



## Women, nation, and survival: Latvian women in Siberia 1941–1957

Mara Lazda

To cite this article: Mara Lazda (2005) Women, nation, and survival: Latvian women in Siberia 1941–1957, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 36:1, 1-12, DOI: [10.1080/01629770400000211](https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770400000211)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770400000211>



Published online: 28 Feb 2007.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 109



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)

## **Women, Nation, and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia 1941-1957**

Mara Lazda, Indiana University

**B**etween 1940 and 1954, the Soviet regime deported approximately 140,000 of a total population of 1.5 million Latvians to Siberia.<sup>1</sup> The mass deportations remain a central part of Latvia's national memory, but the proper place for the commemoration of this history is contested. Government leaders hold public services with prayer, song, and speeches on March 25 and June 14 -- the national days of mourning that mark the two largest mass deportations -- and Latvian flags fly on almost every building and home. Deportee survivors come together even in the smallest town. Others, however, especially from the younger generations, do not feel the need to remember this event, as was evident in 1997, when June 14 fell on a Saturday and thus interfered with summer fun.<sup>2</sup> Younger Latvians argue that their country should look to the future and not dwell in the past, particularly when that past is marked by suffering.

This essay provides insight into the discussion of commemoration and the development of a Latvian national memory of the Soviet deportations by focusing on the memoirs and oral histories of Latvian women sent to Siberia in 1941 and 1949.<sup>3</sup> Women's narratives reveal the complexity of this history as one of loss and victory in which gender played a central role in shaping the exile experience. Life in Siberia was clearly a period of isolation and despair for women deportees. Their pain was both emotional and physical. Torn from their families and homeland, they faced brutal Siberian winters and hard labor. The physical separation from Latvia was exacerbated by women's loss of traditional societal roles they associated with their place in the Latvian nation. As Katherine R. Jolluck has argued in her study of Polish women in the Soviet Union during World War II, losing control over traditional "gender norms" threatened women's sense of national identity.<sup>4</sup> For Latvian women in Siberian exile, however, these same gender norms became sources of strength. The narratives of loss therefore also reveal moments of victory and accomplishment. The women spoke with little bitterness and emphasized their ability to survive precisely because they were women. Latvian women negotiated relationships between fellow deportees and their overseers and adapted their concepts of gender norms to establish new relationships in order to survive.<sup>5</sup> Latvian

women's narratives reveal the close relationship between gender, survival, and nation identity in Siberian exile. Women deportees mobilized gender as a form of cultural resistance.<sup>6</sup>

This essay focuses on a sample drawn from approximately thirty written accounts and thirty oral histories of Siberian exile. Although this study thus serves only as an introduction to the analysis of Latvian women's narratives, even this selection points to the significance of gender in the deportation experience. Furthermore, the inclusion of oral histories considerably expands the types of experiences represented, as the authors of published memoirs usually represent populations from urban areas and with higher levels of education. The oral histories include interviews conducted by the author in 1996, 1997, and 1998<sup>7</sup> in rural Latvia -- Kurzeme and Latgale -- as well as samples from the National Oral History Archive in Riga.<sup>8</sup> Analysis focuses on women deportees who identified themselves as ethnic Latvians, although the deportations included Latvian citizens of other nationalities, including Russians, Jews, and Germans.<sup>9</sup>

The women in this study were victims of the two mass deportations on June 14, 1941 or March 25, 1949.<sup>10</sup> In 1941, the deportation targeted Latvians who were considered potential enemies of the regime, such as those active in the government or who simply appeared to be too nationalistic. In 1949, the Soviet government turned again to deportation to break resistance to the collectivization of agriculture and to recruit labor for Siberia. The people targeted this time were "kulaks", "bandits", nationalists, and their families. Wives of Latvian army officers and mothers of "counterrevolutionary" young men shared the guilt of their husbands and sons. In some cases the officers arrested women as "heads of household" in place of their husbands, who were in hiding or had been arrested earlier.<sup>11</sup> When wives were not at home, the officials searched for them and brought them home only to deport them.<sup>12</sup>

