



## Leningrad: State of Siege

*Michael Jones*

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“All offers of surrender from Leningrad must be rejected,” wrote Adolph Hitler on September 29, 1941, at the outset of Operation Barbarossa. “In this struggle for survival, we have no interest in keeping even a proportion of the city’s population alive.” During the famed 900-day siege of Leningrad, the German High Command deliberately planned to eradicate the city’s population through starvation. Viewing the Slavs as sub-human, Hitler embarked on a vicious program of ethnic cleansing. By the time the siege ended in January 1944, almost a million people had died. Those who survived would be marked permanently by what they endured as the city descended into chaos.

In *Leningrad*, military historian Michael Jones chronicles the human story of this epic siege. Drawing on newly available eyewitness accounts and diaries, he reveals the true horrors of the ordeal—including stories long-suppressed by the Soviets of looting, criminal gangs, and cannibalism. But he also shows the immense psychological resources on which the citizens of Leningrad drew to survive against desperate odds. At the height of the siege, for instance, an extraordinary live performance of Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony profoundly strengthened the city’s will to resist.

A riveting account of one of the most harrowing sieges of world history, *Leningrad* also portrays the astonishing power of the human will in the face of even the direst catastrophe.

## **Leningrad: State of Siege Details**

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Author : Michael Jones

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## From Reader Review Leningrad: State of Siege for online ebook

### Olethros says

-Sobre la Ciudad Heroica y más sobre las experiencias de los implicados que puramente bélica.-

Género. Historia.

Lo que nos cuenta. Relato de los acontecimientos que rodearon los 872 días de asedio de la ciudad de Leningrado durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, desde septiembre de 1941 cuando el Grupo de Ejércitos Norte cierra el cerco y se aplica la estrategia de evitar asaltos o rendiciones con la intención de resolver el asunto condenando a los residentes a morir de hambre, pasando por la ruptura del bloqueo durante la Operación Centella, hasta la liberación completa de los alrededores de la ciudad alejando el frente de sus aledaños.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

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### Justin says

Jones has done a large amount of research to write about the suffering of Leningrad's population during World War II. The Soviets after the war tried to repress the tale because of how grim the situation was in Leningrad. The book does a great job explaining how the tactics by both sides that led to siege of Leningrad. The first three chapters explain the war and then Jones starts telling the stories of those trapped in Leningrad.

The book seemed to get bogged down in the middle by the sheer number of stories and some repetition of similar stories. Jones does a great job of not holding back and telling some truly horrific stories. The last third of the book was my favorite, the orchestra, and the triumph of the human spirit really was an amazing read.

If you are at all interested in history, anthropology, survivor horror, or human nature you need to read this book. This is a story that needs to be told and if you can handle the subject matter you really should pick this up and read it.

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### Alona says

3.5 stars.

I can't read books about WWII and not be sucked into it, be shocked by it and touched by the heroism of the victims and survivors.

This non-fiction book tells the story of the siege of Leningrad.

The horrible 900 days siege (two and a half years!!) that started soon after the Nazis declared war on Russia.

Most of the book is told from diaries of survivors of the siege, people who died in the siege, soldiers and

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historians.

It is shocking and humbling at once.

The first chapter tells the story of the invasion (operation Barbarossa) from the POV of surviving German soldiers or diaries of fallen ones.

The second chapter is the story of the invasion from Red Army soldiers POV.

The next chapter is mostly about the leaders of Leningrad. Of how they operated, their twisted way of thinking, how human lives meant almost nothing for them...

Of how Stalin's paranoia made him chose the wrong and under qualified ppl to lead the city and the army, only because he knew they won't betray \*him\*.

Then, we got to the part of the people of Leningrad.

The unbelievable acts of heroism, desperation, sadness...

Also the ugly side of the starvation, the ppl who ate books, wallpapers, glue.

The fear, the cold of the winter, of living at -40 degrees, with no electricity, no petrol, no running water.

Of small children fighting it all by themselves, after everyone around them died...

The last part is of the Russians FINALLY getting the upper hand, the "victory", and how the survivors of Leningrad did their best to move on after the years of horror.

Very very informative book, but it is not written in a way that "moved" me as deep as it should.

