)

	1 Jan 1935	1 Jan 1936	1 Jan 1937
Russian	72	79	85
Tatar	54	72	93.4
Mordvin	59	71	75
(inc. Moksha	48	65	71.6
Erzya)	70	77	80.8
MASSR Total	66.4	79.8	82.0
USSR Total	83.2	90.5	93.0

(USSR figures are for 1 June)

Source: G. S. Baevskii (ed.), *Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaistvo v srednem povolzh'e (1927-1937): dokumenty i materialy* (Kuibyshev, 1970) pp. 557-8.

According to a report by the Mordovian Communist Party provincial committee, the low level of collectivisation amongst the Moksha Mordvins was a direct result of the under-representation of this particular ethnic group in local party organisations. Whilst Erzya Mordvins constituted 17.8 per cent of the MASSR population, they accounted for 20.3 per cent of the membership of local party organisations. The Moksha Mordvins, on the other

1975) p. 125, and D. Thorniley, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Rural Communist Party, 1927-1939* (London, 1988) p. 200.

³³ The Mordvin ethnic group was mainly concentrated in the border raiony in the north-east (local inhabitants known as Mordva-erzya) and the south-west (inhabited by the Mordva-moksha). BSE, p. 288.

hand, constituted 18.5 per cent of the population, and yet only 9.1 per cent of local party members came from this group.³⁴ Other reasons proposed by Communist Party organisations for the low level of collectivisation in the MASSR included the success of peasants in non-agricultural speculative activities (such as the hiring-out of labour and horsepower, trading, the collection of firewood, etc.) and the continued high levels of productivity and profitability on private agricultural land. The presence of strong religious groups was also identified as a reason for the limited impact of Soviet propaganda in the region.³⁵

1937-1938:

In this section we analyse the data available in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* about the victims of political repression at the height of the Great Terror. These two years alone account for 26 per cent of all of the convictions listed in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'*, and 33 per cent of our database. 65 per cent of all executions in MASSR took place in these two years. The data for 1937-38 allow us to identify the waves of mass repression in Mordoviya and to offer an insight into the social composition of its victims. Preliminary data from the suppressed (6 January) 1937 census record a total population for Mordoviya ASSR of 1,192,012 (541,892 men and 650,120 women).³⁶ The total population recorded in the official 1939 census return was 1,188,004.³⁷ Between the returns of the unofficial 1937 census and the official 1939 census, therefore, there was a loss of population in the Mordoviya ASSR of 4008 people, which is equivalent to approximately 0.3 per cent of the local population. Not all of this population change is attributed to the outcomes of the purges.

³⁴ Baevskii, *Kollektivizatsiya*, p. 558.

³⁵ Baevskii, *Kollektivizatsiya*, pp. 559-61.

³⁶ 1937 Census, pp. 42-43.

³⁷ 1939 Census, p. 25.

A Politburo *zapro*s (request) of 10 July 1937 stipulated the execution of 1250 individuals (930 former kulaks and 320 criminals) and the exile of 2263 individuals (1883 former kulaks and 380 criminals) in Mordoviya, giving a total of 3513 people. According to the ‘limits’ set out in the now infamous operational Order no. 00447 of 30 July 1937 against ‘anti-Soviet elements’, in the Mordoviya ASSR there were to be, in the first category, 300 executions, and, in the second category, a further 1500 convictions of between eight and ten years’ imprisonment, giving a total of 1800 individuals.³⁸ These figures were subsequently added to by the ‘limits’ assigned to Mordoviya ASSR by the various national operations: including 229 executions and 29 imprisonments as a result of the ‘Polish’ Operation (Order no. 00485),³⁹ and 114 executions and 24 imprisonments as a result of the ‘German’ Operation (Order no. 00439).⁴⁰

Table 7.5

Summary of ‘Limits’ in Mordoviya ASSR

	First category (executions)	Second category (arrests)	TOTAL
30 July 1937	300	1500	1800
Polish operation	229	29	258
German operation	114	24	138
Total	643	1553	2196

Sources: M. Yunge (Junge) and C. Binner, *Kak terror stal ‘bol’shim’* (Moscow, 2003) p. 125; B. McLoughlin and K. McDermott (eds), *Stalin’s Terror* (London, 2003) pp. 168, 210.

