

Number 2203

ISSN: 2163-839X (online)

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**The Forgotten Victims:**  
Childhood and the Soviet Gulag, 1929–1953



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## Abstract

This study examines a facet of Gulag history that only in recent years has become a topic for scholarly examination, the experiences of children whose parents were arrested or who ended up themselves in the camps. It first considers the situation of those who were true “children of the Gulag,” born either in prison or in the camps. Second, the paper examines the children who were left behind when their parents and relatives were arrested in the Stalinist terror of the 1930s. Those left behind without anyone willing or able to take them in ended up in orphanages, or found themselves on their own, having to grow up quickly and cope with adult situations and responsibilities. Thirdly, the study focuses on young persons who themselves ended up in the Gulag, either due to their connections with arrested family members, or due to actions in their own right which fell afoul of Stalinist “legality,” and consider the ways in which their youth shaped their experience of the Gulag and their strategies for survival. The effects of a Gulag childhood were profound both for individuals and for Soviet society as a whole. Millions of children’s lives were torn apart by the Stalinist terror; they not only lost loved ones and friends, but they also faced social stigmatization, political and economic marginalization, and compromised opportunities for upward mobility and security. For some whose parents were rehabilitated, this brought a degree of normalcy, and they felt that the state had redeemed itself and their families. But for others it contributed to a process of alienation that ended up in political dissidence and emigration. Any history of post-Stalinist society must take into consideration the fact that the Gulag did not just affect those who served time in the camps and colonies, but also the children they left behind. Further studies are needed to determine to what extent the experiences of children of the Gulag informed social patterns during the last decades of the Soviet regime, and in particular, responses to Gorbachev’s efforts at reform.

Elaine MacKinnon

## **The Forgotten Victims: Childhood and the Soviet Gulag, 1929–1953**

### **Introduction**

The year is 1939. A child is walking along a platform in a railroad station when suddenly a voice rings out and calls his name, “Yura!” He recognizes that voice, but he cannot see anyone. He looks about frantically. He hears his mother, he knows her voice, but he cannot see her. Then the train pulls out and the voice fades away. He may never know whether this really happened, or whether he simply imagined it. But it did happen. This boy’s mother was packed into a crowded railcar, destined for the Gulag, when she saw her son and cried out to him.<sup>1</sup>

For this child, and many like him whose parents fell victim to the Stalinist terror, that was all that they would have—a fleeting memory, a flood of grief and uncertainty, and a profound sense of loss, either of loved ones who never returned, or of years that could never be regained. This poignant scene, witnessed and recalled by Yelena Sidorkina as she herself was en route to ten years in the camps, captures a dimension of the Gulag experience that is only now beginning to be examined more fully: the impact of the Gulag and, more specifically, of Stalinist policies of terror on children. What did it mean to have your childhood disrupted and even destroyed by the arrests of parents, or by your own arrest? How did this boy cope with losing his mother at this age, not knowing what had happened or where she had gone? What did it do to his developing psyche, his sense of security, his particular material circumstances and life opportunities? How did becoming a child of the Gulag affect critical processes of assimilation and socialization into Soviet society, and in the long run, one’s commitment to the regime and its values? For these children, surviving this ordeal became a lifelong process, and their means of coping and the consequences of their traumatic beginnings have much in common. Their experiences constitute a compelling chapter in the history of Soviet childhood that calls for deeper examination.

An unknown number of such children did not survive into adulthood. Those who did, and who have been able to tell their stories, present us with moving accounts of human resiliency, resourcefulness, and as with adult camp survivors, the importance of random acts of human kindness. Children, however, lacked the maturity, the life experience, or education to make at least some sense of their fate and new surroundings. Many had to face their Gulag nightmare having already lost

their primary source of physical and emotional security and nurturing—their parents and often siblings as well.

In the past, scholarly research has tended to overlook the impact of Stalinist terror and the Gulag on children: “Children are often the forgotten victims of punitive, transformative, or military policies that states officially aim at adult populations.”<sup>2</sup> But with Gorbachev’s glasnost and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, a flood of personal narratives and archival records has begun to shed light on the experiences of what Deborah Hoffman calls “the littlest victims.” Above all, the tireless efforts of such civic organizations as Memorial and *Vozvrashchenie* (The Return) have made it possible to compile, store, and publish memoirs, diaries, letters, and artistic works by Gulag victims and their children. A significant breakthrough came in 2002, when the Gulag survivor, writer, and poet Simeon Vilensky (founder of *Vozvrashchenie*) published *Deti GULAGa* (Children of the Gulag) through the auspices of Aleksandr Yakovlev’s International Democracy Fund and the Hoover Institution. This volume, part of the series *Rossiia XX Vek*, contained valuable archival documents, memoirs, and remembrances related to children and the impact of Stalinist policies upon their lives.<sup>3</sup> In 2010, Vilensky teamed with Cathy A. Frierson to publish an English edition of *Deti GULAGa*, presenting a number of the documents found in the original edition. They also provide commentary on these sources and trace the fate of over thirty children impacted by the terror.<sup>4</sup>

Deborah Hoffman, in *The Littlest Enemies*, has also translated a number of the memoirs and letters appearing in *Deti GULAGa*, excerpts from which first appeared in *Russian Life*.<sup>5</sup> In early 2011 the first set of oral histories of Gulag survivors appeared in English. Jehanne Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck, the editors of *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile*, conducted many of the interviews, and they offer insightful commentary on the mental and emotional state of the subjects as they recounted often painful and traumatic memories. This set of oral interviews included individuals who were children of Gulag victims as well as those who were themselves incarcerated or exiled.<sup>6</sup> Important works published in recent years on the history of childhood and on the Gulag have also touched on child victims of Stalinist policies. Catriona Kelly devotes several chapters to such children, including those in the Gulag, state orphanages, and juvenile detention centers.<sup>7</sup> Anne Applebaum in her 2003 history of the Gulag also has an informative chapter on women and children, describing the conditions within the camps for infants and adolescents. She noted, though, the dearth of memoirs by children who had once been prisoners in the camps.<sup>8</sup>

## **Purpose, Time Frame and Scope of Analysis**

This particular study expands the analysis of these publications, and draws upon memoirs, letters, archival materials, oral testimonies, interviews, and fictional texts to examine how children experienced the Gulag. It is important to recognize that the impact of the Gulag on children went far beyond just the small percentage of those actually incarcerated in the camps and labor colonies. Children of the Gulag included hundreds of thousands if not millions of children whose lives were disrupted by the arrest and/or execution of their fathers, their mothers, their siblings, their relatives, and who then had to live for decades without being able to speak publicly about what had happened or what it meant when the state “rehabilitated” their “enemy” parents. It is imperative that all these dimensions be considered in order to appreciate the full extent to which Stalinist policies affected children.

Rather than trace individual lives over a span of decades, as previous studies have done, I consider three major groups of children affected by the Gulag and state terror. In the first group are those who were true “children of the Gulag,” who were actually born either in prison or in the camps. Second are the children who were left behind when their parents were arrested and relatives, nannies, or even neighbors raced to get to them before the NKVD could place them in a reception center for “children of enemies of the people.” If there was no one to rescue them, they ended up in orphanages, or found themselves on their own, having to grow up quickly and cope with adult situations and responsibilities. The third group consists of young persons who themselves ended up in the Gulag, due either to their family connections or to some activity that ran afoul of Stalinist “legality.” My main source for this section is a memoir by a woman who was nineteen when she was arrested, Alla Tumanov. Her experiences showcase the irrational paranoia of a regime that chose to consume its own future by preying upon its most vulnerable subjects.<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet policy of forced labor began as early as 1919, and that from the beginning, children of those deemed opponents of the state, regardless of class or party, suffered the stigma and disruption of a parent’s arrest. In this study, I focus primarily on the Stalinist period, from 1929, when the camps began to increase exponentially in number, to 1956, when the twentieth Party Congress and Khrushchev’s secret speech accelerated the downsizing of the camps and the mass release of prisoners that had begun in the aftermath of Stalin’s death in March 1953. The Gulag preexisted the period of Stalin’s leadership and continued after his death, but there is arguably a considerable difference in the extent to which the broader spectrum of Soviet society was affected by the arbitrary processes of terror and

intimidation under Stalin. This was the period when the Soviet Gulag reached its maximum extent in terms of numbers of camps and prisoners, its role in the Soviet economy, and its harsh treatment of innocent victims. This was the time when the greatest number of people lived with a constant fear that at any moment, their lives could be completely disrupted and destroyed. Even those in the highest positions were vulnerable, as evidenced by the experiences of Soviet leaders such as Molotov, whose wife ended up in the camps.

It was also during the Stalinist era that state policy was most draconian in its treatment of children of “enemies of the people.” This was when the largest number of children were affected by policies of terror, when it was most likely that children whose parents were arrested would be singled out for discrimination, provocation, and arrest. Beginning in 1935, children as young as twelve were subject to criminal prosecution. It was the Stalinist state that put the most extreme restrictions on child victims’ education, social, and geographic mobility, and on their rights to join the collective through membership in organizations such as the Pioneers and the Kom-somol and the Communist Party. Rates of execution of political prisoners peaked under Stalin, while millions entered the camps, died in the camps, and left children behind. After 1956, the camps did not disappear, and many of the most notoriously cruel practices of the Stalinist Gulag continued. But the scale was smaller, and the number of innocent people accused of dissident or “anti-Soviet” political behavior was considerably reduced.

### **Significance for Gulag, Soviet and Comparative Childhood Studies**

Unquestionably the experiences of children in the camps make up a vital part of Gulag history. Although statistically small, the number of young people who spent actual time in the Gulag greatly affected older prisoners in multiple ways, based on the many references we see in memoirs. The ramifications of this study, though, extend beyond the Gulag to include the broader history of Soviet subjectivity, Soviet childhood, and transnational and cross-cultural studies of children’s politics, trauma, and resiliency. In particular the experiences of Gulag children afford an opportunity to explore how people operated in what James C. Scott has called the “hidden transcripts” of subordinate groups—the indirect ways in which people assert themselves in relation to those dominating them. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott distinguishes between the “public transcript,” the highly ritualized

and formal ways in which subordinate groups display their loyalties and commitment to the authority above them (the state or its agent), and the “hidden transcript” of political discourse and experience that reflects and engenders alternative opinions, evaluations, and perspectives of the subordinate group. Scott argues that one must penetrate the surface of public political discourse and power relations to determine what subordinate groups thought and felt about their superiors. This is discourse that goes on behind the scenes, “offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.”<sup>10</sup>

Much of what children experienced after their parents were arrested—stigmatization, expulsion from school and social organizations, incarceration—required them to develop strategies of physical survival and to become political agents, navigating through circumstances that challenged much they had previously been taught. They had to reconcile two very different realities—one that they had to subscribe to in order to move upward in life, to go to school and to enter university, and one that they knew from their private experience, namely, the unfair arrest and often death of loved ones, as well as years of poverty and fear. Scott contends that this disconnect between one’s lived experience of oppressive state power and the “public transcripts” of state rhetoric and patriotic ideals laid the foundation for the eventual erosion of loyalty and commitment. Thus, it is vital to examine the ways in which these childhood experiences helped shape the development of Soviet society and its social fabric.

In addition, it is important to consider the children of the Gulag in light of recent scholarship on Soviet subjectivity and the ways in which ordinary Soviet citizens sought to “internalize Soviet ideology.”<sup>11</sup> The experiences of the Soviet children whose lives were disrupted by Stalinist terror reveal a variety of ways in which people sought to cope with the contradictions between public values and private familial bonds. One can see just how strong that internalizing process was when studying the response of child victims, many of whom did not immediately lose their belief in the state, and some not ever, at least not visibly or publicly. But it is also clear that in many cases the state undermined its own ideological effectiveness. Examining the connections between social movements of dissidence and emigration and the experience of childhood terror helps illuminate the longer term impact and its consequences for Soviet history.

As a consequence of terror, a sizable percentage of the Soviet population experienced severe childhood trauma. Yet these children, never had a public forum, an open trial of perpetrators, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which could have provided what any trauma specialist would insist is essential for helping vic-

tims work through the mental, physical, and emotional anguish wrought by state policies of terror. Until Gorbachev's policies of glasnost, the only recompense provided was the laborious process of legal rehabilitation. But for Gulag survivors and their children, the process was often more traumatic than healing, because it was a highly bureaucratized procedure and had to be initiated from below, rather than granted as an act of contrition by the state. Furthermore, it was not until 1995, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, that the Russian Constitutional Court finally recognized the right of children of "enemies of the people" to be considered victims of terror, even if they had never been incarcerated, and thereby entitled to certain welfare benefits. It is only very recently that scholars have begun asking these "victims" what life had been like for them.<sup>12</sup> Scholars and psychologists have come to acknowledge the "widespread, emotional, long-range price for participation in different forms of man-made violence."<sup>13</sup> Generations who have suffered trauma can pass on those feelings of fear and pain to the next, particularly when not given the opportunity to deal openly and publicly with what happened to them.<sup>14</sup> This is a dimension of post-Stalinist Soviet society that must be considered when examining trends in society after 1953, particularly the rise of careerism and the erosion of belief in regime values.

This aspect of Soviet social history offers fertile ground for rich cross-cultural comparisons of children's responses to terror. Michel de Certeau asserts that through the "politics of everyday life" people manage to cope with, and even find satisfaction in, the most hopeless and oppressive situations. The children of terror victims had to quickly develop a political consciousness, often without fully understanding the context in which they were operating. Studies on the politics of childhood have identified tactics of resistance and tactics of conformity, and tactics that move between them. One can better understand the life trajectories of terror victims and their children if we put them into an analytical framework that recognizes their meaning as responses to interventionist state policies.<sup>15</sup>

## **Methodology and Sources**

Historians of the Gulag face many obstacles in trying to compile an accurate picture of the world within the camp zone. Virtually all materials used to study it are subject to questions of reliability and truth. Though archival documents have been accessible since 1991, we know that official records were often falsified or manipulated to suit the expectations of higher authorities, and numbers of prisoners, particularly

those ill and those who had died, were underreported.<sup>16</sup> Yet, personal sources on the Gulag can also be problematic. In recent years scholars have come to question the usefulness of memoir accounts, not only because of the fallibility of individual human memory. People write memoirs with a variety of objectives in mind, and not always to tell the truth; in cases of severe trauma, they may be psychologically unable to describe accurately what happened to them. Moreover, there is a strong collective consciousness that seems to be at work, an assimilation of public memory as one's own. It is apparent that some memoirists have consciously or unconsciously drawn upon standard texts such as Evgenia Ginzburg's memoir *Into the Whirlwind* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in the construction of their own narratives.<sup>17</sup> For this reason scholars have turned to doing oral interviews with Gulag survivors and their children, arguing that direct conversations can elicit more genuine individual memories.

To present as complete a picture as possible, this study is based on materials and information from many sources. I have used official reports and statistics from published collections of archival documents, but I draw as well from personal sources—memoirs, oral interviews, and letters, including those in published collections—to mitigate the particular biases inherent in each of these sources. I also use memoirs that in my view pass certain tests of reliability, such as those that reveal more personal elements; those written by non-Russian prisoners and thus less likely to be influenced by certain Russian or Soviet literary conventions in mind. I have compared memoirs written and published during different periods of time beginning from the 1930s through the post-Soviet era, and identified the commonalities running through them. I have gleaned information and stories about children from a variety of memoirists, particularly those who testify to the broader human experience in the camps and those who were parents themselves, and hence possibly more concerned with the welfare of children.

The very writing of a memoir reveals to us the profound nature of what children experienced as a result of Stalinist terror. Elena Bonner's first memoir, *Mothers and Daughters*, for example, focuses on her relationship with her mother and grandmother. She explains that the book was a response to her mother's death and that when she began it, she did not really know what form it would take. It is not an account of her entire life with her mother, but rather is framed by the chronology of her parents' arrests and effectively ends with these events. Her attempt to recapture the lost moments with her executed father, to try and remember what she shared with him during his last months, is an illuminating reflection of the psychological impact of terror, whether or not the exact details are accurate.<sup>18</sup>

Alla Tumanov's memoir is significant for what it reveals about the life-altering impact of incarceration in the camps. As Irina Paperno has pointed out, the writing of memoirs can be considered an effort to turn private lives into "public texts," and as a form of social therapy, the equivalent perhaps of a "truth and reconciliation" exercise that was never held.<sup>19</sup> Tumanov includes the MVD documents of her interrogation and the trial of her "conspiratorial group," showing the manipulation of a young teen and the way in which cases were "built" in the Stalinist era. She tells her version based on her memories, but also lets the records speak for themselves, which reveal how she responded to questions and became part of the process, providing details which she admits incriminated many people. We can see a strong desire to repair the fabric of a torn private life by connecting more solidly with collective historical experience, and to obtain a social identity to replace the individual one destroyed by state policy. Sources like this help us understand what it meant to be a "child of the Gulag."<sup>20</sup> They are part of the Soviet state experience.<sup>21</sup>

### **A Gulag Childhood: Background and Political Context**

Stories from the Gulag expose the malignant underside of Stalinist conceptualizations of children and the "happy childhood" promised by the state. While officially celebrating children in its public shows of propaganda and its youth organizations—children embodied the modernizing project, the means by which to transform their elders—the regime exploited children in the name of social protection and larger economic interests. The family was a potentially hostile environment within which the seeds of subversion could grow; thus it must be weakened by creating tension between parents and children.<sup>22</sup> State propaganda generated through youth organizations such as the Pioneers and Komsomol encouraged children to exercise vigilance and inform on parents and relatives if need be. At the same time, children represented a contagion that could easily poison the social fabric. During collectivization hundreds of thousands of children were sent into labor camps, colonies, and settlements along with their families. Rising levels of juvenile crime and homelessness due to the disruptions of Stalinist economic policies contributed to the passing of the 1935 decree that made children over twelve subject to the adult penal code, which included sentences forced labor and even execution for acts of violence, murder, and attempted murder.<sup>23</sup> This led the Commissariat of Internal Affairs to create a sector of Labor Colonies with the designated task of organizing child distribution centers, special prisons, and labor colonies to house homeless

and abandoned children as well as juvenile criminals. The purported goal was to reeducate them through socially productive labor.<sup>24</sup>

Although officially children were not to be held responsible for the sins of their parents, Stalinist paranoia could not overcome the nagging fear that “the apple does not fall far from the tree.” The regime used children as leverage in its hunt for enemies, particularly among high profile political victims. Many were shot because of their parents, including the children of Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. As early as 1919 the Soviet state created a legal category for family members of those convicted or suspected of crimes against the state, and the 1926 Criminal Code allowed for members of a suspect’s family to be arrested as “socially dangerous elements,” though this did not usually apply to dependent children.<sup>25</sup> Already in the 1920s, children of those arrested suffered the effects of a disrupted family life, exile, and diminished opportunities. Then in 1934, a Politburo protocol declared that “socially dangerous” elements could be incarcerated by the NKVD in corrective labor camps, exiled, or banished away from major cities and industrial centers for up to five years. Since the protocol provided no legal basis for determining what this category meant, or on what evidentiary foundation this could be established, it opened the door to arbitrary persecution of countless family members of arrested “enemies” whom the state feared could “potentially” become the source of resentment, sedition, and opposition.<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, in 1934 the Politburo began to deal specifically with the children of arrested persons, committing them to state care if no relatives existed to take them. In the course of the 1930s, as the terror accelerated and the Stalinist Politburo expanded its categories of enemy or hostile elements, the numbers of children affected grew exponentially. In August 1937 the Politburo ordered the arrest of wives of enemies and their internment for five to eight years in special camps to be constructed in Kazakhstan. Young children would be put into state care; those older than fifteen would have their fates individually determined.<sup>27</sup>

