

# The Siege Of Leningrad – The Unspoken Truth

By Yakov M. Rabkin – Global Research

*Without US support to Nazi Germany, the Third Reich would not have been able to wage war on the Soviet Union. Germany's oil production was insufficient to wage a major military campaign. Throughout the war, the Third Reich relied on regular shipments of crude oil from US Standard Oil owned by the Rockefeller family. The Franklin D. Roosevelt administration could have adopted severe sanctions against Standard Oil with a firm decision to enforce a blockade against Nazi Germany. You cannot wage a war without fuel. America had been "sleeping with the enemy" throughout World War II. America's objective was to destroy the Soviet Union.*

**Michel Chossudovsky,**

*Eighty years ago, on January 27, 1944, people in the street were hugging each other and weeping with joy. They were celebrating the end of a nearly 900 days brutal siege. Soviet forces lifted the siege of Leningrad after ferocious battles. Exactly a year later they liberated Auschwitz. Even today, walking in Saint-Petersburg's main avenue, the Nevsky Prospect, one notices a blue sign painted on a wall during the siege: "Citizens! This side of the street is the most dangerous during artillery shelling".*

**The siege was enforced by armies and navies which had come from Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain, and Norway. It was part of a war started by a coalition of forces from around Europe led by Nazi Germany on June 22, 1941.**

The goal of the war against the Soviet Union was different from the war Germany had waged in Western Europe. **On the day of the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler declared that "the empire in the east is ripe for dismemberment". Germany sought new living space (Lebensraum) but did not need the people who lived on it. Most of them were despised as subhuman (Untermenschen) and destined to be killed, starved or enslaved. Their land was to be given to "Aryan" settlers. To make his point in racial terms familiar to the Europeans, Hitler referred to the Soviet population as "Asians".**

Indeed, the war against the Soviet Union had aspects of a colonial war: millions of Soviet civilians – Slavs, Jews, Gypsies (Roma) and others – were systematically put to death. This surpassed Germany's genocide in Southwest Africa (today's Namibia) in 1904-1908 when it just as systematically massacred the local tribes of Herero and Namas. **True, Germany was not exceptional: this was common practice among European colonial powers.**

**The intentions of the Nazi invaders were summarized succinctly:**

*After the defeat of Soviet Russia there can be no interest in the continued existence of this large urban center. [...] Following the city's encirclement, requests for surrender negotiations shall be denied, since the problem of relocating and feeding the population cannot and should not be solved by us. In this war for our very existence, we can have no interest in maintaining even a part of this very large urban population.*

As one of the Nazi commanders enforcing the siege put it, "we shall put the Bolsheviks on a strict diet".

The last rail line linking the city with the rest of the Soviet Union was severed on August 30, 1941, a week later the last road was occupied by the invaders. The city was completely encircled, supplies of food and fuel dried up, and a severe winter set in. The little that the Soviet government succeeded in delivering to Leningrad was rationed. At one time, the daily ration was reduced to 125 grams of bread made as much of sawdust as of flour. Many did not get even that, and people were forced to eat cats, dogs, wallpaper glue, and there were a few cases of cannibalism. Dead bodies littered the streets as people were dying of hunger, disease, cold and bombardment.

**Leningrad, a city of 3.4 million people, lost over one third of its population. This was the largest loss of life in a modern city. The former imperial capital famous for its magnificent palaces, elegant gardens and breathtaking vistas was methodically bombed and shelled. Over 10 000 buildings were either destroyed or damaged. This was part of the invaders' drive to demodernize the Soviet Union, to throw it back in time. Leningrad had to be wiped out precisely because it was a major centre of science and engineering, home to writers and ballet dancers, the see of famous universities and art museums. None was to survive in the Nazi plans.**

**Sadly, neither sieges, nor colonial wars ended in 1945. Britain, France and the Netherlands waged brutal wars of "pacification" in their colonies long after Nazism was defeated.** Racism was still official in the United States, another ally in the fight against Nazism. Twelve years after the war, it took the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division to enable nine black students to attend a school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Today's Western values of tolerance are recent and fragile. Overt racism is no longer acceptable, but its impact is still with us.

**Human lives do not have the same value either in our media, or in our foreign policies. The death of an Israeli attracts more media attention than that of a Palestinian. Severe sanctions are imposed on Iran for its civilian nuclear enrichment program while none are imposed on Israel for its military nuclear arsenal. And, of course, Western powers continue to provide arms and political support for the siege of Gaza, where civilian population is not only bombed and shelled, but deliberately starved and let die of disease. The International Court of Justice confirmed "plausible genocide", even though it failed to stop Israel.**

**Commemoration of the siege of Leningrad should prompt us to put an end to all racism, to stop the siege of Gaza and to prevent such atrocities in the future.**

Otherwise, the accusation thrown in the face of the European citizen by the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire in 1955 would remain still valid:

*.. what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not crime in itself, the crime against man, it is not the humiliation of man as such, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa.”*

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## **The Siege of Leningrad, The Most Gruesome Episode of World War II: An Anniversary the West Would Rather Forget**