³⁸ M. Yunge (Junge) and R. Binner, *Kak terror stal ‘bol’shim’* (Moscow, 2003) p. 125.

³⁹ N. Petrov and A. Roginskii, ‘The “Polish Operation” of the NKVD, 1937-8’, in McLoughlin and McDermott, *Stalin’s Terror*, p. 168.

⁴⁰ H. Schafranek and N. Musienko, ‘The Fictitious “Hitler-Jugend” Conspiracy of the Moscow NKVD’, in McLoughlin and McDermott, *Stalin’s Terror*, p. 210.

The section relating to 1937-38 of our database has 2441 entries, including 773 executions. The number of cases recorded in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'*, then, closely approximates the targets set by the authorities in 1937-38. We have made a number of adjustments to the data in the course of our analysis. Of the 2441 arrests, 49 individuals were released without charge, either immediately or in subsequent months or years, because no case could be made against them. The actual number of long-standing convictions in 1937-38, therefore, was 2392. For a further 30 entries the source makes no mention of the sentence imposed, and so we have no way of telling if these people were imprisoned, executed or released, and we have shaped our analysis accordingly. In such cases, the distinction between *arrest* and *conviction* is important, but this information is not recorded in the printed source. Seven individuals are recorded as having died whilst in custody and, for the sake of analysis, we have included these along with those who were executed.

Sex ratios: it now goes without saying that the victims of political repression in the Soviet Union under Stalin – those arrested during the various waves of the purges and those imprisoned in the labour camps – were overwhelmingly male. In Mordoviya ASSR, 91 per cent of those arrested in 1937-38 were men, and men were an even higher proportion – over 96 per cent – of those who were executed in these years. Men had more active and visible public roles, they were more likely to occupy leadership roles or hold positions of responsibility, they were more likely to be taken seriously if they voiced their opposition to the regime and it was regarded as more subversive when they did so.

Age: the ages of those arrested in Mordoviya in 1937-38 ranged from 17 years to 96 years. 23 (0.94 per cent) of the victims were under 20 years old, and eight (0.3 per cent) were

over 80 years old. The average age of the victims was 45.78 years.⁴¹ Making adjustments to the data to discount the youngest age groups, analysis of the database for this cohort shows that the purges in Mordoviya targeted a disproportionate number of the local population who were over 40 years of age.

Table 7.6

1937-38: Summary of Age Distribution

AGE	no. in db	% in db	% in 1939 Census	Adjusted	for 20-60+	cohort
under 20	23	0.94	49.6			
20-29	222	9.11	15.4	222	9.20	30.46
30-39	557	22.87	13.3	557	23.08	26.32
40-49	641	26.31	8.0	641	26.56	15.93
50-59	622	25.53	6.7	622	25.78	13.34
60+	371	15.23	7.0	371	15.38	13.95
Total	2436	99.99	100	2413	100.00	100.00

Sources: Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1939 goda: osnovnye itogi (Moscow, 1992) p.

32; estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Marital status: no data were provided on the marital status of 550 (497 men and 53 women) of those arrested in 1937-38. Of the remaining 1891, 1664 (1575 men and 89 women) (88 per cent) were listed as married (or were listed as having children, and so have been included in our analysis as 'married?'). 207 (133 men and 74 women) (11 per cent) were listed as single, 19 (16 men and 3 women) as widowed and 1 woman as divorced. Looking more closely at these figures, it is clear that marriage offered seemingly less

⁴¹ The 1939 Census, table 7, provides a detailed breakdown by age cohorts of local populations.

protection against arrest for men than it did for women. 91.3 per cent of the men arrested were married, but the equivalent figure for women was only 53.3 per cent. On the other hand, therefore, being single was far more ‘risky’ for a woman than it was for a man. 44.3 per cent of the women who were arrested were single, but only 7.7 per cent of the men were listed as unmarried.