The legislation that followed this Politburo decision made it clear that wives and children of accused enemies of the people did not have to have committed a specific act of treason or hostility, but could be sentenced if deemed “socially dangerous and capable of active anti-Soviet actions.”<sup>28</sup> The NKVD Operational Order No. 00486 signed by Yezhov mandated the incarceration of all wives of enemies arrested since August 1, 1936; children between the ages of three and fifteen were to be sent to orphanages outside major cities and border and coastal towns, though there was a provision that they could go into the care of unrepressed relatives, a window that was later expanded due to the inability of state institutions to handle

the flood of these children. A typically Stalinist paranoia permeated this order: these “tainted” children had to be removed from “sensitive” areas, isolated from regular society. Nursing infants were to stay with their mothers, but those between one and three would go into nearby orphanages and nurseries run by republic-level commissariats of health. All siblings were to be separated, and investigators were to watch for signs of anti-Soviet moods and sentiments from the older children. Those over fifteen could go to unrepressed relatives, be sent into orphanages, or go to work, but not in the areas where their parents were being held; if deemed dangerous or unreliable, they could be arrested. Most, however, escaped this fate in 1937–1938, only to fall victim a decade later in 1949–1950; they then remained in camps and exile until the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956.<sup>29</sup> By June 1938, over fifteen thousand children whose parents had been arrested were in orphanages, and the state security chief warned that space was needed for ten thousand more.<sup>30</sup>

Wartime decrees further expanded these numbers. Those persons sentenced by NKVD organs went up from 75,421 in 1941 to 123,248 in 1945, but even more significant for children were decrees that punished family members of those accused of espionage or of some type of collaboration with the Germans. Wives and children were to be arrested and exiled for five years in distant regions. At the end of the war, Soviet Red Army soldiers released from German POW camps were rearrested as traitors, and once again family members were targeted as well.<sup>31</sup> Sadly, it was largely teenagers and young adults who made up the majority of slave laborers taken by the Nazis and sent to Germany, and their return to the USSR was not marked by celebration but by suspicion and punishment. Many of them upon their return were subjected at best to harsh interrogations and at worst to a term in the Gulag or in exile. Of the 5.2 million who returned from Axis-controlled territories, 6.5 percent were sent into the Gulag.<sup>32</sup>

Children of deported nationalities were also victims of Stalinist policies; many ended up in state or NKVD orphanages when their parents died in the traumatic process of resettlement. But those older than twelve, particularly if from western Ukraine or the Baltic states, often went to the camps. Between 1920 and 1952, there were fifty-two deportation campaigns of different “enemy” groups, and by the end of 1938, members of such “enemy” nations totaled approximately 26 percent of all political arrests, though they made up only 1.7 percent of the Soviet population.<sup>33</sup> Children were more likely to lose at least one of their parents if they were Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, German, Finnish, Greek, Iranian, Chinese, or Romanian, or if their Russian parents had worked in the Chinese city of Kharbin on the Far Eastern Railroad.<sup>34</sup> Altogether, it has been estimated that children numbered nearly

40 per cent of the national groups deported from their homelands in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>35</sup> From Lithuania alone, over 30,000 children were deported into the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1951.<sup>36</sup>

Given the unreliability of Gulag statistics, it is impossible to provide an accurate number of the children who passed through it or, more broadly, were affected by it. Frierson and Vilensky note that even the Stalinist regime itself did not realize just how many children would be affected by its policies and did not plan for the numbers that resulted. They point out that the authors of Order No. 00486 figured on about five thousand children being put into state orphanages. But since already by the end of 1937 there were over ten thousand, the state was forced to allow many to be turned over to relatives.<sup>37</sup> The actual number of children and teens in the camps was not high relative to other groups; young people under the age of seventeen or eighteen in 1940 made up only 1.2 percent of the camp population, rising to 2.2 percent in 1943.<sup>38</sup>

But the impact of state terror for children went beyond just those who were themselves in the camps. By far the greatest number of prisoners in the Gulag were between the ages of eighteen and fifty (89.1 percent in 1940, falling to 87.3 percent in 1943), precisely the age group most likely to have left children behind when they were arrested.<sup>39</sup> Applebaum estimates that in the course of the Stalinist period, possibly 18 million persons passed through the Gulag; if you consider that up to 80 percent were of prime childbearing age, then you must reckon well into the millions for determining how many children had their lives altered in some way by the Gulag.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, estimates of between 9 and 16 million Gulag deaths from 1929–1956 would suggest a multiplier effect of at least several million if even less than half left children behind when sent into the camps.<sup>41</sup>

## **Children Born in the Gulag**

Despite explicit prohibition in the 1937 operational orders against arresting pregnant or nursing women, there seemed to have been no hesitation in arresting women who were pregnant, no matter how far along.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, despite the segregation of the sexes and the harsh physical conditions, female prisoners did become pregnant in the camps throughout the Stalinist years. Rape by camp guards and criminal prisoners was a significant cause of camp pregnancies, although its frequency cannot be determined precisely and few memoirists have been willing to reveal its full scope. In 1941 the director of the Gulag reported a total of 8,500

pregnant women. In 1949, women who were pregnant or who had small children with them made up 6.3 percent of the women imprisoned, and overall in prisons and camps there were 26,150 women with children and 9,100 pregnant women.<sup>43</sup> In 1941 the director of the Gulag reported to Beria that there were 9,400 children up to the age of four incarcerated with their mothers in correctional labor camps and colonies; only 8,000 of them were in children's institutions within the camps due to a lack of space. In addition, NKVD jails had 2,500 women with young children.<sup>44</sup> By 1949, the number of women in prison who were either pregnant or had small children had increased to such an extent that the state was forced to amnesty women with children up to age seven (though not political prisoners) and alter its policies.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, it now decreed that women prisoners could keep infants with them until age two and then have relatives take care of them. Only if none came forward were they to go into state institutions.<sup>46</sup>

Memoirs tell of some women, usually those convicted of criminal rather than political acts, becoming pregnant as a means of survival, either through the favors gained from sex or to get the higher rations accorded to pregnant women and be released from heavy labor. As noted above, there were periodic amnesties for pregnant women and women with small children, which may have served as an incentive, though the decrees were usually limited to nonpolitical prisoners and were not made public.<sup>47</sup> Survivors' testimonies and memoirs also refer to women becoming pregnant in 1937–1938 to avoid execution.<sup>48</sup> According to one memoirist, having a baby was an emotional defense mechanism, a means of resisting a system that sought to take everything away from you. The fight was worth it, even if the odds were against the baby's survival.<sup>49</sup>

Among the most harrowing scenes recounted in women's memoirs are those describing childbirth in prison cells and camp barracks. Nadezhda Grankina recalls a birth in which fellow prisoners in the cell had to gnaw through the umbilical cord, and one took a scarf off her head to bind up the navel.<sup>50</sup> A Gulag survivor interviewed by Jehanne Gheith still displayed signs of grief and trauma as she revealed in a disjointed stream of consciousness how she had born a son weighing only 1.5 kilograms in a Novosibirsk prison. She said when he was born he already had the eyes of an adult, and she felt he was doomed. Tragically, he lived only eight months, dying from hunger as her nipples were damaged from beatings she sustained during interrogation.<sup>51</sup>

The state did attempt to mandate adequate care and facilities for infants and children imprisoned with their mothers. NKVD orders issued in 1940 required that pregnant women be allowed to deliver their babies in prison hospitals or wards, or in

local hospitals if there were none in the prison; women in the eighth or ninth month were to be interrogated “only in exceptional cases.” Children were to be provided with facilities that would enable them to grow and develop “normally.” They were to bathe at least once a week.<sup>52</sup> Yet, memoirs suggest that as in so many areas of Soviet life, such regulations existed largely on paper, and the system frequently lacked the will or the resources to enforce them. In the camps, the extreme filth, the lack of adequate prenatal care, the debilitating cold or heat all make it miraculous that any newborn could survive. Indeed, memoirs record frequent stillborn births. Enough survived, though, to require barracks for nursing mothers, infant nurseries, and children’s homes; there were also special camps for pregnant and nursing women where the regime was less harsh. One is described as having a birthing block, a hospital, and a “children’s Zone.”<sup>53</sup> Prisoner mothers would only get a few weeks to have the babies physically with them, and then the infants would go into a camp nursery. Nursing mothers were often given jobs within the camp zone or nearby, so that they could return for feedings. After weaning—which often came quite early due to mothers’ losing their milk from malnutrition, but at the most seemed to be one or two years—the mothers went back to regular work and might even be sent to a different camp. The children would then go into specially designated camp zones or NKVD-run children’s homes.<sup>54</sup>

Most memoirists describe infants and children living in drab and poorly built barracks, horribly overcrowded, inadequately staffed with poorly trained personnel, all of which contributed to high rates of infant mortality and malnourishment. In a system where the camps were at the bottom of the priority list in an economy of scarcity, it can be imagined how few resources would have been apportioned to nurseries harboring the offspring of enemies and criminals. According to Applebaum, camp commanders normally relegated infants and children to the shabbiest, coldest, and worst ventilated buildings.<sup>55</sup> Nursing mothers were supposed to get higher rations of food, but memoirs repeatedly claim that they were often not supplied, were too meager to support a healthy milk supply, or were siphoned off by food distributors or attendants. In many camps the nurseries and children’s homes were staffed primarily by criminal prisoners, who at best cared properly just for their own infants. Mothers could only visit for feedings and had to come up with the means to bribe for extra visitations, or even to spend more time at each visit. There were never enough nurses to provide the children with the physical contact they needed.

The archives contain chilling reports of children’s facilities with high rates of disease and unsanitary conditions. An inspection of the Karaganda camps in 1939 found the facilities for children unacceptable; children were ill due to inadequate

heating, poor medical care, and a lack of vitamin-enriched foods. There was no place for mothers to breastfeed infants, and the barracks for mothers and pregnant prisoners were damp and overcrowded.<sup>56</sup> In 1952 a procurator's report from the Dalstroï camp system noted that over 50 percent of the 212 children in the Tokansk Children's home had rickets and dysentery, and there were no provisions for isolating those suffering from flu and pneumonia. In another camp, Snezhnaia dolina, 96 of the 395 children living there had scarlet fever.<sup>57</sup> Death rates of babies and children seem to have been appallingly high. According to Hava Volovich, who was sent with her newborn daughter to a mother's camp, 300 babies died every year even before WWII, and this number greatly increased during the war.<sup>58</sup> One woman who wrote to Memorial about her experiences having a baby in the postwar mothers' camps claimed that she saw 30 to 35 children die every day from exhaustion and emaciation.<sup>59</sup> Applebaum points out that infant death rates were so high that they were frequently covered up, a situation even noted by camp inspectors.<sup>60</sup> Hava Volovich witnessed the kicking and beating of children in the camp nursery and a brutal "rationalization" of feeding that involved the attendants shoving hot food down the throats of crying infants. The infants were bathed in icy cold water and had virtually permanent bed sores and bites. She found bruises on her daughter, who would cling to her neck when she came to nurse. Her story ends tragically; Volovich suggests that her infant daughter simply lost the will to live when, day after day, she faced the same traumatic separation. Her mother would come, only to go away, never taking her back with her. One day when Hava came to the nursery, the little bed was empty.<sup>61</sup>

But conditions varied from one camp system to another, and some memoirs describe more hospitable and humane camp nurseries, particularly as a function of the human personnel. A woman who was a director of children's facilities in a camp system located along the White Sea related in a series of interviews with her local Memorial branch that there were two hundred to two hundred and fifty children in two barracks, and that she always tried to staff them with educated political prisoners, former teachers or professionals. She claimed that each child who died was put in a real coffin, not thrown into common pits as some memoirists have described.<sup>62</sup> A. L. Voitovskaia, who worked as a nurse in the Vorkuta camps, described with irony the fact that Vorkuta, one of the harshest and most deadly camp systems, had what she referred to as an "oasis": a nursery and children's home that was remarkably spacious, with high ceilings, a special kitchen, a laundry, a veranda for walks, and even an ultraviolet lamp. The only difference from normal children's institutions was that the personnel were unpaid prisoners.<sup>63</sup> Nadezhda Joffe, who gave birth in Kolyma shortly after her internment, notes that at one camp the high infant mortal-

ity rate in the nursery led to a personnel change, with a doctor being put in charge who immediately removed criminal attendants and allowed political prisoners to work there. Her daughter ended up being cared for by a kindly, elderly prisoner, and her health, as well as that of the other children, greatly improved. Whereas Hava Volovich's child died at fifteen months, Natasha Joffe's daughter survived, though with a heart condition possibly caused by early deprivation. Joffe was also fortunate to be able to keep close track of her child, for many prisoners who gave birth in the camps did not see their children again. But there were times in her five-year term in the camps when she did not see her daughter for six months, and when reunited, her daughter at first did not know her.<sup>64</sup> Even in the better-run camp nurseries, mothers, including Joffe, had to find ways to bribe, cheat, and cajole in order to see their children. The sense of abandonment for both had to have been traumatic. Evgeniia Ginzburg recalled that when she worked in a camp nursery she saw children at age four who could not yet speak and whose physical and emotional development had been stunted.<sup>65</sup>

Tamara Tsulukidze was a Georgian actress imprisoned for ten years in the Gulag who helped create a puppet theater that toured camp systems and performed at the orphanages and kindergartens attached to them. According to her fellow prisoner Tamara Petkevich, part of the motivation for Tsulukidze was to see children again; she had been working as a nurse after a year of solitary confinement and was still suffering from the agony of being separated from her beloved son. In her memoir, Tsulukidze describes in heartrending terms the children she encountered in the camps—fifty children aged five to six, with shaved heads, emaciated bodies, all dressed alike, and terribly withdrawn. She was shocked by the unnaturalness of their behavior; all these children and no laughter, no running about, no play area, and no toys. One of the directors showed her the one toy that they had, a misshapen stuffed animal sewn from rags by one of the prisoner-mothers; she seemed defensive to Tamara, assuring her that they fed the children not too badly and at least bathed them. Sadly, when the puppet troupe began to perform, they had to stop because the dog character frightened the camp children. The only animals they knew were the snarling guard dogs that patrolled outside the camp. Tamara tried to take the dog puppet out to show them that it was not a real animal. But they became hysterical, and their cries drowned out the singing.<sup>66</sup>

Tragically, for children born in the Gulag camps and then sent into NKVD homes and orphanages, life offered few prospects. Even if they did survive, some of them were never reunited with their mothers, particularly if the mothers had been criminal prisoners only seeking residual benefits through pregnancy—lighter

labor, higher rations, and possibly freedom—and had little interest in the children themselves.<sup>67</sup> Those who did seek their children faced many obstacles. The camps and NKVD homes kept poor records, and the authorities sometimes concealed or altered the child's identity to prevent such reunions. One man, Viktor Serbsky, born possibly in a camp in 1933, only learned his mother's identity when relatives tracked him down in 1957. Both parents had been shot, and he had not been told about either in the home where he was taken. All he had was a memory of his mother's name, and he kept this secret until 1957.<sup>68</sup>

## **The Children Left Behind**

It is difficult to describe adequately the degree of trauma that millions of children suffered as a result of their parents' arrest. Those left behind, the "strange orphans" of Stalinism, were indeed victims of the Gulag, even if they did not actually live in its zone.<sup>69</sup> Most suffered economically, socially, and psychologically. Eventually some did pass through the camps, either swept up in the renewed waves of political arrests that began in 1948 and 1949 or, after ending up in the streets, arrested on criminal charges for stealing, prostitution, or gang activity. The "fortunate" ones were taken in by relatives or neighbors; many, however, ended up in the hands of the NKVD and were put into special homes or retention centers. Each of these scenarios was fraught with trauma, tension, and instability, particularly during World War II.