Soviet officials, who forced locals to guide them to homes, rounded up thousands of families in the middle of the night and told them to pack quickly. The hour or half-hour to prepare proved crucial to their survival. The food they packed fed them during transit to Siberia and the other items they brought -- clothes, personal treasures -- could be traded for food. The men who took the deportees to the train station and loaded them into the cattle cars were not always strangers and, in fact, at times tried to help. Vija noted, "The guards were not all inhuman (*necilvēki*)."<sup>13</sup> When in the 1949 deportations Aina's mother refused to pack anything, the guard, who was a young student the family knew, said, "[W]hat do you mean, you don't need anything?" He went to the pantry and put flour, maybe some peas,

too, in the cart, and then he went to the closet and found some clothes."<sup>14</sup> Deportees stressed that they did not blame individuals for their fate.

Although family members may have begun the deportation process together, all interviewees stressed that in 1941 the separation of men from women and families was an integral part of the deportation process. Soviet guards directed men to different cattle cars once the deportees reached the railroad embarkation point.<sup>15</sup> Some women remembered that the men who arrested them had advised packing men's and women's things in separate bags, but they had not suspected at the time that their paths would diverge. Lidija remembered that, in 1941, the surprise separation at the train station was presented as a civilized gesture. "They announced that men would ride in separate wagons because otherwise it would not be comfortable, we'll all be together in the end. We naively believed this."<sup>16</sup> It was often the case that women, children, and the elderly were sent to labor colonies where they had a chance for survival. Men, by contrast, were taken to the more brutal labor or prison camps, organized into penal battalions, or simply shot. In 1949, families likely remained together, but women and men still faced different fates. Men were often sent to work away from the family, while women were more likely to work on a local collective farm.<sup>17</sup>

Siberian exile confronted women on an intimate level and thus challenged their identities as women. This is evident in the concern expressed about the changing relationship of women to their bodies that appeared as soon as they began transit in the cattle cars. The deportation experience destroyed women's ability to control their appearance and to take care of their bodily functions. Modesty and privacy were not luxuries for them, but an essential part of their identities as Latvian women; they emphasized the unfamiliarity of these conditions in contrast to that to which they were accustomed in Latvia.<sup>18</sup> It is striking that almost all of the narratives of both men and women immediately addressed the wagon "toilet", which was usually just a hole in the floor. Women were less concerned with the discomfort of the "toilet", but instead lamented the loss of self-esteem they experienced by being forced to expose their bodily functions to others. Vineta recalled her feeling of humiliation:

[T]he first task was to provide some kind of screen for the toilet, where we put a sheet and some wheels to good use. [But] it was impossible to take care of nature's needs in the cattle car, and, having lost all sense of shame, we begged to be let out, and right there by the wagon I saw a woman, who, with tears flowing down her face, was taking care of her needs.<sup>19</sup>

Even in oral interviews, where deportees may have been more reluctant to discuss bodily functions, this aspect of transit stands out in women's

memories. Aina stated: “Now it seems a bit comical, how we all rushed out, thousands of people. We could not go anywhere, of course, so we all lined up ... you almost had to be careful, that you were not in someone’s way.”<sup>20</sup>

The humiliation first mentioned in descriptions of transit grew during life in exile and women resented that they had been reduced to thinking about bodily functions and survival. Laima wrote her friend:

[F]orgive me for my prosaicism, but I have such a longing for the warmth of a water closet. It seems unimaginable: to sit in a warm, small room -- most importantly, to sit! I could even spend a week there ... How far have I sunk in my vulgarity, that I long for such a place, not only for opera and theater.<sup>21</sup>

This passage draws attention to the class background of the author as well as to her gender. Laima’s letters clearly reveal her upper-class background; one of the main topics of her letters is how much she missed ballet lessons. Class identity also appeared as a dividing line between different Latvian deportee populations: one woman wrote that while the Latvians got along well, there was initially some tension between the “1941 deportees” and “1949 deportees” as the latter appeared to be more wealthy.<sup>22</sup> The lament for lost privacy, however, is found in the stories of women of various educational and economic backgrounds; Beatrice, who completed four years of school and lived in rural Latvia, also immediately addressed the facilities: “[G]ood thing we had brought buckets with us also.”<sup>23</sup> Class distinction appears to have played only a minor role in women’s interpretation of privacy.