Number of children: 1391 individuals included in our database entries are listed as parents, and 4108 children were affected by the arrest of at least one of their parents. The average number of children per victim was, therefore, just under 3.0. Whilst many victims had relatively small families, one person is listed as the father of 12 children, and there are two families with 10 children and seven with nine recorded in the data.

Residency: Mordoviya ASSR had a very low level of urbanisation, even by the time of the All-Union census in January 1939, which recorded around 26 per cent of the Soviet population as living in urban areas. According to the census returns, of the less than 1.2 million population of the Mordoviya ASSR, only approximately 84,000 (seven per cent) lived in urban areas, and just under half of these (40,900) were in the regional capital, Saransk.⁴² All districts of the Mordoviya ASSR felt the impact of political repression in 1937-38. Saransk, which was home to less than 3.5 per cent of the local population, was home to 7 per cent (171) of the victims. The largest number of victims by classification outlined in the *Pamyat'*, however, were those listed as *inogorodnie* (211 individuals: 202 men and 9 women) (8.64 per cent). Many of Mordoviya's districts were home to religious communities, which themselves became targets of political repression, particularly in the early months of the mass operations from August to October 1937.

⁴² *Mordovskaya ASSR za gody Sovetskoi vlasti (v tsifrakh): statisticheskii sbornik* (Saransk, 1967) p. 50.

Communist Party membership: Membership of the Communist Party in Mordoviya ASSR stood at 7203 on 1 January 1937 and 8199 on 1 January 1939.⁴³ Less than 0.7 per cent of the republic's total population were party members. In our database for the years 1937-38, 140 entries (135 men and 5 women) are listed as members of the Communist Party, or its youth section, the Komsomol. Party members, therefore, comprised around 5.7 per cent of all those arrested in these two years. A significant number of these (23 individuals), however, were released without charge, or had already been rehabilitated by the end of 1940. This reduces the proportion of Communist Party members with long standing convictions to 4.9 per cent. Of the 117 Communist Party members who were convicted, 54 were executed and two died in custody.

Many of the Mordoviya Communist Party functionaries were convicted, mostly to execution, on or around 23 May 1938. For example, Andrei Yakovlevich Kozikov (b. 1893), chair of Sovnarkom MASSR, was sentenced to execution on 23 May 1938. In republican level government bodies, arrests were also made in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the People's Commissariat of Finance. In party organisations, the first secretary of the Mordoviya *obkom* (provincial party committee), Mikhail Dmitrievich Prusakov (b. 1896), was sentenced to execution on 23 May 1938. The secretaries of a number of Communist Party regional committees in the MASSR were also arrested and executed. Many of these individuals were subsequently rehabilitated under Khrushchev.

Social status: There are no entries for 368 records in this section of the database. Making adjustments for this, and based on the categories used in the 1939 Census for social classification of the population, the analysis of the Mordoviya dataset for 1937-38 indicates that around one quarter of all of the victims of the purges in these years were employed in

⁴³ *Mordovskaya partiinaya organizatsiya v dokumentakh i tsifrakh (1918-1972 gg.)* (Saransk, 1975) p. 125. Communist Party membership in 1938 fell to 6217.

white-collar occupations. Kolkhoz farmers (22.24 per cent) and independent peasants (22.82 per cent) together constituted a further 45 per cent of the victims. Almost ten per cent of the convictions were handed down to former or serving religious personnel.

Table 7.7

1937-38: Summary of Social Status of Purge Victims

Occupation code:	Social status	1937-38 no.	Dataset %	Adjusted no.	% of 2073
0	No entry in source	368	15.08		
1	blue-collar	304	12.45	304	14.66
2	white-collar	540	22.12	540	26.05
3	Kolkhoz peasantry	461	18.89	461	22.24
4	cooperative kustar	18	0.74	18	0.87
5	non-cooperative kustar	9	0.37	9	0.43
6	independent peasantry	473	19.38	473	22.82
[7] including:	Miscellaneous	[268]	[10.98]	[268]	[12.93]
7a	temporarily unemployed	39	1.60	39	1.88
7b	religious personnel	194	7.95	194	9.36
7c	Military personnel	11	0.45	11	0.53
7d	Prisoner, exile, deserter	0	0.00	0	0.00
7e	pensioner	2	0.08	2	0.10
7f	Student	15	0.61	15	0.72
8	'unemployed' in source	7	0.29	7	0.34
Total		2441	100.00	2073	100.00