In most cases, the more fortunate child victims were those who could be cared for by grandparents, relatives, or even neighbors. Frierson and Vilensky record numerous instances in 1937–1938 of courageous nannies and grandmothers fighting to keep children out of the hands of the NKVD. The truly unsung heroines of this era were in fact loyal and stubborn nannies who, despite great personal risk and the paralyzing atmosphere of fear, refused to abandon their charges. In several cases when children were taken away to NKVD distribution centers, it was a nanny who recorded the information and contacted relatives who were then able to rescue them.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, there were many grandparents who took in and protected children, often at great expense to themselves personally and professionally. Some spent months and even years tracking down those seized by the NKVD and then preserved links between these children and their repressed parents by writing letters and sending packages. Elena Bonner quoted the child victim and writer Vladimir Kornilov: "And it turned out that in those years there were no mothers. There were grandmothers."<sup>71</sup> Giuzel Ibragimova was two years old and in the hospital with meningitis when her parents were arrested, and though she

was taken home by a colleague of her father's, the NKVD put her in a children's home. It took her grandfather three years first to locate her and then to figure out whom he could bribe in order to retrieve her.<sup>72</sup>

Sadly, even when children were able to stay with relatives or family acquaintances, the situation could be fraught with tension and upheaval. A child victim interviewed as an adult recalled being taken in by close friends of her arrested parents, along with her nanny, and they treated her well, protecting her during World War II when her German-language skills could have gotten her deported. But she recalled that tensions arose when she was not able to call them "Mama" and "Papa."<sup>73</sup> Those children left with relatives were particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of life, such as illness, death, and war, which disrupted the homes into which they had been put. The Russian State Archive contains letters written from children pleading for their parents' release from prison and exile; these were addressed to the OGPU or to E.P. Peshkova, the wife of writer Maxim Gorky who until 1938 was one of the directors for an organization set up to aid political prisoners. Some had been dispersed among relatives and strangers; they ask that their families be reunited, or that they be allowed to continue their schooling. Imprisoned parents also wrote anguished letters pleading to be released in order to care for sick children, or if that were not possible, at least to allow their children to join them in exile.<sup>74</sup> In one letter, written in 1935, a boy of eight asks Peshkova to help him and his four-year old sister. They had been living with their grandmother after their father had been arrested and their mother exiled. But the grandmother had died, and they had no other relatives. They did not know where their parents were, for they had not received any letters. Such letters reveal the impoverished conditions faced by children of exiled kulaks, priests, and political prisoners, well before the 1937–1938 Great Purges.<sup>75</sup>

Memoirs record children being shuffled about from relative to relative, exacerbating their already acute sense of loss and abandonment. Sometimes relatives and friends could not keep them, either from fear or a lack of means. Elena Bonner records the harrowing night she spent after her father's arrest, when her mother sent her to her aunt's apartment for sanctuary. But the uncle was frightened and slammed the door on her, leaving her to wander the streets of Moscow, feeling ashamed and tainted, as if she were contagious.<sup>76</sup> Frierson and Vilensky interviewed one man who recalled that as a boy he stole candy on purpose, hoping to get arrested after having been shuffled from one relative to another. Going to a child distribution center was better than continuing as a burden to the family.<sup>77</sup> Suzanne Rosenberg returned from the camps to find that her daughter had been sent from person to person after Rosenberg's brother, who was the child's guardian, had committed

suicide. He had been unable to find work after his mother and sister were arrested, and the final straw had been his expulsion from the Communist Party. At age six the child ran away from the neighbors who had kindly and courageously taken her into their home. She went to live with her paternal grandmother and aunt, but there, in a one-room apartment, she felt unwanted. So she wandered through Moscow's streets and eventually returned to the neighbors who had been taking care of her.<sup>78</sup> After her father's death in World War II and her mother's arrest in 1947, one young girl ended up a homeless wanderer for over ten years. She worked off and on as a nanny and a farm worker. Frequently she took cover in railroad stations, where she had to live in constant fear of sexual harassment and aggression.<sup>79</sup>

Children in these situations had to grow up fast. There are many accounts of children barely in their teens having to fend for themselves. At age thirteen Elda Fridman endured a three-month ordeal trying to travel to live with her mother in her place of exile; she had to stop and work periodically to earn money, and though she sold off luggage and clothing, she stubbornly kept a piece of her grandmother's coat a neighbor had helped her to save.<sup>80</sup> For Elena Bonner, her childhood ended on the night of her father's arrest, May 27, 1937; after this she was no longer the childish "Lusia," but rather the grown up "Elena." She realized that the world would never be the same, that it would be up to her, not yet sixteen, to take care of her mother and brother. Others, though, reacted differently. Bonner describes a classmate who went wild after her mother's arrest; she ceased to do school work and spent her time partying.<sup>81</sup>

Sadly, children did not always understand that the separation was not the fault of their parents. It had to have been bewildering for children, particularly those whose parents were state and party officials, who had been raised to believe in the infallibility of regime ideals, to accept that the state had acted wrongfully. Elena Bonner's younger brother reacted to his father's arrest by lashing out that enemies of the people were so evil that some "even pretend to be fathers."<sup>82</sup> Similarly, both sons of Osip Piatnitsky, who was executed in 1938, responded with anger at their father for being a counter-revolutionary, and fought bitterly with their mother, Julia, who still believed in his innocence. In her diary, she quoted Vladimir, age 11, as saying "It's too bad they didn't shoot Papa; after all, he is an enemy of the people."<sup>83</sup> Sometimes the fact that children did not know the truth about their parents' seeming abandonment had irreparable consequences. Hilda Vitzthum recalls meeting a young woman in the camps whose parents had been arrested in 1937; she and her brother had gone to live with their grandmother, but suffered severe impoverishment. The grandmother was very feeble and soon died; the two ended up in the streets begging

and stealing, and eventually each received a term in the camps as criminal prisoners. The girl expressed bitter resentment at her mother for having abandoned her and for not having written letters, but seemed unmoved by any attempts to explain why this had happened. Hilda wondered whether the mother would ever be so unfortunate as to meet up with her children in the Gulag world.<sup>84</sup> Another such case is recorded by Olga Adamova-Sliozberg. She met a woman whose high-strung son had difficulty adjusting to relatives after her arrest and had been bounced around from home to home. She was looking forward to her release and arranged to meet her son at a train station. But the year was 1941, and because of the German invasion, she was not released on time. The boy went to the rendezvous point, but she never showed up. He fell ill from exposure, and a kind man took him home. Later this man wrote a scathing letter to the imprisoned woman, berating her for abandoning her son after her release. But though she pleaded with authorities, she could not even write to this man, and eventually the boy turned up in the Kolyma camps on a five-year criminal charge after joining a street gang.<sup>85</sup>

During the worst years of Stalinist terror, children had to cope with the bewildering loss of neighbors, friends, teachers, relatives, as well as of the stigmatization that came with their own parents' repression. Alla Tumanov describes how people stopped talking to them and excluded them, even pouring scorn upon them. She remembers the little girls in her apartment building whose parents had been arrested and how they kept to themselves, never taking part in games or fun.<sup>86</sup> Elena Bonner recalls that her apartment building became subdued after the arrests began in early 1937, and other children avoided her. She and a close friend developed their own coded language to use when talking and writing about those arrested.<sup>87</sup> Wolfgang Leonhard, the son of a German communist arrested in 1937–1938, describes the almost surreal atmosphere in his Moscow school when teachers would disappear from one day to the next; the children could see the visceral agony on the faces of those who hadn't kept track of the arrests and were caught mentioning an "enemy." Rumors ran rampant, and children learned to speak in "hints and metaphors."<sup>88</sup> One child victim, Valeriia Gerlin, recalled not talking to anyone about her father's arrest, feeling scared and lonely, especially after overhearing older girls refer derisively to a classmate whose father was an "enemy." Later she came to have two groups of friends, those who knew about her father's arrest, and those who did not and might end their friendship if they knew the truth.<sup>89</sup> Ibragimova recalled at university how there was a specific cohort of young people who had all been affected by their parents' arrest. They came together out of shared suffering of poverty, joblessness, and

social ostracism. None let this defeat them, but instead they made do with less and worked harder than others to prove themselves.<sup>90</sup>

The 1941 invasion by Nazi Germany exposed many of these children to even greater stress and deprivation. As Frierson and Vilensky point out, children in general suffered greatly during the war, making up as high as 40 percent of non-combat-related deaths.<sup>91</sup> Katherine Jolluck translated a letter found in an archive that appears to have been written by a young Polish child in 1942 to her father. She had been left to fend for her little brother and her sick mother after her father had either been arrested or conscripted. She pleads for help, saying that they lacked food and clothing, and could not leave their place of exile.<sup>92</sup> In the chaos of the invasion and the evacuation of occupied territories, relatives caring for children of the repressed often failed to take them along. Inna Gaister at the age of sixteen had to evacuate herself and her sisters three different times during the war; family members had made their own plans without including them. On her own, she had to find housing, food, and employment; at one point they lived in an unheated hallway. All three contracted tuberculosis, Inna suffered from skin ailments and typhus, and one sister died at age seven.<sup>93</sup> Nadezhda Grankina's daughter was crippled from polio, and her grandmother struggled to care for her after Nadezhda's arrest. She had to go back to work and bitterly resented having to do so, blaming Nadezhda and believing that she must have done something to get such a long sentence. Tragically, both Grankina's mother and daughter died from starvation during the siege of Leningrad.<sup>94</sup>

Nadezhda Joffe writes that only after being released did she learn what harrowing traumas her two daughters endured during her imprisonment. Initially Nadezhda's mother had taken them in, but then she too was arrested, and they went from relative to relative, enduring harsh accusations against their mother by relatives unhappy with two extra mouths to feed. After the German invasion, at ages nine and twelve, the girls were put into an orphanage. An uncle had promised to take them along when he was evacuated, but he never showed up. In the orphanage the food ran out and they had to fend for themselves during the German attack on Moscow. In addition to nearly starving, they were subjected to anti-Semitic slurs and exploitation by neighbors in the communal apartment where they took refuge. The oldest earned money by standing in bread lines for people who ran for shelter when the sirens rang out; she would brave the barrage for a chance to earn a crust of bread. Like many in the camps, the child reached what seemed a point of no return, a moment of absolute despair when she tried to kill herself by throwing herself underneath an automobile. The person who was driving ended up helping her and her sister, as did a teacher in a nearby school who took them to an orphanage. But there, despite better

conditions, they were bullied and taunted as “children of enemies” and hunger still haunted them. Eventually an uncle rescued them, but they continued to hide food, even burying it, in case their hunger returned.<sup>95</sup>

For some children of the repressed, however, the war years were a blessing, for it allowed them to reassimilate themselves into the body politic through war service. Doors opened that had previously been shut, though in the first two years the Red Army kept refusing to employ or allow the enlistment of children of repressed parents. But the exigencies of war forced the acceptance of such “tainted” individuals, and for some this marked the beginning of their path back into a life of relative normalcy. One remarkable story is that of a child who had been left in Leningrad in the care of a nanny and two siblings after her mother’s arrest in 1940. The blockade took the lives of all three, but with the help of a teacher she not only survived, but was able to become a volunteer for the Road of Life transport system to relieve the city. She later parlayed this into a career in hydraulic engineering.<sup>96</sup> For Elena Bonner, who had finished high school thanks to brave and supportive teachers, but had been denied entrance to the university, the war enabled her to volunteer as a nurse and to receive medical training; it brought an end to the “strangeness” of the “strange orphans” of 1937–1938, though for some, only temporarily. At the war’s end, she trained as a doctor at the First Leningrad Medical Institute.<sup>97</sup>

Children whose parents had been arrested were often vulnerable to pressures from the secret police to denounce them or become informants. Children might agree to do so out of a sense of guilt and a desire to obviate or expunge their parents’ guilt, or out of an exaggerated sense of loyalty, either real or feigned. In some cases, children had to denounce parents in order to gain admission to schools, to universities, to the Komsomol, or to get a job. The penalties could be severe if one refused. Frierson and Vilensky tell of a child who had seen her father beaten severely by the agents arresting him. At school she was told that if she denounced her father she would receive felt boots, but when she would not do so, she was forced to wear open-toed sandals in the depth of winter.<sup>98</sup>

No matter how difficult it was for children who were shuffled about among relatives, the alternative was worse: to be sent to an NKVD orphanage, where neglect, deprivation, alienation, filth, overcrowdedness, and even death awaited them. Some ended up in what were called Children’s Reception-Distribution Centers, which were supposed to be transit points en route to orphanages, but children could be stuck there for years. In 1940, according to the deputy head of the Gulag, A. P. Lepilov, there were 162 children’s reception centers which, since 1935, had

processed 952,834 children who then moved on either to children's homes or to the fifty labor colonies then in existence.<sup>99</sup>

The children who passed through these institutions became little more than statistics, a fact poignantly and painfully revealed by Giuzel Ibragimova. She quoted an NKVD telegram sent to an orphanage regarding her and her sister's arrival there from the reception-distribution center; the children are referred to as the "enumerated units," a label that speaks volumes for what they faced in the world of NKVD children's homes.<sup>100</sup> There are also numerous accounts of siblings being separated and sent to different homes, never to find each other.<sup>101</sup> Owen Matthews, a journalist, has described how his Russian mother and her sister, with no one to take them in, ended up in the Simferopol prison for juvenile offenders after their parents were arrested in 1937–1938. They were thrown in with prostitutes and criminals who stole from them and taunted them. While there, Matthews's mother contracted a crippling form of tuberculosis in her bones that required repeated surgeries and caused her to walk with a limp for the rest of her life. At one point children who were trying to escape lit a fire, and the two girls were sent out into the yard where they froze from the cold and the guard dogs snapped at them all night to keep them from running. Fortunately, both sisters were taken to the same orphanage after this fire destroyed the prison. But twelve-year-old Lenina, Matthews's aunt, was haunted for the rest of her life by a fear of dogs and by another searing memory: all through that night she could hear the children of arrested Spanish Republicans, whose toys were taken from them when they arrived at the orphanage, crying out for their "Mama."<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Boris Faifman recalled how traumatized he was by his separation from his parents, and how in the NKVD reception-distribution center he cried for days. As a result he was put into an isolation cell, a point he reiterated several times, as if still incredulous that a five-year-old could end up in such a place. When he returned years later, he asked to see the cell, which was all he could remember.<sup>103</sup>

In state-run orphanages and institutions, food and clothing were often scarce, and there are many accounts of abuse and poor treatment by directors as well as attendants. Tamara Petkevich recalls having a great fear that her own child, who was born in the camp, would be sent to a "free" orphanage, where there were frighteningly high numbers of crippled and handicapped children as well as high rates of tuberculosis.<sup>104</sup> Children of political prisoners were at greater risk than regular orphans in state-run homes. They were always under suspicion and their actions were judged more harshly and punished more severely.<sup>105</sup> Besides isolating and stigmatizing them, supervisors and attendants stole passports and ration cards from the children and deliberately failed to reunite children with relatives searching for

them.<sup>106</sup> Throughout the Stalinist period, there are continued reports of inspectors and various government ministries detailing the abuses, the shortages, and the criminal behavior of employees in the orphanages. Clearly there was widespread graft, embezzlement, and corruption. Letters written in the 1930s by children to Stalin, to E.P. Peshkova, and to Nadezhda Krupskaya, as the official supervisor of state children's homes, paint a bleak picture of not just neglect and inadequate supplies, but heinous acts of malicious cruelty and punishment. The letters plead for food, for education, even for merely a change in underwear.<sup>107</sup>

Likewise, there was a continual stream of orders to punish those responsible and lay down new regulations to improve conditions. It is clear, however, that the problems continued, due in part to an utter lack of capacity but also due to the lack of political will to make this a priority for state resources.<sup>108</sup> An NKVD report from 1938 targeted orphanages run by the Commissariat of Enlightenment and described shortages of beds and cutlery, filthy living conditions, several cases of rape and bullying of children of repressed parents, “mass debauchery,” and multiple cases of infectious disease.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, procurators in the 1940s reported inadequate supplies of clothing, shoes, food; lack of heat in sleeping areas; and cases of rape and outright theft by directors and employees. In one home forty-six children developed frostbite when they were forced to walk barefoot in the snow.<sup>110</sup>

Children who grew up in these institutions frequently recall the humiliation of being always set apart, always reminded of their stigma, and denied entry into the Pioneers and the Komsomol.<sup>111</sup> At reception centers and at their assigned orphanages they would often be marched in by guards with dogs, fingerprinted, and assigned a number; with their heads shaved, they looked like prisoners themselves. Rarely, if ever, would they hear their parents' names mentioned. The orphanage might even change the child's name altogether, like Boris Israelovich Faifman, whose name the NKVD changed to Boris Srul'evich Faifman.<sup>112</sup> The idea was to give the children a “new life” as model citizens of the Soviet Union and make it more difficult for them to discover the identity and the truth about their parents.

Some children were truly “reeducated” by the NKVD in these places. Orphans were particularly susceptible to propaganda. Many felt a compulsion to join the Soviet collective, and for those who did gain entry into the Pioneers and Komsomol, this became a valued compensation for what they had lost. It seemed more secure than relying on what had already been dismembered. Anne Applebaum records a case of a mother whose children survived eight years in a state orphanage, but when she went to get them upon her release, they refused to go with her. They had been taught to renounce their parents completely and never sought to live with them

again.<sup>113</sup> It was harder, of course, for older children to accept what they were being told about their parents and to submit to the new rules. The price for not doing so, however, could be high. *Deti GULAGa* printed a series of diary entries and letters from the secret police file of a fifteen-year-old boy, Vladimir Moroz. Moroz was terribly embittered by his fate and by the poor conditions he faced in the orphanage he and a younger brother had been sent to after their parent's arrest. The despair and outrage expressed in this diary and in his letters, one of which was addressed to Stalin, made him a target for the NKVD, who arrested him as a counterrevolutionary. He died in prison in 1939, age seventeen, of tuberculosis. The efforts of his mother and an older brother, both of whom survived the camps, obtained his rehabilitation in 1957, but they never were able to find the younger brother who had been placed in the home with him.<sup>114</sup>

What stayed in the memory of one woman who grew up in a children's home was a pear tree that never bloomed and a pit where the bodies of emaciated children were thrown after dying of hunger. She recalls abuse, sores, and bathing only once a month.<sup>115</sup> Another woman, Natalya Sareleva, described dingy wooden barracks, no meat except soup made from dried smelt and potatoes, and a director who knocked boys' heads against the wall and punched them when she found crumbs in their pockets, which she claimed were evidence of plans to run away. A childless couple adopted Natalya at age eight and a half, but not her older sister, and the two never found each other again.<sup>116</sup> Mikhail Nikolaev hated how in the orphanage he could never get away from the collective, but was always surrounded by several hundred other children who all had to be alike. It was very much like regular Soviet society, only here you did not even have the possibility of escaping into the family. You had distilled in you the values of Stalinism, the need for eternal vigilance against constantly threatening outside enemies.<sup>117</sup> But it was the inside "enemies" that most threatened these children. They were bullied and sexually abused in addition to being malnourished and subjected to disease-inducing conditions caused by poor sanitation and the lack of hygiene.<sup>118</sup> Nikolaev wrote in his memoir about having to become like a wolf to survive, running with the pack, stealing for food, and submitting to bullies, one who was nicknamed "Hitler."<sup>119</sup> In a series of letters written in the early 1960s, Vladimira Ubovich, daughter of one of the generals executed by Stalin, described the new "collective" she found at the children's home as being shockingly different from all that she had known and experienced in her privileged childhood. The children of political prisoners were targeted by the other children, most of whom came from dekulakized families, and the rules for existence within the collective were crude and abhorrent to her.<sup>120</sup>

Such horrendous conditions often led children to run away, joining the scores of homeless children (*bezprizorniki*) who wandered the streets and often ended up in the camps on criminal charges. One nine-year-old boy ran away repeatedly to escape the taunts of being an “enemy,” each time being caught, beaten and put into a basement for punishment. He eventually succeeded and ended up at the front in World War II, having changed his name and date of birth. According to his brother, “He mixed everything up so thoroughly out of fear that even he couldn’t untangle it.”<sup>121</sup> Alexander Dolgun remembers meeting in his first days in a camp an *urka*, a criminal leader, who was sent to an orphanage after his party-member parents had been shot. He had escaped from the orphanage at age eleven and lived in the streets; by the time he met Dolgun he had spent almost twenty years in prison.<sup>122</sup>

There are also harrowing stories told by children whose orphanages lay in the path of the Nazi invasion in 1941. Many were abandoned by the personnel and had to fend for themselves. Some fled into the forest or, tragically, were caught by the Germans and either executed if Jewish, or sent to work in Germany. Owen Matthews’s mother and aunt were in an orphanage in Dnepropetrovsk in Ukraine. The older sister, who was sixteen, was fortunate enough to make her way to Moscow, where she found an uncle who could take her in and find her employment. But the younger sister, only seven years old, fled first to Stalingrad, then made her way further east before ending up in a refugee camp in Solikamsk, where she nearly starved to death before being miraculously discovered by her older sister.<sup>123</sup>

Letters and memoirs also suggest that the state had no compunction in drafting young boys from the state orphanages and sending them directly to the front, often right into the line of fire on virtual suicide missions.<sup>124</sup> Yet, for some, as with those children of the repressed who were able to live with their relatives, the war years brought new opportunities to win social assimilation by volunteering, or by being trained as nurses. The chaos of war also allowed some to change names and begin life anew.<sup>125</sup> A letter written to Memorial and published in *Russian Life* in 2007 related how the NKVD had prevented the author’s parents from caring for her son when she was arrested; they took him for “reeducation” and put him into a children’s home in Vladivostok, which she said was little more than a camp itself with guards, barbed wire fencing, lice, and filth. Her son ran away and joined the orphans riding the rails, drifting in and out of homes until the war came. He took advantage of the confusion to enroll in a trade school, claiming his parents had died in the evacuation. Eventually he became a paratrooper and served in the war.<sup>126</sup>

Not all the orphanages were run as poorly as those described here. Much depended on the personnel, and there were humane directors and brave teachers who

worked hard to provide the best they could for their charges.<sup>127</sup> Boris Faifman remembered the improvements brought by a new director to his orphanage, where bullying had been brutal and you had to steal not only for yourself but for your “master,” the older child you served. He showed his interviewer the scar on his finger from being cut by his “master’s” knife when he had refused to give over a second bread ration. After over a year of this a new director came and got rid of the older boys who had been bullying and even provided the remaining orphans with chocolate and tasty pies. Life became “more or less normal.”<sup>128</sup> There was a children’s home run by Mark Malyavko in Smolensk Province which maintained exemplary standards for all its charges, including children of political prisoners, and once won a prize as the best orphanage in the Russian Federation.<sup>129</sup> Owen Matthews’s mother, Lyudmilla, after being rescued by her sister from the refugee camp, was put into an orphanage outside Moscow, attended a good high school and Moscow State University—thanks to teachers who vouched for her and fought for her right to an education. When he and his mother visited one teacher years later, they were greeted with tears of joy and shown newspaper clippings detailing Lyudmilla’s admission to university and the prizes she had won. Both she and her older sister had been able to gain admission to the Pioneers and were active in other youth organizations as well.<sup>130</sup>

Yet, even well-intentioned personnel in state-run institutions faced constant systemic problems with shortages and high death rates. The contrasting fates for children left behind is poignantly illustrated by Hilda Vizthum’s story. She had an infant daughter and a toddler son, Ruslan, when she was arrested in 1938. She was trying to find out about her husband, who had been arrested earlier, and left her son with her brother-in-law, who looked after the boy until her release in 1948. But she kept her daughter with her because she was still nursing. When the NKVD arrested Hilda, she had no one to whom she could give the baby—friends were too frightened to take her—so the child went to a children’s home. Within two months she contracted scarlet fever and died. Ruslan survived in the hands of his uncle and aunt, though the circumstances were very difficult for the family, who were *kolkhozniks* and moved at least once to escape the stigma of Ruslan’s presence. They suffered from extreme poverty exacerbated by the extra mouth to feed, and Ruslan, due to illness and a broken leg, did not start school until almost nine years of age. Hilda’s in-laws resented her efforts to find out information about Ruslan, especially when she began contacting *kolkhoz* officials about his schooling, for this put them in a precarious position. When she was reunited with him, she found him weak and emaciated, extremely shy and withdrawn, with hardly any memories of her. But he was alive, and she managed to get both herself and her son to Austria.