Women tried to compensate for the loss of modesty by paying attention to appearance. Presenting the appearance of a “proper” woman was a way to maintain their identities as Latvian women. Their dress distinguished them from the local population. Vizma described her reaction to the people she saw when they reached their destination:

A general feeling of gloom. All the people, dressed the same all in gray, all depressing. Women in white scarves up to their eyebrows ... In all the stations crowds with open curiosity eye the well-dressed unusual foreigners.<sup>24</sup>

The freedom to distinguish themselves by appearance was soon challenged by the need to survive brutal weather conditions. Any sense of vanity gave way to the need for warmth that made the difference between life and death:

The first work clothes we were allowed to buy with our own money were cotton jackets padded with deer fur, cotton, and similar pants. The filling

kept falling out of the bottom. The two layers of cotton then did not provide much warmth. The jacket was made of striped flannel, but the pants -- had a purplish floral pattern. At that point appearance was irrelevant to us.<sup>25</sup>

Precious clothes were traded for food: "I had a nice suit, I gave away my suit, we gave away some dresses -- we traded those for potatoes."<sup>26</sup>

Thus, in the beginning of their narratives, women focused on their suffering as it related to the body -- both in terms of bodily needs and in terms of the socially constructed ideas of appearance. This attention to the body, however, was also connected to the nation, for the Siberian exile experience challenged accepted gender norms associated with Latvian national identity. Deportees explicitly made this comparison in their narratives.

In addition to this loss of identification with the body, Latvian women lost a sense of their understanding of the traditional female role in society. Women had to abandon the distinction between traditional roles of men and women both at home and at work. Women repeatedly described their jobs in Siberia as "men's work". Some women were fortunate to receive an easy job assignment that kept them inside sewing or knitting for the directors' wives, doing the bookkeeping, or nursing in local clinics. Others, however, were sent to do physical labor in farming, forestry, and fishing industries, which they distinguished as "men's jobs":

In the beginning while we were still small we took care of the sheep, but then later [we worked] as milkers, then we were forced to go to the tractors too to help, so we even did such men's jobs, even though we weren't even adults yet.<sup>27</sup>

Vizma remembered:

The first days of work are really like a comedy of errors, not like a job well done, but like a comedy without laughter, but with tears ... The supervisor swears and spits at us. I'm glad I don't understand Russian. The women who do blush and cry. There is practically no woman who knows how to harvest the fields because if at home the roadside needed plowing or cows needed food -- the men did this.<sup>28</sup>

In interwar Latvia, they said, women were not required to perform heavy jobs. In Siberia, they observed, "the work was horrible. We had to pull logs. My sister and I had certainly carried branches and chopped wood [on our farm in Latvia], but pulling such huge logs, that we were never forced to do."<sup>29</sup> Women despaired not because they were unable to do the work asked of them, but because they were asked to do tasks they associated with traditional men's roles.

Life in Siberia redefined traditional social and personal relationships, but deportees coped by turning away from excessive emotion. This did not render the experience less painful, but women resigned themselves to their fate. Lidija despaired when her employer left the labor settlement and a man who had served ten years in a forced labor camp replaced him. When this new commandant suggested Lidija stay with him, she:

stomped the ground in anger and told him to quit kidding ... He replied that he meant it seriously. He gave me bread, sugar, and tried to help me in all kinds of ways. He showed he cared for me. When there is no one at all to help and care, then your heart is thankful and receptive.