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Sentencing data: This dataset records convictions taking place in the years 1937 and 1938, at the height of the Great Terror. 123 arrests were made in the first half of 1937. Thereafter, the peak periods for convictions were the months from August to December 1937 and May 1938.

Table 7.8

1937-38: Summary of Dates of Sentencing

1937		1938	
		January	49
		February	74
		March	87
		April	51
		May	200
January-June	123	June	44
July	37	July	48
August	246	August	21
September	174	September	27
October	588	October	51
November	269	November	25
December	313	December	14

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Details of the sentence are available for 2411 entries in the 1937-38 dataset. Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of those convicted were given custodial sentences (ranging between 6 months and 15 years). 773 individuals (32 per cent) were sentenced to execution; a further 7 died in custody. The remainder were exiled, given some form of probation or released without charge.

Table 7.9

1937-38: Summary of Sentences

SENTENCE	1937-38 db		Adjusted	
	No.	%	No.	%
no data	30	1.23		
Died in custody	7	0.29	7	0.29
Executed	773	31.67	773	32.06

Exile	12	0.49	12	0.50
Imprisonment	1566	64.15	1566	64.95
Probation	5	0.20	5	0.21
Released	48	1.97	48	1.99
Total	2441	100.00	2411	100.00

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

The majority of cases during 1937-38 (62.6 per cent) were tried by the NKVD troika, which was responsible for sentencing 577 individuals to execution. This is equivalent to almost three quarters of all capital sentences issued in these years. The *osoboe soveshchanie* was responsible for issuing a further 16 per cent of capital sentences. The supreme courts of Mordoviya and the USSR (*verkhovnyi sud MASSR*; *verkhovnyi sud SSSR*) tried almost 20 per cent of cases, sentencing most of the accused to imprisonment, and 24 individuals to execution. The Military Collegia and military tribunals tried only a small proportion of cases, but were responsible for issuing 33 death sentences, which was equivalent to over half of all of their cases and over four per cent of all executions. The *osoboe soveshchanie* tried almost ten per cent of cases.

Table 7.10

1937-38: Summary of Selected Cases by Prosecuting Body and Sentence

	Execution	% of 773	Prison	% of 1566	other	Sub- total	% of 2441
Osoboe soveshchanie	123	15.91	101	6.45	17	241	9.87
MASSR/USSR supreme court	24	3.10	458	29.25	4	486	19.91
NKVD troika	577	74.64	927	59.20	24	1528	62.20
Military collegium / tribunal	33	4.27	31	1.98		64	2.62

Total	757	97.93	1517	96.87	45	2319	95.00
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Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Executions in Mordoviya ASSR, 1918–1951:

In this section we analyse the data available in the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* on the victims of political repression who were executed during the period from 1918 to 1951. According to the entries listed in this dataset, a total of 1188 people are known to have been executed in Mordoviya throughout the period covered by the printed source.⁴⁴ These executions span the entire period covered by the study, but the majority of cases fall into three distinct sub-periods: firstly, 1929-1933 – during the collectivisation and dekulakisation campaigns, which accounted for 15.4 per cent of all executions; secondly, 1937-1938 – the years of the 'Great Terror', which accounted for the vast majority, 65 per cent, of all executions; and, thirdly, 1941-1943 – the early years of the Second World War, which accounted for 16 per cent of all executions.

Table 7.11

Summary of Executions in MASSR, 1918-51

	Men	% men	Women	% women	TOTAL
1918	25	100			25
1919	10	100			10
1929	37	100			37
1930	90	96.8	3	3.2	93
1931	47	94	3	6	50
1932	3	100			3
1933					
1934	2	100			2
1935					
1936	1	100			1

⁴⁴ The summary table in the printed source records 1177 executions.