But her memoir suggests that she remained tormented by the choice she had made to keep her daughter with her rather than leave her with in-laws, and by the friends who had refused to take her because of their fears.

## Children and Youth Sentenced to the Gulag

Children also ended up in the Stalinist Gulag as prisoners in their own right. Many thousands of young people passed through the Gulag for juvenile crimes and delinquency, but there were also youths sentenced as political prisoners. One writer recalled seeing in 1936 a fifteen-year-old girl in a prison cell, with a “small, sweet face of a child and her hair was held back in two short braids.” She had written a letter in verse to Stalin pleading for him to help improve conditions on the collective farms, and though everyone at her school vouched for her sincerity, the OGPU arrested her as being part of a conspiracy.<sup>131</sup>

There was a special Gulag world designed for juveniles, though it is not always clear why some ended up in the regular camps while others did not. The state set up prisons, camps, and labor colonies to house juveniles accused of either criminal or political offenses, or who were swept up in mass campaigns against kulaks, deported nationalities, and other groups. The Stalinist era saw a huge rise in juvenile crime, partly fed by the inordinately broad definitions of what constituted a crime, but also by the vast increase in homeless children and orphans caused by collectivization, dekulakization, terror, and then by the German invasion. In 1935, the NKVD created a Department of Labor Colonies, which was to organize child distribution centers, special prisons, and labor colonies for abandoned children and juvenile criminals.<sup>132</sup> During the two-year period of 1938–1939 alone, there were over thirty-three thousand juveniles between the ages of twelve and sixteen arrested, and two hundred sixty-six thousand homeless children were taken into custody by the militia.<sup>133</sup>

Ostensibly the goal of the labor colonies was to “reeducate” and prepare homeless and abandoned children for work in industry and agriculture. According to the deputy head of the Gulag, A. P. Lepilov, in 1940 they housed 155,506 young persons between the ages of twelve and eighteen, 68,927 of whom had been convicted of a crime. Lepilov reported that the labor colonies employed the children in metallurgy, carpentry, and shoe and clothing production. He also claimed that each colony included schools offering a seven-year program of study, as well as cultural clubs, Pioneer and Komsomol organizations, and sporting activities. Archival inspection reports, however, suggest that very little reeducation or true vocational training was

taking place.<sup>134</sup> The “labor educational colonies” were euphemisms for what were essentially children’s concentration camps.<sup>135</sup>

During the war, decrees hardened the line against youthful offenders; the labor colonies were expanded to provide for increasing numbers, which from 1943 on could include those convicted of hooliganism and delinquency in state orphanages. From 1946 to 1947, the number of young offenders held in labor-education and labor colonies rose from twenty-eight thousand to over thirty-five thousand.<sup>136</sup> Children and teens also ended up in regular labor camps if they were arrested as homeless orphans who engaged in theft or prostitution. Still more came in during the war due to the draconian labor laws that provided camp sentences for being late to work or for simple errors. Teenagers were often pressed into work although their families were evacuated; many then ran away to join them, only to find themselves arrested and sent to the camps.<sup>137</sup> During the war young women, many in their teens, were arrested for developing relationships with foreigners stationed in the major cities, particularly with American and British servicemen.<sup>138</sup> The camps also included young people arrested as religious believers and as members of ethnic and national groups deported during the war. There were many as well from the lands annexed or brought under Soviet control, particularly the Baltic states, western Ukraine, Poland, and Yugoslavia.<sup>139</sup> Some ended up conscripted into wartime “labor armies” (*trudovaia armiia*) run by the NKVD, which functioned similar to penal battalions and worked at such tasks as timber felling. Robert Ianke, a Soviet German, already deported to Kazakhstan after the arrest of his father in 1939, was forced in 1942 at age sixteen to join a labor army, and remained in it until 1948. He lived in harsh conditions similar to those of a labor camp, worked under guard for twelve hours a day, and afterwards had to live in a special settlement.<sup>140</sup>

Many children of the repressed who had escaped arrest in 1937–1938 found themselves targeted by the regime. There was a renewal of arrests as a Family Member of an Enemy of the People, or as a Family Member of a Traitor to the Motherland, or as Socially Dangerous Elements.<sup>141</sup> A decree was issued in February 1948 calling for the rearrest and permanent exile of former inmates of the Gulag. One category listed was “groups of individuals presenting a danger because of their anti-Soviet hostile activities,” but this hostility only had to be potential. Most of the wives of those repressed in 1937–1938 were not sent back to the camps, but into exile, usually in Kazakhstan, as were some of their children.<sup>142</sup> Articles 6, 7, and 35 of the Criminal Code were the major means by which children were themselves sentenced to either camp terms or exile; these provided punishment for those considered “socially dangerous elements” either for something they actually did, or for

not informing on the illegal activities of someone else. These articles also covered those connected with “a criminalized milieu,” which included any child whose parent or relative had been arrested under Article 58. The wording identified the “socially dangerous” in extremely broad terms as those against whom “measures had to be taken in the public interest.”<sup>143</sup> Beginning in the late 1940s and continuing through 1953 there were arrests of wives and children who were connected with the Leningrad Affair and the anticommunist campaign directed against Jewish professionals and intellectuals, as well as with the Doctor’s Plot.<sup>144</sup>

Children and adolescents also fell victim to conspiracy charges on the basis of denunciations by classmates, neighbors, or others. After the war, and particularly in 1948–1949, a wave of arrests targeted universities and institutes for both real and fictional underground opposition groups. Beria’s security forces actively recruited, pressured, and blackmailed university students to act as informants. There were cases of young people who created actual oppositional groups, and some even attempted primitive acts of terrorism. Between 1945 and 1953 a number of revolutionary underground groups emerged, many inspired by Leninist ideals to seek restoration of “soviet” democracy. According to a memoir published in the 1950s by Brigitte Gerland, a German communist imprisoned at Vorkuta, hundreds of students from universities in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and Odessa belonged to a movement that produced a program entitled *Istinny Trud Lenina* (Lenin’s True Work), which included a call for the restoration of power to workers and peasants through empowering soviets in every factory and collective farm. She traced the group’s origins to a group of Moscow University students who began to study and discuss the banned poetry of Boris Pasternak. The movement operated clandestinely for over two years before being broken up by mass arrests; members received twenty-five-year sentences but then continued operating in the camps.<sup>145</sup>

As was typical of the Stalinist regime, this phenomenon was greatly exaggerated and used as an excuse for arresting far more than were ever actually involved. One such group consisted of eight young men who came from families of the Soviet elite and were students at Moscow State University in 1945. They formed an apolitical group—the Brotherhood of Impoverished Sybarites—primarily devoted to literary pursuits and ribald humor. But such high jinks in the late Stalin era were an easy prey for a security force eager to provide its superiors with the narrative of conspiracies that fueled and abetted official paranoia and continued campaigns against “enemies.”<sup>146</sup> Other such groups were completely fictional. On her journey into exile after her second arrest, Olga Adamova-Sliozberg met a Ukrainian girl who had been arrested in 1947 with other philology students at Kiev University; they

were supposedly part of a conspiracy to separate Ukraine from the Soviet Union, a scenario concocted by an ambitious NKVD investigator. During her interrogation she was beaten and thrown into a punishment cell when she refused to incriminate fellow students to bolster the “conspiracy.”<sup>147</sup>

The memoir of Alla Tumanov (imprisoned from 1951 to 1956) provides poignant insight into the ways in which the Stalinist regime manipulated and destroyed young lives, weakening the foundations of its own social base. Unlike the children discussed above, Alla was not a “daughter of an enemy of the people.” She came from a privileged background and describes her childhood as happy and normal. The Terror had not touched her parents, although her father worked in the state planning and construction ministries and her mother was a friend of Yezhov’s wife. Alla was arrested in her own right at the age of nineteen for what seems to have been primarily a youthful impulse; she joined an opposition group, but largely for romantic and idealistic reasons. In her memoir, she describes herself as very much a “Soviet” patriot who gradually became disillusioned with the Stalinist regime. More and more the gap between the stirring banners with their heroic slogans and the reality surrounding her filled her with misgivings. She was bothered particularly by youthful encounters with anti-Semitism, by a visit to the impoverished countryside, and by the grotesque pomposity of the Stalin Cult. So she found herself easily swayed by an earnest and engaging young man to join a group of students he said were working to restore the Soviet Union to its true ideals as exemplified in the Bolshevik Revolution and the early years of Lenin. Thus, in this case, as in others, the regime sowed the seeds of her dissent by its own propaganda, which filled her head with the high ideals of the revolution. There may also have been romantic feelings for the young man; moved by his passion and intelligence, it seemed to her a dangerous and thrilling adventure that would live up to the ideals of the revolutionary mythology they both fully embraced.<sup>148</sup> The group, The Union of Struggle for the Cause of the Revolution, however, never met collectively nor did it go beyond the stage of creating a written manifesto.

Despite the lack of any real threat, the capricious Stalinist regime sentenced Alla to twenty-five years in the camps. Here one sees in full light the maliciousness of a regime that refused to recognize the difference between political subversion and youthful idealism. Adolescent passions became tools in the hands of ambitious investigators and officials who took advantage of Alla’s naïve venture into political action to concoct a narrative of subversion to justify continued purges. They were willing to sacrifice youth to the meat grinder of prison, forced labor, and death to achieve the state’s goals and satisfy its own paranoid propaganda. The MGB officials

handling the case purposefully distorted the group's scale and goals to link it with so-called Zionist terrorism (and of course to Trotskyism), possibly as part of efforts to legitimize the anti-cosmopolitan campaigns being directed against Jewish intellectuals and academics. In the end Alla's group of revolutionary romantics became The Jewish Anti-Soviet Youth Terrorist Organization.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, a youthful indiscretion, fueled by high ideals, angst, and surging adolescent hormones, cost her five years (she was released early after the twentieth Congress) and severe psychological trauma—and she was one of the lucky ones. The young man who had invited her into the group, along with two other “leaders,” were shot. One of them realized how amateurishly naïve the whole endeavor had been when the authorities held a “trial” of the sixteen defendants. For the first time in the group's existence, all were together in the same room, presided over by military judges, a general, and two colonels. Alla describes them as typically adolescent in their behavior, laughing (at what she could not remember) and whispering to each other in defiance of admonitions to be silent. It was clear from their testimony that most were motivated more by their romantic imaginations than by any clear ideological purpose, although five of the sixteen were “children of enemies of the people.” In her memoir, Tumanov recalls the despair in the voice of Boris Slutsky, one of the three defendants sentenced to be shot, who spoke last and at the end turned and said to these young people, “Only now do I understand what a kindergarten I have brought with me.”<sup>150</sup>

Alla Tumanov's memoir depicts in vivid terms the shock and despair felt by a young person confronted with the full fury of the Stalinist terror, which treated her as if she had been caught in the very act of state treason, armed and dangerous. Her experience also reveals how ritualized the Stalinist terror was, with little accommodation or modification for younger “suspects.” It began with a nightmarish nighttime arrest that juxtaposed of the representatives of state force and the belongings of this recently graduated schoolgirl. She recalls the officers rifling through her school assignments, most of which were panegyrics to Stalin: “Stalin—Our Glory of Battle,” and “Stalin—Our Ecstasy of Youth!” and crudely breaking her favorite ceramic doll, her golden head cracked in two. She admits that she cannot recall all the events of that evening or the order in which they occurred. What stands out in her memory is the anguish of everyone around her and the coarse behavior of the officers. It was in effect a reversal of the scenario played out in so many homes in 1937–1938 when children saw their parents dragged away. Now Alla's mother had to pack a bag for her and watch her be taken out into the night, alone. Alla recalls her mother aging several years in just a few fleeting moments.<sup>151</sup>

Alla endured the same torturous process of interrogation as adult terror victims. She suffered fifteen months all told of solitary confinement, listened to the night-time screams of anguished prisoners losing their hope and their sanity, and endured intensive questioning that deprived her of sleep and bombarded her with vitriolic accusations that she says after a while she began to believe. She came to see herself as having been deluded and misguided and readily talked to her interrogator about all her acquaintances (she admits that from the interrogations of the sixteen members, over two hundred additional persons were arrested). The state clearly took advantage of her vulnerability both psychological and emotional (as in the case of the other sixteen as well) as well as her already existing idealism.<sup>152</sup>

Nevertheless, Alla was young and healthy, and her memoir is a testament to the resilience of youth and the ability to adjust to drastically altered circumstances. Entering the camps at a younger age was one of the most critical factors for survival among both men and women throughout the period of the Stalinist Gulag. Even though in her privileged childhood she had not been subject to starvation or deprivation, Alla nonetheless fell ill almost immediately with pleurisy. She spent six months in a hospital and invalid camp, which, thanks to her youthful constitution, enabled her to regain strength after her debilitating period of interrogation and prison. Her age and health also enabled her to be in a hospital for an extended time without falling prey to the many diseases that ran rampant through camp hospital wards, such as tuberculosis. Similarly, V. V. Gorshkov, who was arrested during the war for engaging with other school friends to produce a humor magazine that criticized inept military leadership and the lack of democracy, writes in his memoir of how his youth helped him endure the physical challenges of the camps. He cites the hardships he had already experienced as a schoolchild during the war, when he spent his summers building defensive works with little to eat and drink.<sup>153</sup>

Tumanov identifies as particularly crucial her youthful optimism and confidence that she could survive whatever lay ahead. She had no reference point for imagining what lay ahead of her except for her experiences as a Pioneer going to summer camp, and that was how she thought of it.<sup>154</sup> Another young woman, Suzanne Rosenberg, who served time in the camps in the postwar period, writes that she naively looked forward to the camps as an opportunity for healthy physical labor in the outdoors, with little sense of the reality that awaited her.<sup>155</sup>

Once in the camps Alla Tumanov seemed to retain some of her childlike innocence and sensibility, and this served her well. In the memoir there is a particularly bittersweet scene where she describes herself and another young female prisoner giggling as they hauled the waste bucket out of the barrack to be dumped, just as

they might have giggled on their way to a university class.<sup>156</sup> Certainly children are said to have a gift for living in the moment, and this gives them greater resilience in the face of loss and displacement. Alla approached her camp labor tasks with the same sense of discipline and order that she had used for her school assignments. She speaks of being able to lose herself in her immediate task, focusing solely on trying to accomplish it to the best of her abilities.<sup>157</sup>

Young people also benefited from the sympathy felt toward them by older prisoners who were missing their own children, and by camp authorities as well. In a 2006 interview, Valentin Muravskii attributed the fact that he and his mother were able to exchange letters while both were imprisoned in Soviet labor camps to the camp censor. Normally this was forbidden, but the censor was apparently touched by the emotions expressed in the letters between this son and his mother.<sup>158</sup> Many memoirists say they found the strength to survive by befriending younger prisoners.<sup>159</sup> Tzvetan Todorow maintains that the key to survival in Nazi and Soviet concentration camps was the maintenance of morality, and that the camps brought forth a need for people to feel human and to act altruistically.<sup>160</sup> Children were often the beneficiary of this need. Prisoners found surrogate children to protect and nurture, and young prisoners received special care and attention. Alla Tumanov speaks of several “mothers” she came to have in the camps, one of whom was the real mother of a fellow “coconspirator” who was herself in the same camp with Alla. She found her youth made her an object of pity and affection, and many would bring her special treats and go out of their way to help her, especially when she was in the hospital. Likewise, a young Pole arrested in the first weeks of World War II, Janusc Bardach, was befriended by a woman food distributor because he reminded her of her son; she hoped someone was at that moment taking care of her son, just as she was taking care of him.<sup>161</sup> Suzanne Rosenberg also speaks of surrogate mother-daughter or aunt-niece relationships that helped fill deep voids of loneliness and separation, particularly when prisoners had been forced to sever family ties to protect their children. For both the “mothers” and the “daughters,” this restored some semblance of the family that they had been a part of before the nightmare began.<sup>162</sup>

It is also possible that her youth helped Alla when it came to being selected for participation in the cultural brigades, which seems to have been an important avenue of survival for many because of the privileges it brought and because it gave them a creative outlet for escaping their grim reality. She certainly had personal qualities and artistic talents that made her a good candidate for such a role, but her youthful

energy and looks certainly would not have hurt her chances.<sup>163</sup> Alla admits that she was perfectly willing to perform propaganda pieces for the camp administration because she sincerely felt patriotic at the time and the idea of expiating her guilt through devotion to state ideals. She describes herself proudly reading out Mayakovsky's poem "Verses on a Soviet Passport" to assembled male prisoners, most of whom were deported Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, and Ukrainians who glared morosely at her. At the time, she admits, she was completely into the moment and could not understand their reaction, certainly a product of her age and political naiveté. Alla the memoirist recognizes this in her comment: "You rub my nose in your actions, oh youth."<sup>164</sup>