In the fall, he came for me [at the labor settlement]. I did not have any other choice. I went with him.<sup>30</sup>

Vija met one of her mother's acquaintances from Latvia:

She asked me that evening, what should she do? A KGB official had made an offer. If she spends the night with him, then he will let her stay there with her child. If not, then he will take the child and send her together with us to the Far East. I was only seventeen. What kind of advice could I give? But she did not come with us after all. I guess the KGB official made good use of his situation.<sup>31</sup>

Both Lidija and Vija concluded their stories with a vague summary of events and resignation to fate. There was no condemnation of women who were forced to enter sexual relationships in order to save themselves or their families. Nevertheless, this gendered attack remained an acute memory that also affected also men. Men, too, suffered sexual humiliation. Auseklis described his own exploitation:

We received a notice in the village that all men born in a certain year had to show up at the school for a medical examination. The notice also threatened that failure to appear would result in a war tribunal ... At the appointed time five of us young men ... showed up at the school ... At the table there was a young [female] medic and teacher. We expected to see also some representative in an official uniform, but no, just these two. We were told to undress completely and to stand in front of the commission together. Embarrassed, we tried to cover up this and that, but the medic did not like this. "Hands at your sides!" What could we do. After such an order we felt unarmed ...

Later, it turned out, there was no commission ... the girls just wanted to get a look at the village boys.<sup>32</sup>

Siberian exile thus delivered a double blow to Latvian deportees, first by physically severing ties to Latvia and then by challenging attempts to reproduce or protect the gendered roles they had in Latvia. These gendered roles, however, became a source of resistance. Indeed, women felt that they derived their strength from their gendered identity. Stories often contrasted the “innate strength” of women under the harsh conditions of Siberian exile to the apparent weakness of the boys and few men present. Women explained that male identity was related to physical strength and control over their lives; therefore it was natural for men to suffer more than women. Signija spoke of her father’s early death in the camps and said:

Women are supposedly physically stronger, that is one point, but he had also given up psychologically. But really, it’s obvious; men are like that. He was also quite big, and all the big ones died first of starvation.<sup>33</sup>

The deportees came to rely on the physical strength of even girls; for example when people were needed to help bury Ann’s mother in the frozen solid ground, she wrote, “Girls volunteered more than boys. Boys suffered more from the constant feeling of hunger, and every time we needed a bit of strength outside work, girls were the only volunteers.”<sup>34</sup> Women did not question their ability to take on traditionally male roles, but they did express anger because exile imposed these roles on them. As deportees adapted to these roles, however, they also reclaimed more control over traditional gender norms and the family sphere.

Although gender identity was linked strongly to national identity, it also bridged national differences. Latvian women found that their roles as mothers and wives helped them form a sense of solidarity with deportees of other nationalities and the local population. “In the beginning,” Nina remembered, “when we were brought into the kolkhoz yard all the women ran out to look at us. They said they heard that cannibals were coming, but [now they said] ‘look, they’re like us.’ Yes, in the beginning they held back, they had heard that we were bandits, we beat up Russians, but actually in the end, no, the local people were good people.”<sup>35</sup> There was, thus, little tension between Latvians and other ethnic populations based on national differences -- their strong identities as women crossed potential barriers between nationalities. They saw themselves as victims of a shared fate:

People [diminutive *cilvēciņi*] there lived in poverty. Men had been taken from every family, and they had died in the war, so more women [than men] worked there ... They also picked potatoes with us. Life was hard for them also.<sup>36</sup>



Another woman wrote:

The sharpest memories of the first year in exile in the Siberian kolkhoz were the unfathomable cold-heartedness of the young toward everything living. But I also remember the old Russian women who, with a bit of bread or a container of milk hidden under their aprons, were at their gates waiting for us as we came home from work.<sup>37</sup>

The shared experiences with women of other nationalities and the shared fate with other deportees cultivated relationships that helped Latvian women adapt to life in Siberia. The deportation experience had thrown all of the deportee lots together. This did not eliminate national identities, but it did override potential antagonisms. For example, various celebrations, such as the Latvian independence day, were celebrated with

our brothers in fate, the Poles. There was meat stew on the table (meat and water) and two potatoes each (each person brought her own potatoes, but we bought the bird from a local hunter). When we sang the anthem, we all cried, even the Poles. We later celebrated the Polish independence day the same way.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, their stories indicate that they could turn the challenge of Siberian exile on its head. Although they lamented “men’s work”, they were also proud of their accomplishments. Vija said, “After we had lived there for a while, we Latvian women began to impress the locals.”<sup>39</sup> They speak of a Latvian reputation, “The Latvian diligence, honesty, order, was a surprise, and, of course, was appreciated.”<sup>40</sup>