1937	526	94.9	28	5.1	554
1938	218	99.5	1	0.5	219
1939					
1940					
1941	96	85.7	16	14.3	112
1942	49	66.2	25	33.8	74
1943	1	25	3	75	4
1951	2	100			2
No data	2	100			2
TOTAL	1109	93.3	79	6.7	1188

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

The overwhelming majority (93.3 per cent) of all execution victims were men. The proportion of women who were executed increased significantly during the Second World War. Taking men and women together, where data are available for 1172 entries, the mean average age was 48 years. 18.8 per cent were over 60 years of age. Almost 90 per cent of execution victims for whom the appropriate data are available were married (including those presumed married). 1850 children were affected by the execution of at least one of their parents.

The impact of political repression was felt throughout Mordoviya. Almost one fifth of those who were executed had a residency listing of *inogorodnie*. Seven per cent were from the regional capital, Saransk. 4.7 per cent of those convicted to execution were, or had been, members of the Communist Party. Those who were executed came from a variety of backgrounds. The largest single grouping was that of the independent peasantry, who constituted 32.24 per cent of execution victims for whom data are available. Likewise, white-collar workers constituted 25.8 per cent and religious personnel 14.1 per cent of those

executed.⁴⁵ The execution of citizens in Mordoviya was overwhelmingly conducted by All-Union bodies. Less than five per cent of individuals were condemned by either the Mordovian courts or revolutionary tribunals. The statute most commonly used against the execution victims, often in combination with other charges, was Article 58-10 of the criminal code.

Table 7.12

Summary Social Profile of those Executed in Mordoviya⁴⁶

	1918-19	1929-32	1937-38	1941-43	1934-36, 1951, unknown
Number of people executed:	35	183	773	190	7
<i>per cent male</i>	100	96.7	96.3	76.8	100
<i>per cent female</i>	0	3.3	3.7	23.2	0
Number of Party members:	0	0	55	2	0
Social status of victims: largest category		6	2	1	
<i>per cent</i>		67.92	32.1	28.4	
2nd largest social status:		7b	6	6	
<i>per cent</i>		20.75	24.73	20.3	
Age of youngest	21	23	20	20	19
Age of oldest	76	74	86	71	52
Mean age	44.2	51	48.6	44	33.8
married (inc. presumed married) (<i>per cent</i>)		96.4	89.6	79.2	28.6
Children directly Affected by execution	8	383	1232	222	5
Property confiscated	0	8	68	7	2

⁴⁵ These proportions are possibly underrepresented. No information of social status is provided in the source for 23.2 per cent of the total number of execution victims.

⁴⁶ The calculations in this table are adjusted to take into account only those entries where data are available.

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

Each of the execution waves listed above had its own specific identity. Information on the early Civil War period remains sketchy in the printed source, but it is apparent that those executed in these years were convicted either for direct participation in anti-Bolshevik movements or for their former employment in the tsarist police service. Political repression during the years of collectivisation and dekulakisation was aimed overwhelmingly at the rural peasant population. Rural areas demonstrated the strongest adherence to traditional religious beliefs, and many surviving religious communities were located outside of the urban centres. The persecution of religious personnel is directly reflected in the statistics.

A change in the social profile of those who were sentenced to execution took place during the period of the Great Terror, when white-collar workers and Communist Party members increasingly became the targets of political repression. Almost one third of those executed in 1937-38 were white-collar workers. However, the proportion of independent peasants (24.7 per cent), *kolkhoz* peasants (13.8 per cent) and religious personnel (13.8 per cent) amongst those who were executed in 1937 and 1938 remained high.

The relative lack of information for 1918-19 is repeated during the confusion of the early years of the Second World War (particularly 1941-43), when the social background of 60 per cent of those who were executed is not detailed in the printed source. The increase in the proportion of women amongst those who were executed in these years most probably reflects the fact that many men had already left the region for the frontline. It is also interesting to note that an increasing number of single people were targeted in these years.