Youth also had its disadvantages. Although some camps permitted children and adolescents to attend school and work fewer hours, they were rarely spared the normal routine of prisoners. Despite their immaturity and lack of experience, children worked at felling trees, making bricks, building furniture, and doing such tasks around the camps as shoveling snow, cleaning barrack stoves, scrubbing floors, and refilling wood bins.<sup>165</sup> There are also accounts of young people being vulnerable to accidents with machinery and tree felling.<sup>166</sup>

It is easy to understand how some young prisoners later became brutalized and even hardened criminals. The materials published in *Deti GULAGa*, as well as Alla's experiences, show that teen-aged children and some even younger were subjected to harsh interrogations and to both physical and psychological forms of pressure, often similar to that inflicted on adults. Certainly adolescents would not have had many resources for coping with such treatment.<sup>167</sup> Janusc Bardach came to know well a woman who had been in the camps since her arrest in 1938 at the age of seventeen as the daughter of an enemy. She had been arrested, she claimed, because she had fought the men who came to arrest her father. She herself was beaten and raped during the arrest and during her interrogation. In the camps she had become a nurse on the advice of an older prisoner who had befriended her, and this helped her to survive. But she managed to have always a camp "husband" for protection against sexual aggression, even when there was no emotional connection. It had become a way of life for her. Bardach describes her as being psychologically traumatized—distant, unable to trust anyone, and unable to put the memory of her parents' fate from her mind. She told him that she could not remember her parents except for how they looked when the NKVD were beating them and holding a gun to their heads; she could not see them as they were in earlier, happier days. She had attempted to commit suicide multiple times by slashing her wrists.<sup>168</sup>

## The Aftermath: Repercussions of a Gulag Childhood

Children's lives were deeply affected in profound ways and the impact of the Stalinist terror extends even into subsequent generations, the grandchildren of the Gulag.<sup>169</sup> The personal materials collected by Memorial and Vozvrashchenia as well as the interviews of Frierson and Vilensky have yielded rich sources for analyzing the consequences of the Stalinist victimization of children. The topic is also becoming a focus for literary examination. In 2011 Eugene Velchin published *Breaking Stalin's Nose*, a moving and multilayered novella that explores the mind and experiences of a child during the first twenty-four hours after his father's arrest. It describes the contradictory emotions and understandings in a young boy's heart as he faces the complete disruption of his world at home and in school. The story ends with him standing in a long line at the prison where a woman who has lost her own son appears to befriend him. The novel is dedicated to his father, who survived the Great Terror.<sup>170</sup>

Those children whose lives were altered by the arrests of parents or by their own arrests suffered physically, emotionally, and psychologically. In the pool of individuals they interviewed, Frierson and Vilensky found common physical conditions caused by deprivation and trauma; many continued to live with the aftereffects of such childhood diseases as scurvy, typhus, tuberculosis, and a skin ailment, furunculosis.<sup>171</sup> They also identify common patterns of psychological responses; the tearing asunder of their families led many child victims to spend the rest of their lives putting the pieces back together. Some cherish their family bonds and have spent considerable time tracing even far-distant relatives. They cling to whatever memories, photographs, and artifacts they have of their lost parents.<sup>172</sup> A joint Russian-American research team conducted interviews in 1993–1994 with fifty grandchildren of purge victims and found that family stability and productivity was much higher among those who sought to find out as much as they could about their family's past and memorialize those who had suffered and died as Stalinist victims.<sup>173</sup> Like adult survivors, the children of the Gulag also have shown a tendency to stay in touch with each other, forming their own communities of individuals who shared the same youthful trauma. Some married fellow child victims.<sup>174</sup> They maintain their human connections religiously and keep in touch as well with people who shared their parents' experiences.<sup>175</sup>

Others have said that the experience of being a child victim made it more difficult to form bonds and friendships. The joint Russian-American study on the impact of Stalin's terror on children found higher rates of divorce and separation among children of Gulag survivors, and the situation was even worse for grandchildren

of those repressed in the 1930s.<sup>176</sup> Guizel Ibragimova emphasized that her experiences as a child victim taught her to be very careful in forming relationships, and throughout her life she remained cautious, never revealing herself fully except to a few intimate friends.<sup>177</sup> Elena Bonner suggests that the arrest of her parents made her overcome youthful self-centeredness; she was forced to grow up and become stronger, acquiring survival skills that served her well. She never allowed herself to show that she was afraid. But she felt her younger brother did not fare so well. The experience destroyed what was good in him and weakened his spirit.<sup>178</sup>

Letters sent to Memorial and Vozvrashchenie ring with sorrow and bitterness over what was lost and over the arbitrariness that altered their life paths forever. Some speak of never overcoming a sense of loneliness, or of always feeling a void, no matter how successful or happy their lives became. One woman said that she could never erase from her memory the fact that her parents had died tragic deaths.<sup>179</sup> Some feel that they never really fit into society and were always outcasts. Many of those interviewed by Frierson and Vilensky said that their childhood experiences left them with a permanent sense of fear, a lifetime of quivering when the doorbell rang, a never-ending sense of foreboding that their loved ones would be taken away from them. There is evidence that young children whose parents were abruptly torn from them, found it more difficult to overcome fear than did their prisoner parents.<sup>180</sup> Lyudmila Matthews was haunted by fears of losing her children as her mother had lost hers, and had recurring nightmares even before becoming a mother that the son she bore in her arms was being taken from her by an official who was “choosing the best children out of a crowd.”<sup>181</sup>

In her memoir on growing up in the post-Stalinist era, the dissident Ludmilla Alexeyeva described how the Gulag left an indelible print on the former prisoners she came to know in Moscow during the 1950s and 1960s. She found an emotional immaturity in former Gulag inmates who had entered there at young ages; they developed physically, but remained emotionally “infantile,” or at best retained the personality they had when they were arrested. Some refused to speak about the experience at all, while others revealed a “perverse nostalgia” for the camps.<sup>182</sup> She also reflects on how a childhood in the Gulag affected Pyotr Yakir, son of a Red Army commander, Iona Iakir. Both his parents were executed, and he was first placed in a children’s home and then sent into the camps for rebellious and disruptive behavior. After his release he became a dissident and was involved in the Action Group for the Defense of Civil Rights. But he broke under KGB interrogation and his confession was used to construct over two hundred cases in the early 1970s. Alexeyeva found him loud, careless, and unpredictable, and she felt that behind his dramatic

flourishes he was simply a scared little boy who had been dragged away from his mother at the age of fourteen. He grew up in the camps, met his wife in the camps, and fathered a daughter in the camps. In her view, he “had the manners, the look, the walk, and the lexicon of a man who had been formed by association with young criminals.” Her perspective on him was undoubtedly biased, given the devastating impact his breakdown had on the dissident movement, but it is nonetheless worth considering that while his early experience in the Gulag may have made him more likely to become a dissident, it also may have left him vulnerable to any pressure threatening to revive that childhood trauma.<sup>183</sup>

Many of the letters and testaments sent to Memorial and *Vozvrashchenie* are from people who never knew their parents, who have fleeting memories of some kind of presence or semblance of a family and a home, but nothing more.<sup>184</sup> Many children sent into state homes were never able to identify their real parents to find their lost siblings. One woman writing in 1989 spoke mournfully of her loneliness, of the father whom she lost at age two and about whom she knew nothing. Her baby sister died soon after birth, undoubtedly because her pregnant mother had to stand for days at the KGB prison. But what seems to haunt her most is a memory from the children’s home she was sent to after her mother’s arrest. She can still see herself as a child dancing and singing joyful songs of praise to Stalin and now seems to loathe the pride she felt when the audience applauded her performances.<sup>185</sup>

Even under the best of circumstances, children of “enemies” had to endure a lifetime of coping with that stigma, facing at every step in life, every application for school or work, the moral dilemma of whether or not to tell the truth about a parent’s arrest.<sup>186</sup> The barriers put up by the Soviet system to those whose families had been repressed lessened after 1953, but did not disappear entirely, even after legal rehabilitation had been obtained. As late as the 1990s, one man whose father had been executed found it necessary to apply for rehabilitation again because some documents still referred to him as a “child of the enemy of the people.” Despite having been rehabilitated himself as a child in 1957, he continued to face problems getting an apartment and finding work.<sup>187</sup> Some were better able to recover and achieve success in their careers and personal lives. But many children of the Gulag, led lives very different from what they might have been; their choices—of graduate education programs, of particular professions, even places to live—were limited, closing off major avenues of upward mobility. It was particularly distressing for those who were desperate to be part of a collective, to find some way to make up for the disruption of their family bonds. Some were forced to take lower status jobs and spent their lives lying low, and remaining silent.

Frierson and Vilensky's findings seem to confirm that children sent to state institutions in most cases had more odds against them than those cared for by family members or friends.<sup>188</sup> Children placed in state homes were usually given limited choices: either factory work or at best taking courses at a factory-technical school.<sup>189</sup> Boris Faifman, for example, when he left the orphanage at age fourteen to go to school, had only the option of learning a trade at a vocational high school. The fact that he had lost both of his parents to repression barred him from higher education.<sup>190</sup> Lyudmilla Alexeyeva recalls hearing about the fate of the "children with famous names," the children of executed Soviet military commanders who were brought up in orphanages and camps. Many had stayed on to live in their region of exile, Kazakhstan, where they worked in low status jobs as laborers and sales clerks.<sup>191</sup>

In many cases, those who were able to pursue meaningful careers and enjoy stable relationships did so because of courageous teachers or humane administrators or, in some cases, thanks to random acts of human kindness. Many child victims remember teachers willing to risk arrest not only to allow them to continue in school but also to provide food, shelter, and clothing.<sup>192</sup> One woman whose father was shot and her mother imprisoned attributes her success in gaining admission to the Kharkov Medical Institute to the director of the children's home where she had been sent; he seems to have gone out of his way to help her get ten years of schooling instead of seven, and she says he even sponsored her for the Komsomol.<sup>193</sup> Giuzel Ibragimova said she owed her career as a physicist to the Dean of the physics and mathematics department at Kazan University who was willing to take her as a student after she had been turned down by the chemistry faculty in 1952. As it was explained to her, children of "enemies of the people" could not be trusted to do required student internships in chemical factories and "closed" enterprises where there might be explosives and other sensitive materials. Ibragimova speculated that the Dean of Physics was sympathetic to her plight because he himself had lost a brother to the Terror.<sup>194</sup> Frierson and Vilensky also found that some children of the Gulag fared better than others due to personal connections, geographical location, and social status. Those who came from urban intellectual or professional backgrounds, or whose families enjoyed some connection with the Communist Party, reentered society more easily than those who lacked any political or intellectual connections or who came from outside major metropolitan centers. Jewish children of repressed parents fared even worse.<sup>195</sup>

Sadly, even for those children who were reunited with one or more of their parents, the severed bonds were not necessarily restored, especially if the children had been infants when taken away from their mothers. The camps took a toll on

the parents who survived them, and it was not always possible to establish normal relations with their children. The experience had opened a tremendous gulf between them, and often neither knew how to bridge it. Children with little conscious memory of their mothers tended to form idealized images of them; when the real-life mothers who had endured the brutalization of the camps returned, reunions could be painful. Elena Bonner writes of visiting her mother in the camps, but not knowing how to heal the distance and tension between them, which continued even after her mother returned and lived with her: “She was withdrawn and secretive. I could tell that she didn’t share our postwar jollity and didn’t approve of our way of life. . . . Neither of us knew how to be open with the other.” Her brother also seemed unable to relate to their mother and did not even want her to kiss him.<sup>196</sup> Similarly, Ibragimova speaks of the complicated relationship she and her sister had with their mother; she suspected that her mother had been raped in the camps but could not be sure because her mother had told them very little about her time there. She says that her mother never got over her fear of being targeted anew by the state and insisted that they keep their rehabilitation documents and maintain a veil of silence over their family’s past. Ibragimova’s sister had wanted to be a writer, but her mother was determined that she become a doctor, because that would give her a skill that would facilitate survival if the camps were revived.<sup>197</sup> The mother of Lenina and Lyudmilla Matthews came back from the camps mentally disturbed and full of vindictive anger which she frequently took out on her daughters, especially the eldest. Relations between her and her daughters were strained and even torturous for the rest of their lives.<sup>198</sup>

Some children remained close to the relatives or caretakers who had sheltered them. To protect the children, such caretakers did not always reveal the injustice of their parents’ arrest and encouraged their continued belief in the Soviet system. This potentially created a gulf between them and their returning parents, who would have to decide whether to challenge their own children’s naïve beliefs and possibly damage even more their chances for upward mobility and success in the system. Elena Bonner describes a situation in which a woman gave her infant son to a niece to raise after both she and her husband were arrested. He went into the military, never knowing who his real mother was, even after she returned from the camps. Worried that the truth might hurt his career, she just watched him from a distance.<sup>199</sup> Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, who was arrested along with her husband in 1936, was fortunate that her parents could take her two children, and the extended family could help with their care. But she talks in her memoir of the barrier that initially existed between her and her son when she was released; he had grown up a true believer in Stalin and did not seem to know how to relate to her.<sup>200</sup> Anino Kuusinen, a Gulag survivor, tells a

sad tale of a breach that was never healed. She helped a Finnish woman she met in the camps track down her daughter, who had been placed in foster care. When the Finnish woman was released, she wanted to take her daughter back to Finland with her, but the daughter said she no longer considered herself her daughter—Russian was her language and Russia her home.<sup>201</sup>

Suzanne Rosenberg considers herself fortunate in that she and her daughter, separated for only three years, were able to rebuild a relationship, but she notes that many of her fellow prisoners could not. Her own daughter was eight when she returned. At first the little girl did not know what to make of her mother; she had been encouraged by the neighbors she lived with to forget her. The neighbors had thought that they were being kind because they did not expect Suzanne to return. It took time for the child to accept that her mother was real, and at one point she tore up her mother's photograph in front of her. Taunted at school for being the child of an enemy, she adamantly displayed her belief in Stalin and in the regime. Rosenberg recalls her shock when she returned to see scratched on the wall above her daughter's cot the words, "Stalin is the wisest and the best in the world."<sup>202</sup>

The question of the impact of the Gulag on children's attitudes toward the Soviet system is quite complex. For some, the Gulag experience, whether their parents' or their own, did not sow seeds of hostility but rather made them try even harder to gain the favor of the state and prove their unrelenting loyalty. Like others in Stalinist Russia, they continued to believe in their own parents' innocence while accepting that the system was not to blame, that mistakes could be made but the overall course was positive and worthy of their commitment.<sup>203</sup> For some groups, especially the offspring of dekulakized peasants and special settlers, living in exile, there was really little choice except to endorse Soviet values; they had no other path for integration into "normal" society. It is difficult to discern the fine line between what people did from a lifelong sense of fear, and what constituted "true belief."<sup>204</sup>

Rather than rejecting the state, many children of repressed parents actively sought readmission to the collective, and an opportunity to make up for any blemish on their family's loyalty, by becoming strong Soviet patriots. To overcome their shame they displayed their zeal and commitment to regime ideals, possibly out of what some scholars view as a type of negotiation, a political response, even if not entirely conscious. A young girl Adamova-Sliozberg met in 1949 in prison was raised by her aunt, who was so afraid that she had the girl tell everyone her parents had died rather than admit to the arrests. She spent her youth trying to excel at everything she did, so that she could "show everyone" that there was no reason to doubt her family's loyalty.<sup>205</sup> Some also undoubtedly possessed genuine conviction that

truth and justice would eventually prevail. Elena Bonner fought fervently against her expulsion from the Komsomol, even traveling to Moscow to make her appeal to the Komsomol Central Committee; yet she refused to renounce her parents.<sup>206</sup> Ida Slavina at age 80 recalled in an interview how as a schoolgirl, even when she was standing in line to send parcels to her arrested parents, she fully believed in the necessity of the regime's efforts to hunt down enemies. She said that at the time, she felt the same way as countless others, that her own parents were innocent, but the others were not.<sup>207</sup> Wolfgang Leonhard, after the 1937 arrest of his mother, willingly continued his education in Soviet schools and trained to work in the Comintern. He was confused and frightened, he acknowledges, but was not willing to connect the personal fate of his mother to the system he still fervently believed in. As a classmate had told him, in order to remove a rotten spot from an apple, sometimes you have to take some of the healthy fruit as well. He remained committed to international socialism and Soviet ideals. His doubts in Stalinism, which led eventually to his defection to Yugoslavia and then the West, would emerge only later, after the war.<sup>208</sup>

During the war years a remarkable number of children of repressed parents volunteered to serve in the army. Many of them lost their lives doing so. Two of the most famous women partisan fighters, including the iconographic Zoia Kosmodemianskoe, who was tortured and executed by the Germans, were children of repressed parents.<sup>209</sup> Young Nina Kosterina, a partisan fighter, was the daughter of a journalist who was arrested in 1938. In her diary, which has been compared to Anne Frank's, she agonized over the stigma attached to her because of her father's arrest, which made her feel like a "leper." She came to view the German invasion as an opportunity to make up for what had happened to her family. She would show her commitment to the collective by her courage, and possibly even save her father by volunteering for the front. Ironically, while she died fighting, her father Aleksei survived his time in the camps and later became very prominent in the dissident movement, along with Nina's sister Elena.<sup>210</sup> Many were like Nina; World War II became a way to redeem themselves. For others, it was less redemption than escape—the possibility of claiming a false identity and starting a new life. In general, life was very difficult in the Soviet Union for those who did not fit into the collective, and many children of the Gulag spent a lifetime trying to get approval. But for those who chose to embrace the system, particularly if they had conscious memories of their repressed parents, this also meant a lifetime of coping with guilt for their compromises. At the same time, however, the rehabilitation of repressed parents, which began under Khrushchev, allowed their children some degree of satisfaction that the regime had indeed redeemed itself by admitting its errors, even though in practice many of its

promises remained unfulfilled, which intensified for some when they later discovered the complete lack of any evidence to justify their parents' arrests.<sup>211</sup>