Many parts written too "dry" for my liking, and some parts where repetitive.

Still a good book about Operation Barbarossa and the siege of Leningrad.

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### **Andrew says**

This is not a book about military strategy but instead about heroism and the strength of the human spirit when faced with adversity. The deliberate attempt to starve a city's inhabitants is only worsened by the Russian leaderships lack of desire to reveal the truth to the rest of the world and to not try everything in its power to feed its people. The author does not shy away from the horror of such things as cannibalism but it is incidental to the suffering of the people of Leningrad which is authentically revealed as well as can be expected. If you want to be reminded of how life was for civilians on the Eastern front during WW2 then seek this book out you won't be disappointed!

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### **Sebastián Vilugrón says**

Un libro centrado principalmente en los escalofriantes padecimientos de la población civil de Leningrado durante la SGM. Un relato en donde se exponen de forma descarnada el hambre, el frío, la miseria y degradación humana producto de la guerra, y sin embargo, también hay espacio para mostrarnos acerca de quienes nunca perdieron la esperanza y entereza bajo padecimientos tan terribles. Jones recoge fuentes de primera mano sin olvidar el apartado de fotografías e imágenes que resultan realmente impactantes. Un libro muy recomendado.

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### **Teresa Ferreira says**

Livro de uma dureza imensa, mas também de uma esperança no ser humano, que culmina com a frase final do livro, retirada do diário de Krukov, sobrevivente do cerco - "Combatíamos para conservar uma face humana, para nos mantermos seres humanos. E ganhámos a batalha." A que custo...

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### **Adrian says**

A decent account of the siege of Leningrad but with many grammatical errors in the kindle version. If you are wanting to read this fascinating read about a very important date in history than I would highly recommend either the paperback or hardback version.

P.s This book would have got 4stars if it was not for the grammatical errors.

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### **Yair Zumaeta Acero says**

Dentro de las innumerables batallas que se dieron durante la campaña oriental de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, una de las más brutales, despiadadas e inhumanas tal vez fue el sitio de Leningrado. 872 días soportaron sus habitantes lo inenarrable entre fríos inviernos rusos, bombardeos constantes alemanes, incompetencia de los funcionarios soviéticos, hambrunas despiadadas, raciones que ni siquiera superaban los 125 gramos de pan por persona, saqueos, canibalismo, ausencia de electricidad, calefacción, agua corriente o alcantarillado... muerte, desolación y destrucción por doquier. La tragedia humana vivida en dicho asedio es descrita con soltura, amenidad y erudición por parte del historiador inglés Michael Jones, quien se detiene lo justo en los aspectos militares y se dedica a narrar la tragedia humana de uno de los peores asedios de la historia humana. A partir de cartas, diarios y entrevistas con los sobrevivientes, Jones reconstruye el día a día de los habitantes y refugiados de la ciudad, y el espiral de locura y deshumanización en la que muchos cayeron cuando el hambre se empezó a apoderar de Leningrado, con desgarradores testimonios sobre la serie de porquerías a las que la gente tuvo que acudir para suplir la ausencia de calorías, incluido el canibalismo. Pero más aterrador que eso, resulta el relato de la cruel indiferencia de las autoridades de Leningrado y los miembros del partido comunista hacia el sufrimiento de sus habitantes, su ineptitud e incapacidad para mantener la ciudad abastecida y repeler el asalto alemán.

Un libro que tal vez no gustará a quienes buscan más información sobre tácticas e historia militar, pues contiene lo justo para contextualizar al lector, pero que resulta ampliamente recomendado para todos aquellos que buscan conocer la historia a partir de los testimonios directos de quienes padecieron en carne propia los sufrimientos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Un testimonio de lo que padeció el pueblo de Leningrado, de su resistencia, de su supervivencia y ante todo, de su esfuerzo para mantener su humanidad. "Lo que soportó y venció Leningrado trascendió la lucha de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. El increíble heroísmo de la ciudad pertenece a una escala más grandiosa e intemporal".

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### **Nicholas Grace says**

Leningrad is a hero city.