**By M. K. Bhadrakumar – Global Research, April, 2024**

**The siege endured by more than three million people, of whom nearly one half died, most of them in the first six months when the temperature fell to 30° below zero. It was an apocalyptic event. Civilians died from starvation, disease and cold. Yet it was a heroic victory. Leningraders never tried to surrender even though food rations were reduced to a few slices of bread mixed with sawdust, and the inhabitants ate glue, rats — and even each other — while the city went without water, electricity, fuel or transportation and was being shelled daily.**

It was on the 22nd of June, 1941 that the German armies crossed the Russian frontiers. Within six weeks, the Army Group North of the Wehrmacht, armed forces of the Third Reich, was within fifty kms of Leningrad in a fantastic blitzkrieg and had advanced 650 kms deep into Soviet territory.

A month later, the Germans had all but completed the city's encirclement, only a perilous route across Lake Ladoga to the east connected Leningrad with the rest of Russia. But the Germans got no further. And 900 days later their retreat began.

**The epic siege of Leningrad was the longest endured by any city since Biblical times, and, equally, citizens became heroes — artists, musicians, writers, soldiers and sailors who stubbornly resisted the iron from entering their souls. Petrified by the prospect of surrender to the Soviet Union, the Nazis preferred to lay down arms before the western allied forces, but Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, ordered that the honour of victory should go to the Red Army.**

Herein lies one of the greatest paradoxes of war and peace in modern times. Today, the anniversary of the siege of Leningrad has become, most certainly, an occasion that the US and many of its European allies would rather not remember. Yet, its contemporary relevance is not to be glossed over, either.

**The Nazi leadership aimed to exterminate Leningrad's entire population by enforced starvation. Death by starvation was a deliberate act on the part of the German Reich.**

In the words of Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler **“intended to have cities like Moscow and St Petersburg wiped out.”** This was “necessary”, he wrote in July 1941, **“because if we want to divide Russia into its individual parts,” it should “no longer have a spiritual, political or economic centre.”**

Hitler himself declared in September 1941, **“We have no interest in maintaining even a part of the metropolitan population in this existential war.” Any talk of the city surrendering had to be “rejected, as the problem of keeping and feeding the population cannot be solved by us.”**

Simply put, the population of Leningrad was left to starve to death – much like the millions of Soviet prisoners of war held by the Wehrmacht. The historian Jörg Ganzenmüller later wrote that this form of mass murder was cost-effective for Berlin, for, it was **“genocide by simply doing nothing”**.

“Genocide by doing nothing”! Those chilling words are as well applicable today to the West's “sanctions from hell” with an ulterior agenda to “erase” Russia and carve out five new states from its vast landmass with fabulous resources that can be subjugated by the industrial world.

**The mother of all ironies is that Germany is even today at the forefront of the “genocide by doing nothing” strategy to weaken and bring down the Russian Federation on its knees. The Biden administration depended on a troika of three German politicians to do the heavy lifting in that failed effort to erase Russia — EU's top bureaucrat in Brussels Ursula von der Layen, German Chancellor Olaf Schulz and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.**

George Santayana, the Spanish-American philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” This is how the far-right thrives.

In Germany and elsewhere, younger generations are becoming indifferent to the history of fascism. The idea of a Fourth Reich has entered an unprecedented heyday and is currently experiencing a new phase of normalisation in Europe. The tumultuous political upheaval throughout the western world provides the backdrop today.

The author of *The Fourth Reich: The Specter of Nazism from World War II to the Present*, historian and professor of history and Judaic studies Gavriel Rosenfeld has written that “The only way to mute the siren call of the Fourth Reich is to know its full history. Although it is increasingly difficult in our present-day world of fake ‘facts’ and deliberate disinformation to forge a consensus about historical truth, we have no alternative but to pursue it.”

**The justification of political violence is classically fascist. This past week, we saw a breath-taking spectacle at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Hague reminding us that we are now in fascism’s legal phase. If the Nazis used Judeo-Bolshevism as their constructed enemy, Israel is doing the same thing by raising the bogeyman of Hamas. Fascism feeds off a narrative of supposed national humiliation by internal enemies.**

**Meanwhile, what gets forgotten is that there has been a growing fascist social and political movement in Israel for decades. Like other fascist movements, it is riddled with internal contradictions, but this movement now has a classically authoritarian leader in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who has shaped and exacerbated it, and is determined that in his time in politics it will be normalised.**

The probability is high that in a matter of a few days, the ICJ will give some sort of interim order/injunction to Israel to end the violence against the hapless Palestinians in Gaza. But the fascist movement Netanyahu now leads preceded him, and will outlive him.

These are forces that feed off ideologies with deep roots in Jewish history. They may be defending a fictional glorious and virtuous national past, but it would be a grave error to think they cannot ultimately win.

The Russians are learning this home truth the hard way in Ukraine where “de-nazification” is turning out to be the weakest link in their special military operation, given its geopolitical moorings traceable to Germany’s dalliance with the Ukrainian Neo-Nazi groups in Kiev in the run-up to the 2014 coup, which the US inherited gleefully and wouldn’t let go.