While some child victims retained their belief in the Soviet system, others turned resolutely against it. This may not have occurred immediately, but often evolved over time. Children touched by the Gulag faced continually the dissonance between official propaganda and the lived experience of their families, as well as the barriers put up by a state unwilling to trust even its own maxims about the capacity for "enemies" and their children to be rehabilitated.<sup>212</sup> From the very beginning of the NKVD operations against family members of enemies, there were reports that the children sent into state homes were agitating against Soviet power and the arrests of their parents. In one home in the Altai region, reportedly they could not hang up any portraits of Soviet leaders because they would be torn down or vandalized.<sup>213</sup> In 1938 the NKVD ordered that children of repressed parents placed in state institutions be watched more carefully because of behaviors that were allegedly terroristic and oppositionist. It accused children of such arrested Soviet generals as Tukhachevskii, Gamarnik, and Uborevich of trying to appear loyal by joining the Komsomol, but claimed that in truth they were harboring "terrorist" attitudes.<sup>214</sup> According to Alla Tumanov, five of the sixteen youths who were involved in her underground conspiratorial group had been children of enemies of the people. One of them, Maya Ulanovskaya, shouted during the trial that she hated the judges and had never believed her parents to be guilty; she and both her parents survived and moved in dissident circles after their return. Maya married a man who was close friends with the dissident writers Daniel and Sinyavsky.<sup>215</sup> A large number of the young people involved in the neo-Leninist opposition groups after World War II were orphans of the "generation of 1937," children of repressed parents, many of whom had been prominent party, government, and military officials.<sup>216</sup>

Although the percentage of child victims of the Gulag among dissidents is not known, there are some well known examples: Vasily Aksyonov, Yuli Daniel, Pyotr Yakir, Roy and Zhores Medvedev, Elena Kosterina, Leonid Petrovsky, Vladimir Kornilov, and Elena Bonner. The roots of their opposition may lay precisely in the disjuncture that emerged between the "public" and "hidden" transcripts, between the trumpeted ideals of the regime and the lived realities of that regime.<sup>217</sup> In these cases the "hidden transcripts" of their lives as children of enemies prepared the ground for their eventual alienation and rejection of the Soviet system.<sup>218</sup> Wolfgang Leonhard explained in his 1955 memoir that for a time, he could disassociate the two realities he knew—the reality of the regime values he espoused, and the personal experience

of his mother being arrested despite being innocent. But over time the discordance became more disturbing. Eventually he had to reject the Soviet system.<sup>219</sup>

Studies suggest that a high percentage of those who founded Memorial and Vozvrashchenie were children (and grandchildren) of the Gulag. Arseny Roginsky, whose father died in Stalin’s prisons, was one of the founders of Memorial; he first attracted KGB attention in the 1970s when he started gathering materials about repression for his private archive. In 1980 he was arrested and sent to a camp for four years.<sup>220</sup> In 1967, forty-three self-proclaimed Children of Murdered Bolsheviks collectively composed and signed a letter of appeal to the Central Committee protesting the end of de-Stalinization and demanding that a monument be constructed to the “victims of Stalin’s despotism.” Many of those who signed included the names of their repressed parent or stated that they were a son or daughter of “Communists.”<sup>221</sup> Frierson and Vilensky note that many of the persons they traced and interviewed got involved after 1985 in efforts to memorialize and assist victims of the Gulag. They see among the child survivors tendencies toward social activism and altruism, as though in recognition that their own survival and perhaps healing was made possible by the humanity of individuals, some known and some unknown. They also note that many are driven to social activism by a sense of moral duty—to help others and to tell the story of the Gulag and its victims. Only after 1985 could they examine their parents’ NKVD files and discover the dates of their executions, and for some this changed their perspective on the Soviet experience. A few remained loyal Leninists, but most have come to blame not just Stalin but the entire Soviet system.<sup>222</sup>

There are also children of the Gulag who became not true dissidents, but non-conformists who challenged the normal conventions of Soviet life. One prominent example is the poet-bard Bulat Okudzhava, described as a minstrel for the “other-minded.” His songs were not political, but they were original, independent, and often controversial. His father was a party official executed in 1937, and his brother died of tuberculosis in the camps. His mother spent eighteen years in the Gulag.<sup>223</sup> Okudzhava also wrote short stories thought to be informed by his parents’ arrests, and by his own difficult reunion with his mother when she returned from the camps (“Devushka moei mechty” and “Nechaiannaia radost”). According to one scholar, Okudzhava, along with other writers who were children of the Gulag such as Yurii Trifonov and Vasily Aksyonov, engaged in “second-degree witnessing,” using their literary gifts to provide testimony gleaned from their parents’ experiences.<sup>224</sup> Likewise, the playwright Mikhail Shatrov, whose historical plays played a maverick role during the perestroika period, was a child of the Gulag. Many members of his family perished in the Stalinist terror, including his father, who was executed; his

mother was arrested and exiled to Krasnoyarsk. According to an obituary, he and his mother struggled to survive, and he tutored classmates in return for bread and potatoes. Like Okudzhava, he never became a dissident, but he often pushed the limits of official censorship and he supported the dissident writers Sinyavsky and Daniel.<sup>225</sup> Another example is the Soviet three-star general turned historian and biographer Dmitry Volkogonov, who lost his parents to repression. For decades he served the Soviet state loyally and wrote hundreds of manuals and pamphlets on Soviet military strategy. But in his private life he collected materials related to Stalin and when perestroika came, he published the first critical Soviet biography of Stalin and then became increasingly radicalized in his presentation and analysis of Soviet history.<sup>226</sup>

In her study of the Gulag, Anne Applebaum suggested, and this is confirmed by memoirs as well, that many of the children affected by the terror and the Gulag, particularly those who passed through the camps and the state homes, became criminals. Although this is speculative, it is true that the camps were a plunge into an abyss of violence and human degradation for which many youths, particularly those who came from privileged, urban backgrounds, were completely unprepared. Children as young as twelve and thirteen often had little recourse except to band together or to seek the protection of an adult. But adult prisoners could not always protect them from criminal elements, some of whom would hold “auctions” to pick out which newcomers would become their personal attendants and virtual slaves. Memoirs describe both boys and girls joining gangs and becoming hired killers and prostitutes in order to survive. They grew up hardened and wild.<sup>227</sup> Though memoirs tend not to discuss this, young girls were at high risk for sexual aggression, and it has been suggested that some suicides of survivors may be traced to rape and violence suffered in the camps.<sup>228</sup> Applebaum notes that when she began her research into the Gulag, she tried to locate memoirs by former child prisoners, but found very few, despite the tens of thousands, as she calculates it, who passed through the camps and labor colonies as children and adolescents. But a Russian friend discouraged her from advertising in the newspaper to find subjects for interviews, because as the friend put it, everyone knew what had happened to such persons, implying that they had gone into the camps and orphanages and come out as criminals.<sup>229</sup> Certainly some of the most atrocious actions described in survivor memoirs are attributed to the *maloletki*, the juvenile prisoners turned criminals who terrorized political prisoners in the camps; it is conjectured that many of these began as children whose lives had been disrupted in some way by Stalinist policies, or became this way in the camps themselves.<sup>230</sup>

What may have been the most common behavior of survivors was “internal exile,” an alienation from mainstream Soviet life, a desire to blend unidentifiably into society and never again attract the attention of the state. In a note sent to Vozvrashchenia and published in *Deti GULAGa*, Vladimir Lisovsky speaks bitterly and resentfully about having lived his life by the dictum of his KGB interrogator, “Go, live, but live quietly,” followed by his mother’s injunction to “live quieter than water, lower than the grass.” He had been conscripted by the Germans at age fifteen and sent to a German concentration camp. Despite his courageous escape, and harrowing physical ordeals, the Soviet system stigmatized him. He felt as though he were a “stepson,” doubly “suspicious” because his father, a priest, had been executed in 1937.<sup>231</sup>

Alla Tumanov was led by her experiences to seek a quiet life outside the mainstream. She was released in 1956 and was able to get work and resume her studies, but she could not shake off a constant sense of oppression and of being under surveillance. She feared being called into a supervisor’s office or to personnel. She describes her post-Gulag life as an attempt to live anonymously, simply dissolving into the masses. This seemed to work for her, but in the 1970s she and her family became anxious, particularly when a revival of Stalinism and anti-Semitism seemed possible. She heard of a memoir circulating in *samizdat* by Maya Ulanovskaya, a member of her underground circle and she panicked. Eventually she emigrated to Canada with her husband and son, but she struggled for years with guilt over how her case had affected her parents and other family. Her brother could not attend university, and he ended up in the dissident movement. He became close to Col. Petro Grigorenko, who had spent a number of years wrongfully imprisoned in a mental hospital.<sup>232</sup> Her father’s career in the state ministries was never affected by Alla’s arrest, but he became an internal dissident, opting out, toiling away and saying little. At the age of eighty he joined his daughter in Canada. Owen Matthews’s mother Lyudmila eventually emigrated as well after meeting and falling in love with an English student, but her older sister remained in the USSR. In *Stalin’s Children*, Matthews describes his mother as having an independent streak. She was willing to stand up for points not popular with others and cultivated many dissident friends among whom she would poke fun at official values.

## Conclusion

No history of the impact of the Stalinist terror or of the Gulag can be complete without considering the ways in which children's lives were affected. This study has encompassed three major dimensions of a Gulag childhood: those born in the camps, those children who were left behind when their parents were arrested, and those children and young people who were themselves arrested and sent into labor camps. There were of course many other categories of child victims not covered here, including children of dekulakized families, children whose families were forcibly collectivized or victims of starvation, and children of deported nationalities sent into exile.<sup>233</sup> The majority of cases discussed were those of children whose parents were political prisoners, or were themselves arrested on political charges. Yet there were many more children than these in the camps, arrested on criminal charges or for juvenile delinquency and hooliganism. Thus, there is much yet to be done to examine the full history of children's experiences of Stalinism.

Even though the Stalinist state did not necessarily target children in conducting its policies of terror, at least not until the period 1947–1949, children suffered immeasurably from the “collateral damage” of its assault upon Soviet society. The state proclaimed triumphantly that Stalin and Soviet socialism provided a “happy childhood” for all, but children whose lives were affected by the Gulag rarely achieved this. They faced a reality much different than the idealized images found in propaganda posters and books. The state in theory committed itself to the rehabilitation of children of enemies, and proclaimed children to be innocent of their parents' crimes. But the Stalinist regime lacked the resources and the will to provide for all of the children whose parents and relatives were arrested, and its suspicions regarding the questionable loyalty of such children overwhelmed any commitment to their re-assimilation into society. It had little concern for the human price being paid for its “protection” of the body politic. Some might argue that this was an intentional facet of Soviet modernization, the breakdown of traditional bourgeois family structure and the attempted construction of a new Soviet family, headed by the new father, Stalin. But the destruction of these children's families was conducted under false pretenses, on the basis of non-existent conspiracies and crimes. Their stories reveal the capriciousness of the Soviet system, exacerbated under Stalin but found nonetheless throughout its history--its capacity to turn so quickly upon the very human material it sought to celebrate and serve. The regime could not trust even its most loyal followers. There is perhaps no better example of this than Geyla Engelsina Markisova, the little girl whose picture with Stalin in 1936 became one of

the most famous icons of the Soviet era, displayed in schools, kindergartens, Pioneer palaces, and orphanages to symbolize the happy childhood enjoyed by all in the Soviet Union. This darling of Soviet propaganda, the idol of millions with her sailor suit, broad smile, and arms clasped around the neck of the Great Leader was, however, also a child victim. Less than two years after this photograph appeared, her father, a high-ranking government minister in the Buryat-Mongolian ASSR, fell victim to the terror. Geyla wrote a pleading letter to Stalin, reminding him of the photograph and defending her father's loyalty, but the only response was the arrest and exile of her mother, who died soon thereafter. Geyla survived and even did graduate work at Moscow State University, where she met and mixed with a number of future dissidents. But she remained silent about her fate until 1988 when Gorbachev's glasnost policy encouraged her to tell her story publicly.<sup>234</sup> So many children affected by the Gulag were forgotten victims, for whom there was little or no public recognition of their suffering nor, at least until the post-Soviet era, any allocation of state resources to compensate for years of discrimination and stigmatization.

Thus, it is imperative to continue to interview and publish the remembrances, memoirs, and correspondence of child victims of the Gulag. We also need a more accurate picture of the number of persons affected by the terror. The question is not only about death—how many persons died, how many babies were not born, how many children did not live to be adults—but also how many people did not live up to their potential. The experiences of child victims had political implications. The tragedy of children affected by the Stalinist Gulag, and the enormous scale of this phenomenon raises significant questions regarding its legacy for post-Stalinist Soviet society. How many turned inward, to narrow self-protecting spheres of interest, trying to simply “blend in.” Silence became a survival mechanism for the individual, but for the collective this was a fatal condition which blocked its capacity for self-improvement and critical analysis of problems and possibilities. What were the consequences of deprivation, stunted stages of development, and malnutrition? How many children of “enemies” did not pursue higher education, or did not get to develop skills that might otherwise have served the state and society? Much more research must be done before we can say with any certainty whether the experiences and responses of child victims informed or shaped larger developments in post-Stalinist history. But evidence suggests there was a profound collective impact. Some rejected the system and sought to challenge and change it, although dissidents could have only a limited impact; possibly even more became part of the marginalized and often criminalized underbelly of Soviet society. Another group chose the path of emigration. It is no wonder that when perestroika did come, and an effort

was made to revitalize Soviet socialism, there was not a truly viable social base to sustain it. How much damage to the social fabric, to Soviet collectivism itself, did Stalinism inflict in the alleged interests of that collective?

Studying the experiences of child victims of Stalinism brings into glaring focus the fatal waste of human capital caused by Soviet policies. When children were not being maliciously targeted, being punished for their “potential” hostility, they were at best the victims of a state that could never muster the resources to carry out its transformative mission. The fate of the children of the Gulag is a tragic testimony to the appalling inadequacy of the Soviet regime to achieve even its most well-intentioned goals. Yet belief in the system, and optimism about its future, endured, even among those suffering the worst forms of victimization. Some lost their faith only in the late 1980s and 1990s when KGB files were opened and they came face to face with the absolute truth that it had all been for nothing, that their parents had not been guilty of anything.

The human price paid for the Soviet state’s accomplishments should not be underestimated. The regime fell from its own fatal flaw; its paranoid ideology weakened itself by attacking the sources of its own greatest potential. Though it corrected itself to a certain degree after 1953, it could not overcome this legacy. As Frierson and Vilensky point out, in the end, what triumphed was not the regime, but the individual human being who refused to allow the state to dehumanize others by assigning them to state-defined categories. The state sought to turn children into abstractions that could be more easily handled and processed in the channels safest for state interests. In the end, those who survived the Gulag did so because individuals retained their capacity to see through the abstractions, the categories, and recognize fellow human beings. They were willing to reach out to those in need, regardless of who the state claimed them to be. Neighbors, nannies, relatives, officials, teachers, strangers, and even camp guards saw a human being, not an “enemy,” and gave someone an opportunity.<sup>235</sup> This is an uplifting lesson worth telling again and again. But what also must not be forgotten, as so many survivors understand, are the innocent victims who suffered and died, who paid the ultimate price that comes when any state or regime claims omniscient powers to define who belongs to the body politic and who does not. The Gulag was not an accident but an intrinsic element of a system that used social engineering for its own purposes of self-preservation. It is necessary to keep stories of the Gulag alive, in order that the whole scope of the Soviet legacy be known, and not just those aspects deemed most appealing by its current political heirs.

## Notes

The author would like to thank all those who have read versions of this work and offered critical and insightful commentary: above all, the editors and readers for *The Carl Beck Papers*; fellow participants in the May 2012 Russian Children’s History Workshop; panel members at the 2011 Biennial Conference of the Society for the History of Childhood and Youth and the 2009 AAASS Annual Convention; and Dr. Aran MacKinnon.

1. Yelena Sidorkina, “Years Under Guard,” in Simeon Vilensky, ed., *Till My Tale Is Told* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 198.
2. Lynne Viola, introduction to Deborah Hoffman, trans. and ed., *The Littlest Enemies: Children in the Shadow of the Gulag* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2009), 2.
3. Simeon Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa: 1918–1956* (Moscow: Demokratia, 2002).
4. Cathy A. Frierson and Simeon S. Vilensky, eds., *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
5. Deborah Hoffman, trans. and ed., *The Littlest Enemies: Children in the Shadow of the Gulag*; (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2009); Deborah Hoffman, “Children of the Gulag,” *Russian Life* Vol. 50, No. 6 (Nov.–Dec. 2007): 38–45.
6. Jehanne Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck, ed., *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). In 2007 Orlando Figes published a well-received, sweeping portrait of how Stalinism penetrated and manipulated the private lives of both elite and ordinary citizens, including many children of terror victims, which was based largely on oral interviews. However, the book has since come under serious scrutiny concerning his methodology, particularly his translation of both written and oral sources. See Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007). For discussion of the book and the allegations against it, see Peter Reddaway and Stephen Cohen, “Orlando Figes and Stalin’s Victims,” *The Nation*, June 11, 2012, reprinted online with a response from Orlando Figes at <http://www.thenation.com/article/168028/orlando-figes-and-stalins-victims>.
7. Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia 1890-1991* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).
8. Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 307–333.
9. Alla Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, trans. Gust Olson (Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Press, 1999).
10. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 4–5, 14.

11. See, for example, the essays in Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman, eds., *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).
12. Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 122.
13. Dan Bar-on, *The Indescribable and the Undiscussable: Reconstructing Human Discourse after Trauma* (Budapest: Central European Press, 1999), 5.
14. Ibid.; also see Katherine G. Baker and Julia B. Gippenreiter, “The Effects of Stalin’s Purge on three Generations of Russian Families,” *Family Studies*, 3, no. 1 (1996), 5–35.
15. Michael de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); see discussion of Certeau and the topic of the politics of childhood in Kirsi Paulina Kallio, “The Body as a Battlefield: Approaching Children’s Politics,” *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (2008): 285–286.
16. Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 8.
17. Ibid., 7–9; Evgenia Ginzburg, *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, trans. Paul Stevenson and Max Hayward (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) and Evgenia Ginzburg, *Within the Whirlwind*, trans. Ian Boland (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979); Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, parts 1–2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) .
18. Elena Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (London: Hutchinson, 1992).
19. Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 9.
20. This is a point made by the editors of *Gulag Voices*: that one can learn from the factual errors detected in oral interviews, from the very fact that individuals tell stories in certain ways. Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 9.
21. Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience*, 14.
22. Cynthia Hooper, “Terror of Intimacy,” in Kiaer and Naiman, *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia*, 65–66.
23. Edwin Bacon, *The Gulag at War: Stalin’s Forced Labour System in the Light of the Archives* (New York: NYU Press, 1994), 62–63; “Postanovlenie TsIK i SNK SSSR o merakh bor’by s prestupnost’yu sredi nesovershennoletnikh,” 7 April 1935, State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. 9401, op. 12, d. 103, l. 35, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 182–183.
24. “Doklad zamestitelia nachal’nicha GULAGa Lepilova na imia Berii, Kruglova, Chernyshova i Kobulova o rabote GULAGa,” March 1940, GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 28, ll. 1–124, reprinted

in A. I. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov, comps., *GULAG (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei) 1918–1960*, Rossiia XX Vek (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond “Demokratiia” 2002), 731.

25. Kelly, *Children’s World*, 237.

26. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 148–149.

27. “Vypiska iz protokola No. 51 Zasedaniia politbiuro TsK VKP(b), 5 iulia 1937g,” Arkhiv Politburo TsK KPSS, f. 3, op. 58, d. 175, l. 107, *Memorial Informatsionnyi biulleten’* 12 (September 1999): 18 reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 229–230.