If you read this book you will get a picture of a city that was a victim to the extremes. As Soviet Leaders

worked to impose their ideology on the people and purge dissenters it led to tragic events. This book is very brutal and not for those easily sensitive. It uses many first-hand accounts from those caught up in the siege and very effectively shows a divide between the population and the city administration. The structure of this book is very clear. Starting with the build-up and the apparent miss-management which led to Leningrad being besieged, the author then takes us through the events starting with the German invasion and then about the Red Army and City Leadership. You cannot feel any sympathy with these officials who appear highly corrupt and in some cases almost as much the enemy as the Germans. This is a book about the population caught up between the two sides and offers a harrowing reality. Why did I give it 4 stars? The one thing that bothered me was the referencing. I like to see clear footnotes or endnotes. There were notes at the end of the book but these were not specific.

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### **Paul says**

Un frickin' believable. How can humans behave like this towards each other? Why is this story not taught in US schools?

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### **Carolyn says**

This is a pretty good general history of the seige of Leningrad from 1941-44, containing lots of information that was new to me. The personal stories relating the horrors of everyday life for people both in Leningrad and on the front lines had a tremendous cumulative effect.

The stories about the government bureaucats and their families eating and having heat and electricity at the very same time that the ordinary citizens were starving to death in the cold and dark make very clear what Stalinism represented in the USSR. There were of course opportunists and crooks operating during the seige (such vermin always emerge during times of crisis and social breakdown), but the majority of the citizens acted like true communists - that is, they helped each other and demonstrated a determination to live that seems astounding to us here in the comfortable West in the 21st Century.

It behooves citizens of the U.S. and its European allies in WWII to remember who made possible the defeat of Hitler and the Third Reich: the USSR. Without the courage and sacrifice of the Soviet Citizens and the Red Army, Hitler's Wehrmacht would have concentrated on the Western front and likely invaded England. However, it was the Soviet Union's eventual defeat of Hitler's armies that made victory in Europe possible.

Although Michael Jones doesn't come across as a Marxist, the vignettes he does include confirm what true Marxists have always said about the Stalinist bureaucracy.

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### **Khoa Dang says**

The true horror of wars can never be fully expressed in words. It brings about endless destruction, suffering and death. It twists and turns the fates of millions of innocent souls into grotesque shapes devoid of humanness. The scars of wars are imprinted on the psyche of generation after generation in the aftermath. And yet, in the face of seemingly insurmountable adversities come the extraordinary strength and resilience

of the human spirit. In the years of living hell between 1941 and 1944, the citizens of Leningrad had proved it with their optimism, solidarity, the love for life and, above all, courage. "Courage is not acting without fear. It is acting in spite of it."

"That winter, death looked straight into our eyes, and stared long, without faltering. It wanted to hypnotise us, like a boa constrictor hypnotises its intended victim, stripping him of his will and subjugating him. But those who sent us so much death miscalculated. They underestimated our voracious hunger for life."

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## **Iceman says**

Iniciei o ano de 2013 a ler sobre a 2ª Guerra Mundial e acabo o ano a ler sobre um dos piores e mais terríveis episódios deste conflito: O cerco de Leninegrado.

Aquando da leitura da obra de Martin Gilbert, um dado sobressaiu: de todos os países envolvidos no conflito, a União Soviética foi aquele que mais perdas humanas teve. Entre civis e militares calcula-se que morreram vinte milhões de pessoas!

Nesta presente obra, esta evidência ressalta com toda a força e percebemos também a causa de tanto morticínio. O autor refere, por variadíssimas vezes que muitos factos só foram conhecidos publicamente após o fim da União Soviética e que muitos dados ainda estão por conhecer. Ou seja, é claro que muitas dessas vítimas se deveram a incúria de políticos e chefias militares que demonstraram uma total desprezo pela vida humana. São aqui relatados, não só as causas que colocaram à frente do exército chefias vaidosas e incompetentes, como também da instabilidade dos seus líderes, inclusivamente Estaline, que não só mandavam os soldados para a morte como também foram um dos grandes responsáveis pelo cerco de Leninegrado.

E é assustador o que este livro revela, mais assustador quando sabemos que o que aconteceu pode vir a acontecer outra vez, pois a essência do Ser Humano é maldosa e a História repete-se vezes sem conta, pois este cerco pode ser a que melhor está documentado, mas não é caso único na História onde uma força sitiadora tenta conquistar pela fome uma cidade.