In addition to receiving the death sentence, 85 people (7.1 per cent) also had their property confiscated, mainly during the period of the Great Terror. Of these, one quarter were

Communist Party members, most of whom had occupied positions of responsibility within the republic.

Women in Mordoviya:

The total number of women listed in our database of the Mordoviya *Pamyat'* is 1271. This is equivalent to just under 14 per cent of all of the entries listed in the printed source, and just over 17 per cent of the total number of entries contained in our database.

The female victims of political repression in Mordoviya ranged in age from 17 to 75 years old, with an average age of just over 43 years. From the records available for 823 entries in this dataset, only around a half of the female victims of political repression in Mordoviya in the entire period covered by the source were married (or are presumed to have been married because they had children). Just over 43 per cent are listed as 'single' (*nezamuzhem*). One woman is listed as divorced (*razvedena*), and a further 55 as 'widow' (*vdova*). 366 women are listed as having children, and 954 children were affected by the arrest of their mother.⁴⁷ Five of the women, with ten children between them, are listed as 'single' mothers. Almost 14 per cent are listed in this dataset as *inogordnie*, and only four per cent were residents of Saransk. Over ten per cent were from Zubovo-Polyanskii *raion*. Seven of the women, none of whom were executed, are listed as members of the Communist Party.

Data are available on the social status of 985 women. The largest number of arrests – 472 (47.9 per cent) - was made amongst women listed as independent peasants (*krest'yanka edinolichnitsa*), most likely women who had evaded the drives towards the collectivisation of agriculture in the 1930s. In contrast, collective farm peasants (that is, those recorded in the printed source as *kolkhoznitsa*) constituted 9.1 per cent of the arrests. This data perhaps reflects the slow rate of collectivisation in the republic. Other significant groups subject to

⁴⁷ The number of children per mother ranged up to eight.

arrest included religious personnel (15.7 per cent) and, amongst white-collar workers, those individuals who were listed in the Mordoviya *Pamyat* as ‘housewife’ (*domokhozyaika*) (9.1 per cent).

No date of conviction is available for seven of the entries in this part of the database. A further eleven women were convicted after Stalin’s death in March 1953. Only one woman, Anis'ya Andreevna Eroshkina, was arrested before 1929, and this was for her involvement in counter-revolutionary activities, for which she was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. There were, therefore, 1253 arrests of women in Mordoviya during the period from 1929 to 1952. Of the chronological periods of particular interest to our study, 43.22 per cent of the arrests took place during the years of collectivisation and dekulakisation, and a further 17.62 per cent of arrests took place during the two years of the ‘Great Terror’. The war years, from 1941 to 1945, account for 28.71 per cent of the entries in this dataset. The majority of women (72.07 per cent) were given sentences of imprisonment, and a further 15.08 per cent were given sentences involving exile. 6.3 per cent of cases resulted in executions. Almost five per cent of women were released, either without charge (because of insufficient evidence, for example) or because they had already served their time during the investigation.

A total of 79 women were sentenced to execution. 44 of these convictions were made during the war years (1941-45). Data on the social status of women who were executed is available in only 37 cases. Of these, over 45 per cent (17 in total) were independent peasants. In contrast, only one *kolkhoznitsa* was executed. Almost 19 per cent of the women who were executed were religious personnel, and just over 16 per cent were white-collar workers.

Table 7.13

Women: Summary of Social Status, including Execution Victims

Occupation code:	Social status	All women	% of 985	including Executions	% of 37
0	No entry in source	[286]		[42]	
1	blue-collar	53	5.4	3	8.1
2	white-collar	171	17.4	6	16.2
3	kolkhoz peasantry	90	9.1	1	2.7
4	cooperative kustar				
5	non-cooperative kustar	1	0.1		
6	independent peasantry	472	47.9	17	45.9
[7] including:	Miscellaneous	[198]		[10]	
7a	temporarily unemployed	25	2.5		
7b	religious personnel	155	15.7	7	18.9
7c	military personnel				
7d	prisoner, exile, deserter	6	0.6	3	8.1
7e	pensioner	1	0.1		
7f	student	2	0.2		
8	‘unemployed’ in source	9	0.9		
Total		985	100.0	37	100.0

Source: estimated from data in P. E. Sen'kin, *Pamyat': zhertvy politicheskikh repressii* (Saransk, 2000).