28. See “Operativnyi prikaz narodnogo komissara vnutrennikh del SSSR No. 00486 ‘Ob Operatsii po prepressirovaniyu zhen i detei izmennikov ro diny,’” 15 August 1937, reprinted in Kokurin and Petrov, *Gulag*, 106–110; reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 234–238; also see the NKVD operational order “Concerning the Punishment of former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements, July 30, 1937,” in J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, eds., *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939*, trans. Benjamin Sher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 477.

29. “Operativnyi prikaz,” 109; See, for examples, Zayara Vesvolaya, 7-35: *Vospominaniia o tyurme i ssylke* (Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 2006), an excerpt of which is translated as “7:35,” in Simeon Vilensky, ed., *Till My Tale is Told: Women’s Memoirs of the Gulag*, trans. John Crowfoot, et. al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 302. She and others like her were charged in 1949 as “socially dangerous elements” under Articles 7 and 35.

30. Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 130.

31. “Postanovlenie gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony No. Goko-1926SS ‘O chlenakh semei izmennikov ro diny,’” 24 June 1942, *Sbornik zakonodatel’nykh i normativnykh aktov o repressiiakh i reabilitatsii zhertv politicheskikh repressii* part 1 (Kursk: 1999), 439; reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 379–380; see translation and discussion in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 283–284.

32. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 333; Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 158.

33. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 339, cited and discussed in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 241.

34. Ibid.

35. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 7.

36. Tomas Balkelis, “Lithuanian Children in the Gulag: Deportations, Ethnicity and Identity. Memoirs of Children Deportees, 1941–1952,” *Lituanus Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and*

*Sciences*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Fall 2005), 2, accessed online at [http://lituanus.org/2005/05\\_3\\_2Balkelis.htm](http://lituanus.org/2005/05_3_2Balkelis.htm).

37. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 162.

38. Bacon, *The Gulag at War*, 151.

39. Ibid.

40. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 584.

41. Stephen Blyth, "The Dead of the Gulag: An Experiment in Statistical Investigation," *Applied Statistics*, 44, no. 3 (1995): 319; a much smaller figure of 1.5 million is given by Lynne Viola in her introduction to *The Littlest Enemies*, based on the work of A. I. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov, eds., *Gulag, 1917–1960: Dokumenty* (Moscow: Materik, 2000), and S. V. Mironenko and N. Werth, eds., *Istoriia Stalinskogo gulaga. Konets 1920kh—pervaia polovina 1950-kh godov. Sobranie dokumentov*, 7 vols. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004–2005), 4: 38–39, 54–56.

42. Applebaum points out that the 1937 order from Yezhov prohibited arresting pregnant women, a 1940 order said that children could stay with their mothers for up to a year and a half, "until they cease to need mother's milk." See Applebaum, *Gulag*, 317.

43. "Zapiska nachal'nika gulaga NKVD SSSR V.G. Nasedkina narkomu vnutrennikh del SSSR L. P. Beriiia," 19 aprelia 1941g., GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 42, ll. 26–27, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 366–367; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 256. See also figures prepared by the head of the Gulag in February of 1949, Major-General Dobrynin, preceding a Supreme Soviet order amnestying pregnant women and women with small children in the camps, in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 571 n. 61. Applebaum, in *Gulag*, 322, cites slightly different figures for 1949: 9,300 pregnant women and 23,790 with small children. This was quite a jump, a 138 percent increase from figures listed for 1948, which cited 19,918 women pregnant or with children, only 17 percent of whom were arrested for political crimes.

44. "Zapiska nachal'nika gulaga NKVD SSSR V.G. Nasedkina narkomu vnutrennikh del SSSR L.P. Beriiia," reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 366–367; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 256.

45. "Ukaz prezidiuma verkhovnogo soveta SSSR 'Ob osvobozhdenii ot nakazaniia osuzhdennykh beremennykh zhenshchin i zhenshchin, imeiushchikh maloletnikh detei,'" 22 April 1949, GARF, f. 7523, op. 36, d. 488, l. 127, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 477.

46. "Ukaz prezidiuma verkhovnogo soveta SSSR 'O vozraste detei, kotorye mogut nakhodit'sia pri osuzhdennykh materiakh v mestakh zakliucheniia,'" 29 May 1949, GARF, f. 7523, op. 36, d. 533, l. 51, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 477; and "Postanovlenie soveta ministrov SSSR No. 2213 'O sokrashchenii sroka sodержaniia pri osuzhdennykh materiakh detei i peredache detei starshe dvukh let na sodержanie blizkikh rodstvennikov ili v detskie uchrezhdeniia,'" 29

May 1949, *Sbornik postanovlenii Pravitel'stva SSSR. Postanovleniia SM SSSR za Mai 1949 g.*, pt. 2, 979, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 478; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 308–309.

47. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 318–319.

48. See for example, “Svidetel'stvo A. L. Voitolovskoi,” in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 320; excerpted from A. L. Voitolovskaia, *Po sledam sud'by moego pokoleniia* (Syktvyvkar: Komi Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1991), 282–284, 285, 292–293, 294–295; testimony of Elda Fridman, “My Brother Andrei Saved My Mother from Being Shot,” in Hoffman, *Littlest Enemies*, 153–155.

49. Tamara Petkevich, *Memoirs of a Gulag Actress*, trans. Yasha Klots and Ross Ufberg (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 282–283.

50. Nadezhda Grankina, “Notes by You r Contemporary,” in Vilensky, *Till My Tale Is Told*, 113. She had left five children behind when she was arrested.

51. “Surrounded by Death,” interview with Giuli Fedorovna Tsivirko, conducted and translated by Jehanne M. Gheith, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 89–92.

52. “Prikaz narodnogo komissara vnutrennikh del SSSR No. 0457 ‘S ob’iavleniem instruksii po sanitarnoi sluzhbe tiurem NKVD SSSR,” 23 October 1940, GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 66, ll. 40–42, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 343–345; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 213–215.

53. “Iz pis'ma N. V. Mat'tsevoi,” Leningrad, Archive of Memorial, 1193/89, reprinted in *Zven'ia: Istoricheskii Al'manakh*, Part 1 (Moscow: Progress Feniks Atheneum, 1991), 55–56.

54. See the memoir of actress Tamara Grigor'ievna Tsulukidze, “Kukol'naia tragikomeidiia,” in *Teatr GULAGa: Vospominaniia, ocherki* (Moscow: Memorial, 1995), 42.

55. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 322.

56. “Prikazanie po glavnomu upravleniiu ispravitel'no-trudovymi lageriami NKVD SSSR No. 163 ‘O nedochetakh raboty detskikh uchrezhdenii Karagandinskogo lageria NKVD SSSR,” 8 May 1939, GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 22, l. 151, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 312–313.

57. B. A. Piskarev, comp., *Prokuratura Magadanskoii Oblasti: Konspekt chetyrykh desiatiletii: Dokumenty* (Magadan: OAO “MAOBTI,” 1997), 46–48, translated as “Investigation of ‘Dalstroii’ Administrators’ Transfer of Children from the Zone in 1952,” in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 312–313. The report noted that the overburdened camps just kept shuffling sick children from one region to the next rather than try to accommodate them, which led to high death rates. Also found in the camps were many cases of a skin ailment, pyoderma, thought to be caused by trauma. It involved painful inflammation and ulceration. See *ibid.*, 212.

58. Hava Volovich, "My Past," in Vilensky, *Till My Tale Is Told*, 260–262.
59. "Iz pis'ma N. S. Zubovoi v 'Memorial,'" Arkhiv Nauchno-informatsionnyi i prosvetitel'skii tsentr 'Memorial' (NIPTs), reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGA*, 461.
60. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 323.
61. Volovich, "My Past," 262. Archival photographs reveal faces that are hauntingly somber. There are unsmiling mothers and babies with shaved heads and numbers on their clothes, looking as much like prisoners as their mothers. See Applebaum, *Gulag*, 322; photographs found online at the Virtual'nyi muzei Gulaga, accessed at <http://www.gulagmuseum.org/start.do>.
62. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 310–312.
63. "Svidetel'stvo A. L. Voitlovskoi," 319–320.
64. Nadezhda Joffe, *Back in Time: My Life, My Fate, My Epoch*, trans. Frederick S. Choate (Oak Park, MI: Labor Publications, Inc., 1995), 135–136, 139. Hilda Vitzthum also describes camp nurseries being run by caring and dedicated doctors; see *Torn Out by the Roots: The Recollections of a Former Communist* trans. Paul Schaach (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 145–146. Tamara Petkevich gave birth while imprisoned in a forced-labor camp, and her memoir describes the infants' nursery as clean and well cared for; but one should also note that the father of the baby was a free doctor working in the camp and therefore may have exerted influence to insure better conditions; see Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress*, 282–287.
65. Ginzburg, *Within the Whirlwind*, 3–11.
66. Tsulukidze, "Kukol'naia tragikomediia," 43–44. For discussion of Tsulukidze and the work of her puppet theater, see Petkevich, *Memoir of a Gulag Actress*, 235, 256–258, 270–271, 326–327. Petkevich records as particularly touching a moment when one little boy, five years old, after seeing the puppet theater perform *The Nightingale*, told Tsulukidze that he loved her. Petkevich felt that he had somehow been moved deeply by the songbird from the play, an animal he had probably never seen before. *Ibid.*, 258.
67. Hilda Vitzthum worked in camp nurseries, and she writes of how sad it was for these children, many of whom were abandoned by their mothers even before being taken by the NKVD. She would try to hold the babies as long as she could, but there were so many that each could get relatively little of her time. See Vitzthum, *Torn Out by the Roots*, 145–146.
68. Hoffman, "Children of the Gulag," *Russian Life*, 38–40.
69. According to Elena Bonner, it was Ilya Ehrenburg who used this term to refer to those whose parents were arrested in 1937–1938. See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 214; Elena Bonner, "Speech for the Freedom Forum," Oslo, May 18, 2009, <http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfconf2009/english/node/13>.

70. See accounts in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, pp. 152, 154–55, 163, 164, 172–174, 177–178.
71. Bonner, “Speech for the Freedom Forum.” Kornilov’s novel includes characters who were child victims and whose lives followed troubled paths. *Building a Prison*, trans. Edward Dale (London: Quartet Books, 1984).
72. “Enumerated Units,” interview with Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova, conducted and translated by Jehanne M. Gheith in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 138–39.
73. “From Privilege to Exile,” interview with Valeriia Mikhailovna Gerlin, conducted and translated by Cathy Frierson, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 152–159.
74. The letters to the society headed by Peshkova, “Pomoshch’ politicheskim zakliuchennym” (Assistance to Political Prisoners) or *PPZ*, are found in the Russian State Archive in fond R-8409, and have been reprinted and published in, S. V. Cheshko, ed., *Izgnanniki v svoei strane: pis’mo iz sovetsskoi ssylki 1920–1930–kh godov: po dokumentam Fonda “E.P. Peshkova. Pomoshch’ Politicheskim Zakliuchennym”* (Moscow: Nauka, 2008). See for example the letters of K. I. Logunov and his son, dating from 1930 and 1931, 300–304; “Telegramma v PPZ Liudmily i Borisa Vlasovykh. 10 fevralia 1931,” 308–309; the letters of V. V. Mal’chevskii dating from 1930–1931, 310–313; “Zaiavlenie Antoniny Shcherbakovoi. 21 August 1931,” 316–317; “Pis’mo Lidy Andreevoi. 14 June 1931”, 321; and “Pis’mo Liali i Vali Andreevykh. Bez daty. [Ne pozdnee 14 June 1931 g.],” 324–325.
75. “Zaiavlenie v PPZ Mikhaila Tatur. 3 maia 1935 g.,” in *Ibid.*, 325–326. Because the letter was not handwritten, the editors suggest that probably the young boy did not actually write the letter, but rather it was written for him by an adult.
76. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 305.
77. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 168–169.
78. Suzanne Rosenberg, *A Soviet Odyssey* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 189–190.
79. “From the Memoirs of Nadezhda Kapralova,” *Moskovskoe Istoriko-Literaturnoe Obschestvo “Vozvrashchenie,”* reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 459–460; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 306–307.
80. Fridman, “My Brother Andrei Saved My Mother from Being Shot,” 153–155.
81. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 286, 306.
82. *Ibid.*, 317.

83. Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolutionary on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 97–98; discussed also in Figs, *The Whisperers*, 287–288; 309–314.
84. The girl was the daughter of a Kazakh government minister and had led a privileged, elite life. But in the camps she behaved, in Hilda’s description, wildly and lewdly, and seemed at home in the world of the *urki*, or criminals. See Vitzthum, *Torn Out by the Roots*, 114–115.
85. Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” in Vilensky, *Till My Tale is Told*, 62–63.
86. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 24.
87. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 258–263, 293.
88. Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution*, trans. C. M. Woodhouse (London: Ink Links, 1979), 35–41, 53. He said some of the senior students talked among themselves about analogies with the Jacobin terror.
89. “From Privilege to Exile,” 156, 163–164.
90. Ibragimova, “Enumerated Units,” 145.
91. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 259, 296–297. They estimate that at least 7 million children died during the war.
92. “‘We Will Surely Die’: Letter from Irena Grzeskowiak to her Father, Andrzej,” trans. Katherine R. Jolluck, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 212.
93. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 261–262.
94. Grankina, “Notes by Your Contemporary,” 119–120. Also see, in the same volume, Zayara Vesyolaya, “7:35,” 306.
95. Joffe, *Back in Time*, 173–175.
96. Testimony of Marina Krivosheina in Hoffman, *Littlest Enemies*, 126–128.
97. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 287, 326. Bonner muses here about just how “strange” she and her fellow child victims were, for virtually everyone in Soviet society had someone in their family who was affected by state policies; perhaps the truly “strange” were the ones who pretended not to know what was going on around them.
98. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 290–291. Tamara Petkevich, seventeen when her father was arrested, received a ten-year Gulag sentence during the war after NKVD agents hounded her unsuccessfully to become an informer. See Tamara Petkevich, “Just One Fate,”

in Vilensky, *Till My Tale Is Told*, 219–221. Elena Bonner was also pressured during the war to become an informant; the reasons given were that her parents were enemies and that foreigners would be likely to try and recruit her for their services. She says that she angrily refused, but nothing happened to her. See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 311–312.

99. “Iz doklada zamestitelia nachal’ nika gulaga A. P. Lepilova na imia L. P. Berii, S. N. Kruglova, V. V. Chernyshova i B. Z. Kobulova, 1 marta 1940 g.,” GARF, f. 9414, op. 1, d. 28, ll. 37–40, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 331–332.

100. “Enumerated Units,” 140.

101. See, for example, the testimony of Georgy Barambayev in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 119–120, and of Natalya Saveleva, 117–118.

102. Owen Matthews, *Stalin’s Children: Three Generations of Love, War, and Survival* (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), 69–70, 73–75.

103. “Three Death Certificates But No Grave,” interview with Boris Israelovich/Srul’evich Faifman, conducted and translated by Cathy Frierson, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 120–121.

104. Petkevich, *Memoirs of a Gulag Actress*, 313.

105. Kelly, *Children’s World*, 238.

106. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 304–305.

107. “‘If They Give Us Just a Little Help We’ll Succeed,’ Children’s Letters to Nadezhda Krupskaya,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 86–103; also see “‘Just to Advise You,’ Children’s Letters Intercepted by Military Censor,” 174–177.

108. See, for example, resolutions and directives concerning abuses and problems in children’s distribution centers and homes in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 450–453; “Prikaz ministra vnutrennikh del SSSR No. 934 ‘S Ob’iavleniem postanovleniia soveta Ministrov SSSR ot 26 Noiabria 1951 goda No. 4857,” GARF, f. 9401, op. 12, d. 210, t. 2, ll. 32–33, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 492–494.

109. “Prikaz narkoma vnutrennikh del SSSR No. 00309 “Ob ustraneniі nenormal’nostei v sodержanii detei repressirovannykh roditelei,” 20 May 1938, GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 20, ll. 199–99 ob, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 296–297; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 192–193.

110. “Iz doklada prokurora V. M. Bochkova zamestiteliu predsedalelia SNK SSSR R. S. Zemliachke, 12 aprel’, 1941g.,” GARF, f. 5446, op. 25a, d. 7352, ll. 19–24, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 366, also see 390–391.

111. Testimony of Lyubov Stolyarova in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 109, and of Galina Rykova, 129–30 and Hoffman, “Children of the Gulag,” 41.
112. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 184–185. Faifman, “Three Death Certificates.”
113. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 327.
114. Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 284–293; translated and reprinted as “‘Happiness Will Triumph,’ From Vladimir Moroz’ Investigative File,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 144–149.
115. Aldona Volynskaya, “A Large Pear Tree That Never Bloomed,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 163–164.
116. Testimony of Natalya Saveleva in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 117–118. For similar stories, see testimony of Anna Ramenskaya and Lyubov Stolyarova, *ibid.*, 108–109 and of Nelya Simonova, 114–115. Nelya Simonova was born in a camp zone and then sent to a children’s home; she had to scavenge for garbage and berries in the forest in order to survive, but her most searing memory was of the abuse suffered from attendants who beat the children.
117. Mikhail Nikolaev, “They’d Even Taken Away My Name,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 79–86.
118. Applebaum records cases of young girls being raped by older children, and accounts of several hundred children sharing a small number of plates and spoons. See Applebaum, *Gulag*, 325–326.
119. Nikolaev, “They’d Even Taken Away My Name,” 83–84. Nikolaev recalls “Hitler” forcing boys to eat feces.
120. “We’d Been Thrown Out of That ‘Normal’ World,” letter from Vladimira Uborevich to Yelena Bulgakova, in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 149–152.
121. Testimony of Mikhail Bezzubnikov in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 125.
122. Alexander Dolgun, *Alexander Dolgun’s Story: An American in the Gulag* (New York: Knopf, 1975), 152. Remarkably, the *urka* was convinced his parents had indeed committed some kind of grievous act of disloyalty and was offended when Dolgun suggested that they may have been completely innocent. He refused to believe that Stalin would have allowed that.
123. Matthews, *Stalin’s Children*, 80–94. Also see Volynskaya, “A Large Pear Tree That Never Bloomed,” 165–168.
124. Emma Grabovskaya notes that all the young men from her children’s home were sent to the front and none returned. See her testimony in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 122; also see the fate of Valia Obolensky, in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 278. As a son of a repressed enemy, he could not be accepted as a volunteer in the Red Army but was conscripted

into the people's militia in Leningrad. He was killed when he was sent as part of suicide missions to slow down German advances at the front.

125. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 276–279, 296–298; also see the account of how Galina Rykova was allowed into the army in 1942, in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 129–130.

126. Hoffman, “Children of the Gulag,” *Russian Life*, 41; “Mark Malyavko Consciously Saved Us,” from the memoirs of Alla Semyonova, in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 138–143.

127. Nonetheless, even “normal” conditions could not make up for the loss of family. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 194–195.

128. “Three Death Certificates,” 123–126.