Durante 872 dias (entre 1941 e 1944) as forças alemãs sitiaram a cidade condenando à fome milhões de civis. Foi uma atitude propositada, os próprios soldados alemães tinham disso consciência e há inúmeras provas que o atestam. E é baseado em relatos dos próprios sitiados, a maioria escritos em diários agora em exposição num museu dedicado ao cerco, que o autor vai construindo um cenário monstruoso e terrífico do quotidiano dos cidadãos e pelo que passaram.

Confesso que em muitas alturas tive de parar de ler tal a agonia que me metia. Casos de canibalismo de virar o estomago são narrados de uma forma crua, tornando este episódio ainda mais brutal, pois num conflito armado até podemos perceber os combates, mas é inimaginável conceber a angústia da fome ao ponto de fazer seres humanos matar outros para os comerem. De bandos de canibais organizados que fomentaram mercados negros de carne humana e isso com o beneplácito indirecto dos dirigentes da própria cidade. Declaradamente foram 1.400 pessoas presas por actos de canibalismo e 300 executadas, no entanto facilmente se percebe que foram muito, mas mesmo muitos mais casos, assustadoramente muitos mais.

Não conhecia esse lado, propositadamente escondido da opinião pública e que inclusive Martin Gilbert omite, não sei se propositadamente ou não, na sua obra "Segunda Guerra Mundial", mas confesso que foi o aspecto que mais me enojou mas que acabou por não me surpreender, pois e, repito, a História está cheia de factos desses.

Um livro brutal que revela, uma vez mais, a essência do Ser Humano e do que o mesmo é capaz de fazer ao seu congénere (para o bem e para o mal), no entanto é uma obra que revela também a enorme capacidade de resistência e de adaptação que o Ser Humano revela quando confrontado com situações extremas.

Uma leitura perturbadora, nada aconselhável a estômagos fracos.

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### **Nuno says**

O relato do que a história teima em não traduzir em números!

Michael Jones apresenta-nos outro magnífico livro sobre a opressão que os nazis realizaram sobre Leninegrado. São inúmeras as passagens que refletem o horror vivido em Leninegrado durante os 872 dias que durou o cerco, sendo "impossível" de contabilizar o número de mortes no final da opressão. Ninguém tem interesse em divulgar as perdas humanas já que os valores seriam catastróficos, no livro são apresentadas 2 referências: primeiro cerca de 600 mil mortes e depois a rondar o milhão e duzentas mil, salientando sempre a certeza que os valores serão muito superiores. Apenas um misto de coragem, sacrifício e auto-superação permitiu às tropas/população reprimir os nazis.

Se o Cerco de Leninegrado foi um dos horrores da Segunda Guerra Mundial, também terá de ser conotado como o princípio do fim da opressão Hitleriana durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial. Tal como descrito no livro, houve momentos que a fuga dos nazis era tão rápida que nem o exército vermelho os conseguia acompanhar.

Livro que deve fazer parte de qualquer leitor.

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### **'Aussie Rick' says**

This is a decent book covering the World War Two siege of Leningrad. The book is full of first-hand accounts from those caught in the city and besieged by the German Army who had adopted a deliberate policy of starving the city to death. It's not an in-depth military history, for that you will have to look elsewhere (David Glantz and Harrison Salisbury).

Most of the accounts are from Russian civilians caught up in this terrible siege and generally cover the slow starvation of the city and its affects on the population. Some of the stories are fairly horrific with accounts of cannibalism and murder as morals break down with those slowly starving to death. The book is full of sad and terrible accounts with the occasional uplifting story of the human spirit persevering against all odds.

One thing with this book was that I was quite taken back with the ineptitude of the Soviet command within the city and the abuse of power of those who made decisions affecting the lives of so many innocent people. While those in position of authority stuffed themselves with delicacies the average person tried to survive on an adulterated bread ration as low as 150 grams.

Overall a decent account of this terrible WW2 siege, but for those who want more on the military aspects of the siege of Leningrad they may need to look elsewhere.

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