Eventually, as restrictions were lifted, women were able to attend school, earn money, and, occasionally, marry and raise a family. Most of the women returned to Latvia as soon as possible. The dream of returning home was repeatedly noted: “The only thought that kept us going [was that] we have to survive today. Tomorrow the war will end and we’ll all go home.”<sup>41</sup> Economic conditions were perhaps better in Siberia for the deportees than the life that awaited them in Latvia, but as Nina stated, “We knew there was nothing left in Latvia, but nothing can replace your homeland.”<sup>42</sup>

When the deportees were allowed to return home in the mid-1950s, they could not automatically resume their lives. They returned to Latvia, but only rarely were they able to return to the homes from which they had been deported. Deportees were not welcomed back with open arms. Some were looked upon with suspicion or even fear. Vija noted that upon return to Latvia, “We did not associate with any strangers. We knew our aunts, my cousin’s family, my brothers. My brothers later married [after the second time we were deported], they both married deportees. So we were

all in the same situation.”<sup>43</sup> The deportation experience continued to shape personal relationships throughout these women’s lives.

These women’s narratives reflect the challenges of national memory construction in Latvia today, but they also reveal ways in which to convey the significance of the deportee experience in the lives of all generations and groups of Latvia’s peoples. Women felt the responsibility for the survival of family and nation both physically and spiritually. Moreover, these gendered relationships became important tools for survival as women were able to relate to other nationalities by understanding their shared suffering as women. They had all lost fathers, husbands, and children in the war. These women’s narratives provide insight into life in Siberia as a life of challenge and of strength as well as of suffering, and help us also to understand the complexity of the memory of World War II in Latvia today. The stories of Latvian deportees broaden the definition of resistance and increase our understanding of the deportees’ efforts to reconstruct life and maintain their personal and national identity in exile.

### Acknowledgment

Research for this essay was supported by an Indiana University Russian and East European Institute Andrew W. Mellon Endowment Grant-in-Aid for Research (1996) and the Indiana University Office of International Programs International Educational Enhancement Grant (1996). Versions of this essay were presented at the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies Convention at Johns Hopkins University in June 7, 2002 and at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies National Convention in Toronto, Ontario on November 22, 2003. I am grateful to Professor Tiina Kirss and Professor Benjamin Frommer for their insightful comments.

### Notes

1. Estimates vary. Heinrihs Strods notes that scholars’ assessments range from 180,000 to 216,000 deportees during the first Soviet occupation from 1940 to 1941 and in the postwar period from 1945 to 1953. See Strods, “Genocīda galvenās formas un mērķi Latvijā 1940-1985,” in Anda Līce, ed., *Via dolorosa: Staļinisma upuru liecības*, vol. 3, Riga: Preses Nams, 1995, p. 20. Of those 15,081 deported on June 14, 1941, 47.7 percent were men and 35.1 percent were women. Heinrihs Strods, “Septītā plauja (1940-1949),” in Anda Līce, ed., *Via dolorosa: Staļinisma upuru liecības*, vol. 2, Riga: Liesma, 1993, p. 11. In 1949, the percentage of women deportees considerably increased. Of 42,975 deportees, 58.1 percent were women and 41.9 percent were men. Sindija Dimanta and Indulis Zālīte, “Četrdesmito gadu deportāciju struktūranalīze,” in Tadeušs Puisāns, ed., *Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā 1940-1990: Rakstu krājums*, Stockholm: Memento, 2000, p.148.
2. A Riga newspaper asked “Is June 14th a day to rejoice?” and listed the numerous dances, beer festivals, and sports events that were planned for June 14. *Neatkarīga Rīta Avīze*, June 13, 1997.
3. The number of oral histories and memoirs of Soviet deportation, labor camp, and gulag experiences continues to grow since glasnost and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Recent works include: Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002; O. Nosova, *V objatijach udava: Vospominaniia uznitsy GULAGa*. St. Petersburg: SPbGTU, 2001; Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000; Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia*. New York: Routledge, 1998; Simeon Vilensky, ed., *Till My Tale is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag*, trans. John Crowfoot, et al. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999; Meinhard Stark, *"Ich muss sagen, wie es war": Deutsche Frauen des Gulag*. Berlin: Metropol, 1999.

4. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, 87.
5. Karlis Racevskis also comments on the absence of hatred or of a desire for revenge in Latvian narratives of deportation. Racevskis suggests that in fact the act of writing memories restores deportees' humanity lost in exile and gives them power over their former captors. Racevskis, *Modernity's Pretenses Making Reality Fit Reason from Candide to the Gulag*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, pp. 119-20.
6. On Polish women and the relationship between cleanliness and resistance see Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, 150-51.
7. The author's interviews are included in the National Oral History Archive Collection and are cited as part of the holdings.
8. Written accounts have also influenced oral interviews, and interviewees make reference to memoirs such as Melānija Vanaga's multivolume *Dvēseļu pulcēšana*. Riga: Karogs, 1993-1996. As Vieda Skultans notes, "Latvian narratives have a marked literary quality: lives are heavily theorized before they ever reach anthropologists such as myself." Skultans, *Testimony of Lives*, xiii. In the Russian case, gulag memoirs have had a particularly strong influence in oral recollections. See Irina Sherbakova, "The Gulag in Memory," in *Memory and Totalitarianism*. International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, vol. 1, ed., Luisa Passerini. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 103-15.

The study of memory and history has grown in Latvia in recent years. See Roberts Ķīlis, ed., *Atmiņa un vēsture: No antropoloģijas līdz psiholoģijai*. Riga: NIMS, 1996 and Māra Zirnīte, ed., *Spogulis: Latvijas mutvārdu vēsture*. Riga: University of Latvia Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, 2000.

9. In 1941, the deportee population was 80.4 percent Latvian, 12.4 percent Jewish, 5.3 percent Russian, 0.3 percent German, and 1.6 percent "other"; in 1949, the deportee population was 95.6 percent Latvian, 1.8 percent Russian, 0.01 percent German, and 2.59 percent "other." See Dimanta and Zālīte, "Četrdesmito gadu deportāciju," 148.
10. Most of the written memoirs used in this study have been published in the four-volume series, Anda Līce, ed., *Via dolorosa: Staļinisma upuru liecības*. Riga: Preses Nams and Riga: Liesma, 1990-1995. Many of these have been translated into English. See Astrid Sics, comp. and trans., *We Sang through Tears: Stories of Survival in Siberia*. Riga: Jāņa Rozes Apgāds, 1999. In this study, where reference is made to published memoirs, the author's name is included. In the case of oral histories, a pseudonym is provided.

The National Oral History Archive (hereafter, NOHA) in Riga at the University of Latvia's Institute of Philosophy and Sociology holds more than one thousand interviews. The NOHA and the author apply the life story approach in conducting interviews. The interviewer may provide guiding questions, but no set questionnaire is used. The goal in using this technique is to record *how* the interviewee remembers his or her experience. For more on the NOHA see <http://www.dzivesstasts.lv>.