129. Kelly, *Children's World*, 238–241. Alla Semyonova was one of Malyavko's charges in a home in Kardymovo. He “helped” her and others lose their documents, change their names, and become eligible for education and jobs. See “Mark Malyavko Consciously Saved Us,” 138–143.

130. Matthews, *Stalin's Children*, 99–103.

131. “Memoirs of Aleksandra Chumakova,” in George Saunders, ed., *Voices of the Opposition* (New York: Monad Press, 1974), 200–201.

132. “Doklad zamestitelia nachal' nika GULAGa Lepilova na imia Berii, Kruglova, Chernyshova i Kobulova o rabote GULAGa,” March 1940, reprinted in V. N. Shostakovskii, ed., *Gulag (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei) 1918–1960*, Rossiia XX Vek: Dokumenty (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond “Demokratiia,” 2002), 731; also see Bacon, *The Gulag at War*, 62–63.

133. “Pis'mo narodnogo komissara vnutrennikh del SSSR L. P. Berii i prokurora SSSR M. Pankrat'eva v TsK VKP(b) na imia I. V. Stalina i v SNK SSSR na imia V. M. Molotova, 28 fevralia 1940 g.,” GARF, f. 8131, op. 37, d. 137, ll. 4–11, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 327–331; see table 5, “Juvenile Arrests and Seizures of Homeless Children, 1935–1939,” in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 188; also see Bacon, *The Gulag at War*, 62–63.

134. “Iz doklada zamestitelia nachal' nika gulaga A. P. Lepilova.”

135. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 329.

136. Kelly, *Children's World*, 255. According to the archival records cited by Kelly, in 1946 there were 67 labor-education colonies and 27 labor colonies.

137. Veronica Shapovalov, ed. and trans., *Remembering the Darkness: Women in Soviet Prisons* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 11. Also see Oleg Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror*, trans. Vadim A. Staklo (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 237.

138. An example of this was sixteen-year-old Lydia Izrailevna Sooster, who went dancing at the Metropole with foreign journalists during the war and found herself arrested and exiled, then rearrested in 1949; see “Khudozhnik Iulo Sooster,” in *Teatr GULAGA: Vospominaniia, ocherki* (Moscow: Memorial, 1995), 91–102; also see the memoir of Valentina Grigorievna Ievleva-Pavlenko, “Unedited Life,” in Shapovalov, *Remembering the Darkness*, 317–354.

139. See for example, Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 157; Dolgun, *Alexander Dolgun’s Story*, 228–229.

140. For an example, see “Soviet but German,” Interview with Robert Avgustovich Ianke,” conducted by Svetlana Chashchina and Robert Latypov, June 2004, trans. Elizabeth Stine and Katherine R. Jolluck, in Ghieth and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 37–44.

141. In her cell at Butyrki Prison in 1949, Olga Adamova-Sliozburg met and nurtured numerous “children of enemies” who had been six to eight years old when their parents were arrested in 1937–1938. See “My Journey,” in Vilensky, *Till My Tale is Told*, 72. Also see the story of the daughter of a repressed writer who was arrested in 1949, Zayara Vesolaya, 7–35: *Vospominaniia o tyurme i ssylke* (Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 2006), an excerpt of which is translated as “7:35,” in Vilensky, *Till My Tale Is Told*, 302. See also the interview with Valeriia Mikhailovna Gerlin, whose father had been arrested in 1937–1938 and who was arrested herself in 1949: “From Privilege to Exile,” 151–167.

142. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 335–337.

143. *Ibid.*, 140; also see Vesolaya, “7:35,” 302.

144. See for example the story of seventeen-year old Mikhail Kireevsky, “Twenty-Five Years,” From the Memoirs of Mikhail Kireevsky,” in Hoffman *The Littlest Enemies*, 181–183. Also see Rosenberg, *A Soviet Odyssey*, 154, for description of the wives of high-ranking Leningrad officials she met in the camps.

145. Brigitte Gerland, “Vorkuta (1950–1953): Oppositional Currents and the Mine Strikes,” in George Saunders, ed., *Samizdat: Voices of the Opposition* (New York: Monad Press, 1974), 222–225; also see the editor’s introduction, “Currents in the Soviet Opposition,” 19–21.

146. Lyudmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 87. Also see Dolgun, *Alexander Dolgun’s Story*, 169, for an account of two youths being arrested for involvement in a conspiratorial group called the Black Guard. They put out a few pamphlets, pushed over a few kiosks, and knocked out street lights. But a disaffected girl friend informed on them and they received twenty-five years.

147. Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” 76–77.

148. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 107–109. She emigrated to Canada in 1974.

149. According to Alla, she was at one point interrogated by Viktor Abakumov, who was Minister of State Security, which suggests the interest of the higher levels of the state and the security organs in Alla's group. She also asserts that for a time her interrogators played with tying her activities into a plot to kill Beria, but this was dropped. See *ibid.*, 78–79 and 86–89.

150. For example, one woman related how she had daydreamed about joining with hundreds of others in the spirit of Mayakovsky's poem, *There are Millions of Us*, which she even recited at the trial. *Ibid.*, 119–122.

151. *Ibid.*, 6–10.

152. But, she notes, she never revealed that her father's sister lived abroad, and this fact never seems to have surfaced in the charges against her. *Ibid.*, 100.

153. V. V. Gorshkov, "My Life As a Gift," in Alexander Solzhenitsyn, ed., *Voices from the Gulag*, trans. Kenneth Lantz (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 302.

154. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 10.

155. Rosenberg, *A Soviet Odyssey*, 151.

156. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 227.

157. *Ibid.*, 171.

158. Emily D. Johnson, "Fare Thee Well: Excerpts from the Camp Correspondence of Valentin Tikhonovich Muravskii and Rozalia Iosifovna Muravskaia," in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 220.

159. In *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Gopchik is a Ukrainian boy arrested for aiding General Bandera's men during WWII. Though given an adult term, he still is a boy in his manner and energy, and Ivan Denisovich feels paternal toward him and willingly helps him. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, trans. Ralph Parker (New York: New American Library, 1963), 66–67.

160. Tzvetan Todorov, *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps*, trans. by Arthur Denner and Abigail Pollak (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).

161. Janusc Bardach and Kathleen Gleeson, *Man Is Wolf to Man: Surviving the Gulag* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 174–175.

162. Rosenberg, *A Soviet Odyssey*, 172–173.

163. Another example is Tamara Petkevich; she survived thanks to her theatrical skills, but also noted that many women prisoners would want to touch her and talk to her because she reminded them of her daughters. See Petkevich, "Just One Fate," 221.

164. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 211–213.

165. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 330; Lev Razgon, *True Stories*, trans. John Crowfoot (Dana Point, CA: Ardis, 1997), 122.

166. Razgon tells the tragic story of two brothers age sixteen and eighteen from Czechoslovakia who were assigned to forest work. The older always looked out for the younger but could not protect him when a tree fell on him and killed him. See Razgon, *True Stories*, 122. For another account of a youth being forced to do dangerous heavy labor, see “Iz pis’ma F. E. Bergera v ‘Memorial’,” Arkhiv NIPTs “Memorial,” No. 6829/89, in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 474; see translation in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 162.

167. Applebaum notes that NKVD officers in the late 1930s were arrested for extorting false confessions, and many of them had been children. See Applebaum, *Gulag*, 330.

168. Bardach, *Man Is Wolf to Man*, 295–296.

169. See Katherine G. Baker and Julia B. Gippenreiter, “The Effects of Stalin’s Purge on three Generations of Russian Families,” *Family Studies* 3, no. 1 (1996): 5–35.

170. Eugene Velchin, *Breaking Stalin’s Nose* (New York: Henry Holt, 2011).

171. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 379–380.

172. Two examples are “Enumerated Units,” interview with Giuzel Gumerovna Ibragimova, and “Three Death Certificates,” interview with Boris Israelovich/Srul’evich Faifman.

173. Baker and Gippenreiter, “The Effects of Stalin’s Purge,” 32; also see Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 384–386.

174. In 1950 Valeriia Gerlin married Iurii Aikhenvald, the son of a literary critic exiled early in the Soviet period. He later became prominent in the dissident movement. See “From Privilege to Exile,” 166. Tamara Petkevich’s first husband was also a fellow child victim whom she met while waiting in prison lines. See Petkevich, *Memoirs of a Gulag Actress*, 39–43.

175. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 391–392. For examples of this, see “Fare Thee Well,” in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 220; Petkevich, *Memoirs of a Gulag Actress*, 467–468; Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 235, 324.

176. Baker and Gippenreiter, “The Effects of Stalin’s Purge,” 22–23, 26–29; see discussion in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 369.

177. “Enumerated Units,” 142–143.

178. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 289.

179. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 383–384.

180. *Ibid.*, 379–381.

181. Matthews, *Stalin's Children*, 107–108.

182. She describes the men she knew who had been arrested at age eighteen as behaving like little boys when they would get together, indulging in sexual innuendos and dystopias with sexual references. Alexeyeva herself eventually married a man who had been arrested at age eighteen. See Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 88–89.

183. Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 204, 250, 262–263; at the same time that Yakir broke down, the KGB also got Victor Krasin, another child of the Gulag who turned dissident, to agree to cooperate after a series of twelve-hour psychological interrogations. Each was given a lesser sentence in exchange for public recantations of the movement. For Yakir's own account of his life as a child of the Gulag, see Pyotr Yakir, *A Childhood in Prison*, edited and introduced by Robert Conquest (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973).

184. See, for example, the testimony of Yevgeniya Dalskaya in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 107–108.

185. Testimony of Margarita Semyonova, in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 123. Also see Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 383–384.

186. Elena Bonner recalls a spiteful neighbor who accused her of stealing a slip from the communal apartment they shared, “because everyone in their family had been arrested.” See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 310.

187. “A Mother in Exile,” interview with Larisa Mikhailovna Lappo-Danilevskaia, conducted by Jehanne M. Gheith, August 2000, trans. Elizabeth Stine, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 84–85.

188. Frierson and Vilensky identify three of their pool of interviewees who went on to highly successful careers in the Soviet system; one became director of the Institute of Hematology in the Academy of Medical Sciences, one worked at the Physico-Technical Institute, and a third achieved a prominent career in forestry. But they emphasize that such professional success was atypical. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 370–371.

189. See testimony of Hilda Yermashova, Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 115–116; another woman was never allowed to go higher than the seventh grade at a night school. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 328–329.

190. “Three Death Certificates” 129, 131.

191. Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 99.

192. Frierson and Vilensky identify as particularly courageous Nikolai Mikhailovich Zhavoronkov, who as director of the Moscow Chemical-Technical Institute in the postwar period accepted children of enemies and Jewish children as students, many of whom were top students but could not be admitted to Moscow State University. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 389. Also see discussion in Figes, *The Whisperers*, 294 and 297. Elena Bonner and Ida Slavina each mentioned the remarkable head of their school in Leningrad, Klavdiia Alekseyeva, as having helped them in multiple ways in 1938–1939. See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 254–255.

193. This director, Leonty Litvin, also protected the children when the home was evacuated. He went with them and got the older ones jobs. See the testimony of Emma Grabovskaya in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 121–122.

194. “Enumerated Units,” 140. She claimed that he insisted his field was a safer science, because it was “not ideological.” She went to have a very successful career as a physicist, and worked in closed scientific enterprises, but still seemed to have regrets that she did not get to study chemistry.

195. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 326–329.

196. See discussion of this in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 318–321; Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 328–329. Bonner suggests that it was not until she had children that the distance between her and her mother began to shrink. Tamara Petkevich also describes a troubled mother-daughter relationship; Petkevich, *Memoirs of a Gulag Actress*, 466–467.

197. “Enumerated Units,” 140–141, 146–147.

198. She had been a successful party activist repressed after her husband’s arrest; she returned from the camps after WWII. Matthews, *Stalin’s Children*, 108. Also see discussion and examples given in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 316–317.

199. Elena Bonner decided that the boy, Yura, who was the son of one of her father’s colleagues, should know the truth and in 1957, it was she who told him who his real mother was. See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 235.

200. Frierson and Vilensky interviewed both Olga’s son and daughter, and certainly their family bonds were restored, partly due to the protective net of the extended family that came together to help the children cope with their father’s execution and their mother’s arrest and exile. Olga was able to rebuild relationships with both children and they had a warm, loving family circle. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 367. But Adamova-Sliozberg met in prison a woman who lost her daughter rather than tell her the truth about her unjustified arrest. Her daughter wrote her that she needed to know the truth, whether or not her mother had committed a “crime,” because if she had not, then the daughter would not join the Komsomol; but if she had, then the daughter would no longer be able to correspond with her, but would denounce her as an enemy of the Soviet government she loved so much. The agonized mother chose to lie to her daughter and never received another letter. Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” 41–42.

201. See Anino Kuusinen, *The Rings of Destiny: Inside Soviet Russia from Lenin to Brezhnev* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 207.

202. Rosenberg, *A Soviet Odyssey*, 190–191.

203. Many of those interviewed by Frierson and Vilensky felt this way growing up. For example, the son of Olga Adamova-Sliozburg, Aleksandr Zakgeim, remained a strong proponent of Leninism for much of his adult life, well into the 1990s. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 223–225. Likewise, Owen Matthews’s aunt Lenina also fiercely believed in her father’s innocence, but did not blame the state.

204. For a probing examination of the assimilation and assertion of Soviet values by a son of dekulakized parents, Stepan Podlubny, see Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*, 165–221.

205. Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” 73.

206. Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, 323.

207. See Irina Titova, “Group Discovers Terror Victims,” *St. Petersburg Times*, September 20, 2002, accessed through [www.sptimes.ru/index.php](http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php); though it seemed to make her sad, she could still recall, in 2002, the Communist songs of her childhood. Slavina wrote a memoir of her life. See I.I. Slavina, *Tonen’kii nerv istorii* (Richmond, Calif.: Gennadii Farber, 2006). For similar admission by Inna Gaister, also a child of repressed parents, see Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 231–232.

208. Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution*, 52–54, 81.

209. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 276–277.

210. Mirra Ginsburg, translator, *The Diary of Nina Kosterina* (New York: Avon Books, 1970), 139, 185.

211. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 357–358.

212. Frierson and Vilensky interviewed a woman who had a very successful career as manager of a store, but refused to join the Communist Party even after local officials pressured her to do so. She felt that corrupt people were in the party and she did not want to have any part in it. Later under Gorbachev she became involved in the Russian Orthodox Church. See Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 374.

213. “Dokladnaia zapiska predsedatel’ia DTK VTsIK N. A. Semashko v NKVD SSSR,” GARF, f. 5207, op. 3, d. 42, l. 41, reprinted in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 308–309.

214. “Prikaz narkoma vnutrennikh del SSSR No. 00309 “Ob ustraneniі nenormal’nostei v sodержanii detei repressirovannykh roditel’ei,”” 296–297. To deal with the situation, among

other steps, the report ordered that all “privileges” accorded to children of repressed parents, including extra food and clothing, were to be eliminated.

215. Tumanov, *Where We Buried the Sun*, 184–185.

216. Saunders, “Currents in the Soviet Opposition,” 19–21.

217. See for example, Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*; James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

218. Memoirs provide a window into the psychological impact of “hidden transcripts,” even if not addressed directly. In his memoir, *Children’s Home*, which is excerpted as “They’d Even Taken Away My Name,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 79–86, Mikhail Nikolaevsky is both describing and ruminating on the impact of his experiences in orphanages, the indoctrination, and the terrible contrasts between the conditions in the homes and the propaganda. He later became a dissident and spent fifteen years in camps as an adult before emigrating to the United States. Also see the memoir of a child of a prisoner who later became a dissident, L. Bogoraz, “Na kanikuly v Vorkutu,” *Teatr GULAGA*, 60–63. In *Gulag Voices* there is an interview with Feliks Arkadievich Serebrov, who was a child of a repressed father and who served four terms himself, twice on criminal charges and twice, after he became a dissident, on political charges. Interestingly, his father survived and remained a loyal Soviet patriot, which caused tensions between them. See “Bridging Separate Worlds,” interview with Feliks Arkadievich Serebrov, conducted by Emily D. Johnson, trans. Elizabeth Stine and Katherine R. Jolluck, in Gheith and Jolluck, *Gulag Voices*, 169–189.

219. Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution*, 80–81.

220. Baker and Gippenreiter, “The Effects of Stalin’s Purge,” 16; David Remnick, “The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go?” *The New Yorker*, Dec. 19 and 26, 2011, 97. Another example is Viktor Serbsky; he was born in a camp and grew up in a Vladivostok orphanage. He became a collector of Russian poetry and helped found a provincial branch of Memorial in Bratsk. See “Serbsky and Zakharyan Must Be Removed,” From the Memoirs of Viktor Serbsky, in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemies*, 130–135.

221. “Forty-three Children of Murdered Bolsheviks Protest Rehabilitation of Stalin,” September 24, 1967, first translated and published in the Summer 1970 *Fourth International* (London), reprinted in Saunders, *Samizdat: Voices of the Opposition*, 248–250.

222. Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 401–402.

223. Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 101–102; also discussed in Figes, *The Whisperers*, 552–553.

224. Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2000), 221–222, also note 22.

225. William Grimes, “Mikhail Shatrov, 78, Soviet Playwright,” *New York Times*, May 28, 2010, B11.

226. See his trilogy of biographies: *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1992); *Lenin: A New Biography* (New York: Free Press, 1994); *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

227. Kelly, *Children’s World*, 241–242.

228. Olga Adamova-Sliozberg recounts the tragic fate of a young Ukrainian girl who had been sentenced to twenty years and sent to the mines of Karaganda, in part because she had refused to submit to her interrogator. See Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” 76–78.

229. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 333.

230. See Vitzhum, *Torn Out by the Roots*, 114–115; Razgon also ascribes many violent acts to them in such works as *True Stories*.

231. “Iz vospominanii V. M. Lisovskogo ‘Zapiska o prebyvanii v nemetsko-fashistskikh lageriakh i posle samoosvobodzheniia,’” Archive of MILO Vozvrashchenie, in Vilensky, *Deti GULAGa*, 415–416; see translation in Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 271–272, 329.

232. Her brother did not emigrate with her; he managed to get her memoir published in Russia and helped her by obtaining access to her KGB files which are reproduced in the memoir. On Grigorenko, see Petro Grigorenko, *Memoirs* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980).

233. In 2007 Chris Swider, produced a documentary film interviewing Polish child survivors of the deportations into the Soviet Union; one of those interviewed was former Polish leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski, who at age 16 had been deported in 1941. See *Children in Exile: Recollections of Childhood in the Soviet Gulag* (2007), DVD, directed by Chris Swider (Opus 27 Productions and BulletProof Film, 2007).

234. Lyudmila Alexeyeva met Geyla while they were graduate students at MGU in the early 1950s. Alexeyeva tried to get her to publish her story in 1976 in an unofficial journal she was publishing, but Geyla refused, claiming the time was not yet right for the truth to come out. See Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 80–83.

235. Poignant examples include the testimony of N. Seredina, “The Apple Doesn’t Fall Far From the Tree,” in Hoffman, *The Littlest Enemy*, 105; and of Elda Fridman, 153–155.