The vast majority of women arrested in Mordoviya were charged, often in combination with another statute, under a section of Article 58, particularly 58-10, of the criminal code. Only 106 women (out of 1241 cases where we have the appropriate information) were not. The charge of ‘family member’ (ChSIR: *chlen semei izmennikov rodiny*) or ‘blood relative’ of an ‘enemy of the Motherland’ was used in 44 cases. Only five of these charges were made during the period of the Great Terror, when this particular ‘crime’ was introduced to the statute books.⁴⁸ Most of the ChSIR charges were levelled against women during the Second World War. During the Great Terror, seven women were charged specifically with ‘counter-revolutionary activities’, and one of these was sentenced to execution.

⁴⁸ For more details on the arrest of wives and family members, see chapter 5.

Conclusions:

The data presented in this chapter provide preliminary evidence of how the purges operated on a regional level in the Soviet Union under Stalin. By moving the focus of ‘victim studies’ away from the major industrial centres, we are able to see how the processes of political repression operated in a relatively underdeveloped region of the country, especially one in which the progress of collectivisation appears to have been comparatively slow. It is not possible at this stage to gauge the extent to which the development of the local economy was disrupted by the processes and outcomes of the terror in Mordoviya, but the purges must certainly have caused a considerable amount of upheaval, especially in the republic’s agricultural regions.

Unfortunately, the printed source from which the data for analysis in this chapter were taken does not provide any detail of the nationality of the victims of political repression. We are unable, therefore, to examine the impact of the various ‘national operations’ in the MASSR. Neither are we able to draw any conclusions about the impact in Mordoviya of one of the identified motivations behind the Great Terror, namely the perceived threat of the potential emergence of a ‘fifth column’ in the years immediately preceding the Second World War.⁴⁹ We are, however, able to say a little more about the purges as an exercise in social cleansing.⁵⁰ Two of the targeted social groups for political repression in Mordoviya were the

⁴⁹ For more on the ‘fifth column’ as motivation, see O. Khlevnyuk, ‘The Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937-38’, in J. Cooper, M. Perrie and E. A. Rees (eds), *Soviet History, 1917-53* (London, 1995); and for its impact in Leningrad, see Ilic, ‘The Great Terror in Leningrad’.

⁵⁰ This line of investigation has been traced in D. R. Shearer, ‘Crime and Social Disorder in Stalin’s Russia: a Reassessment of the Great Retreat and the Origins of Mass Repression’, *Cahiers du Monde russe*, nos. 1-2, vol. 39, 1998, pp. 119-48; and D. R. Shearer, ‘Social

independent peasantry and religious personnel, both of which represented the ‘old regime’ in the face of Soviet attempts to impose a new social order. Economically inactive social groups, such as housewives, also appear to have been disproportionately targeted. In addition, the older age groups, especially those in the over 40 years of age cohort, were disproportionately victims of political repression. Many of these individuals were in their seventies and eighties and were more likely, we may assume, to have been less economically productive and more socially dependent.

A further point is worthy of mention here. Although our analysis of the data in the Mordoviya *Pamyat’* has not specifically focused on an examination of the waves of political repression that took place after the years of the Great Terror, it is clear from the available evidence that the processes of arrest, conviction and execution carried on into the 1940s, and were particularly noticeable in the early years of the Second World War. Certainly this was not unique to the MASSR, but it is a process that, with further investigation, may offer new insight into the full course of Soviet political repression under Stalin.

Disorder, Mass Repression and the NKVD during the 1930s’, *Cahiers du Monde russe*, nos. 2-4, vol. 42, 2001, pp. 505-34, reprinted in McLoughlin and McDermott, *Stalin’s Terror*. For the impact of ‘social cleansing’ in Leningrad, see Ilic, ‘The Great Terror in Leningrad’.