11. Iveta Šķinķe, "1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācija arestētās un izsūtītās sievietes. Ieskats problemā," in Latvijas vēsturnieku komisija, ed., *1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācija: Noziegums pret cilvēci*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Apgāds, 2002, pp. 332-33.
12. Some women escaped this fate. See NOHA, number 504. Ruta reported the account of her grandmother. Ruta's mother had gone to visit her mother. Although Ruta's mother was found and deported, her grandmother was allowed to stay because the "criminal" -- Ruta's father -- was her son-in-law and a relative by marriage only.
13. Vizma Stūre, "Aiz mežiem, mežiem ... mājas," in *Via dolorosa*, vol. 3, p. 67.
14. NOHA, number 367.
15. Deputy Minister of Interior I. Serov instructed that officers should bring all family members together to the embarkation point and only then separate men from their families. Serov suggested that the arresting officers could ask men to pack their belongings in a separate suitcase and give the reason that men would undergo a health inspection separately from the women and children. Families were allowed to pack up to 100 kilograms. See the order as published in Elmārs Pelkaus, ed., *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā 1939-1991: Dokumentu krājums*. Rīga: Nordik, 1999, pp. 146-51.
16. Lidija Vilnis, "Manas dzīves melnā lapa," in *Via dolorosa*, vol. 3, p. 98.
17. Latvian men and women were also imprisoned or sent to prison camps, but this study focuses on the "special settlements" primarily in the Omsk, Krasnojarsk, and Tomsk regions. Edwin Bacon outlines the different types of camps and labor settlements in *The Gulag at War: Stalin's Forced Labour System in the Light of the Archives*. New York: New York University Press, 1994, p. xii. *Spetspereselenets*, *trudposelenets*, and *spetsposelenets* were different categories of people who, like the people in this study, lived in labor settlements with no personal documents and no rights to leave.
18. Katherine Jolluck describes similar situations in the experiences of Polish women who were deported to the Soviet Union in World War II. Jolluck makes the distinction between the "generic" and the "gendered" bodies of Polish women in war. The „generic” body, Jolluck writes, was limited to the physical needs of the body, but the „gendered” body included the traditional social role of the female body. Polish women, therefore, saw attacks on their individual bodies as attacks on the body of the Polish nation. See Jolluck, "Gender, Identity, and the Polish experience of War, 1939-1945," Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995, p. 88.
19. Vineta Studāne, "Dzīve ir nomocīta," in Anda Līce, ed., *Via dolorosa: staļinisma upuru liecības*, vol. 1. Rīga: Liesma, 1990, p. 376.
20. NOHA, number 367.
21. Laima Veckalne, "Piecas lappuses no čekas arhīva. Vēstules," in *Via dolorosa*, vol. 3, p. 189.
22. Erika Krauja, "Ne visi ir zvēri," in *Via dolorosa*, vol. 3, p. 222.
23. NOHA, number 366. This is not to say that class differences completely disappeared, but it is clear that understanding of traditional women's roles and of privacy cut across class lines. Jolluck argues in the case of Polish women in the Soviet Union, exile "leveled" social differences that had existed in Poland. Jolluck, "Gender, Identity, and the Polish Experience of War," 261.
24. Stūre, "Aiz mežiem," 66.
25. Spīdola Bierne, "Tēva un mates piemiņai," in *Via dolorosa*, 258.
26. NOHA, number 588.
27. NOHA, number 589.
28. Stūre, "Aiz mežiem," 77.
29. NOHA, number 366.
30. Vilnis, "Manas dzīves," 108-109.
31. NOHA, number 302.
32. Auseklis Helvigs, "Aiz Jenisejas rietēja saule," in *Via dolorosa* vol. 3, 129.

33. NOHA, number 301.
34. Bierne, "Tēva un mātes piemiņai," 262.
35. Bierne, "Tēva un mātes piemiņai," 262.
36. Irēne Dumpe, "Musu lielas 'rūpju bērns,'" in *Via dolorosa*, vol. 1, 335.
37. NOHA, number 588.
38. NOHA, number 589.

The difference between narratives of Polish women and Latvian women regarding their relationships to the local population and Russians is striking. Jolluck notes that unfamiliar perceptions of traditional gender roles in fact contributed to the division between the two populations and the Polish women's disapproval of Russian women. See Jolluck, "Gender, Identity and the Polish Experience of War," 413.

39. Krauja, "Ne visi," 205.
40. Krauja, "Ne visi," 207.
41. NOHA, number 302.
42. Bierne, "Tēva un mātes piemiņai," 269.
43. Bierne, "Tēva un mātes piemiņai," 255.
44. NOHA, number 588.
45. NOHA, number 302.