

The Siege of Leningrad (September 8, 1941 – January 27, 1944)

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Encirclement of Leningrad

According to the plan “Barbarossa” in the summer of 1941 Hitler was planning to conquer the USSR in two months. The key city in the northern direction was Leningrad. 150 km from the city of Leningrad by the town of Luga the Nazis were stopped by the Soviet troops because Russian resistance was fierce. Initially, the city was to be taken immediately but the Germans relied on the expectation that the besieged city would surrender. Hitler decided to raze Leningrad to the ground with the help of aviation.



The last rail connection to Leningrad was severed on 30 August, when the Germans reached the Neva River. On 8 September, the road to the besieged city was severed when the Germans reached Lake Ladoga at Shlisselburg, leaving just a corridor of land between Lake Ladoga and Leningrad which remained unoccupied by axis forces. Bombing on 8 September caused 178 fires. On 21 September, German High Command considered the options of how to destroy Leningrad. Simply occupying the city was ruled out "because it would make us responsible for food supply". The resolution was to lay the city under siege and bombardment, starving its population. On 7 October, Hitler sent a further directive signed by Alfred Jodl reminding Army Group North not to accept capitulation.



Operation Iskra

The encirclement was broken in the wake of Operation Iskra. After fierce battles the Red Army units overcame the powerful German fortifications to the south of Lake Ladoga, and on 18 January 1943 the Volkhov Front's 372nd Rifle Division met troops of the 123rd Rifle Brigade of the Leningrad Front, opening a 10–12 km (6.2–7.5 mi) wide land corridor, which could provide some relief to the besieged population of Leningrad.



Although the Red Army managed to open a narrow land corridor to the city on 18 January 1943, the siege was finally lifted on 27 January 1944, 872 days after it began. It was one of the longest and most destructive sieges in history. The total number of human losses during the 29 months of the siege of Leningrad is estimated as 1.5 million, both civilian and military.



Famous People Who Survived

Ioannina German
Berggoltz



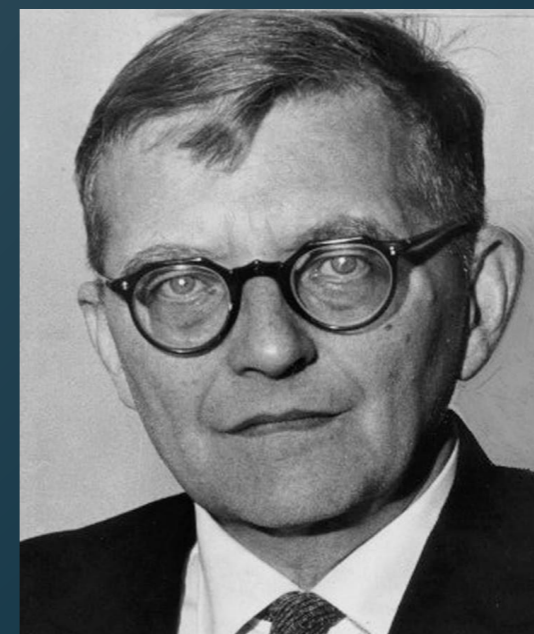
Olga



Valentina Leontieva

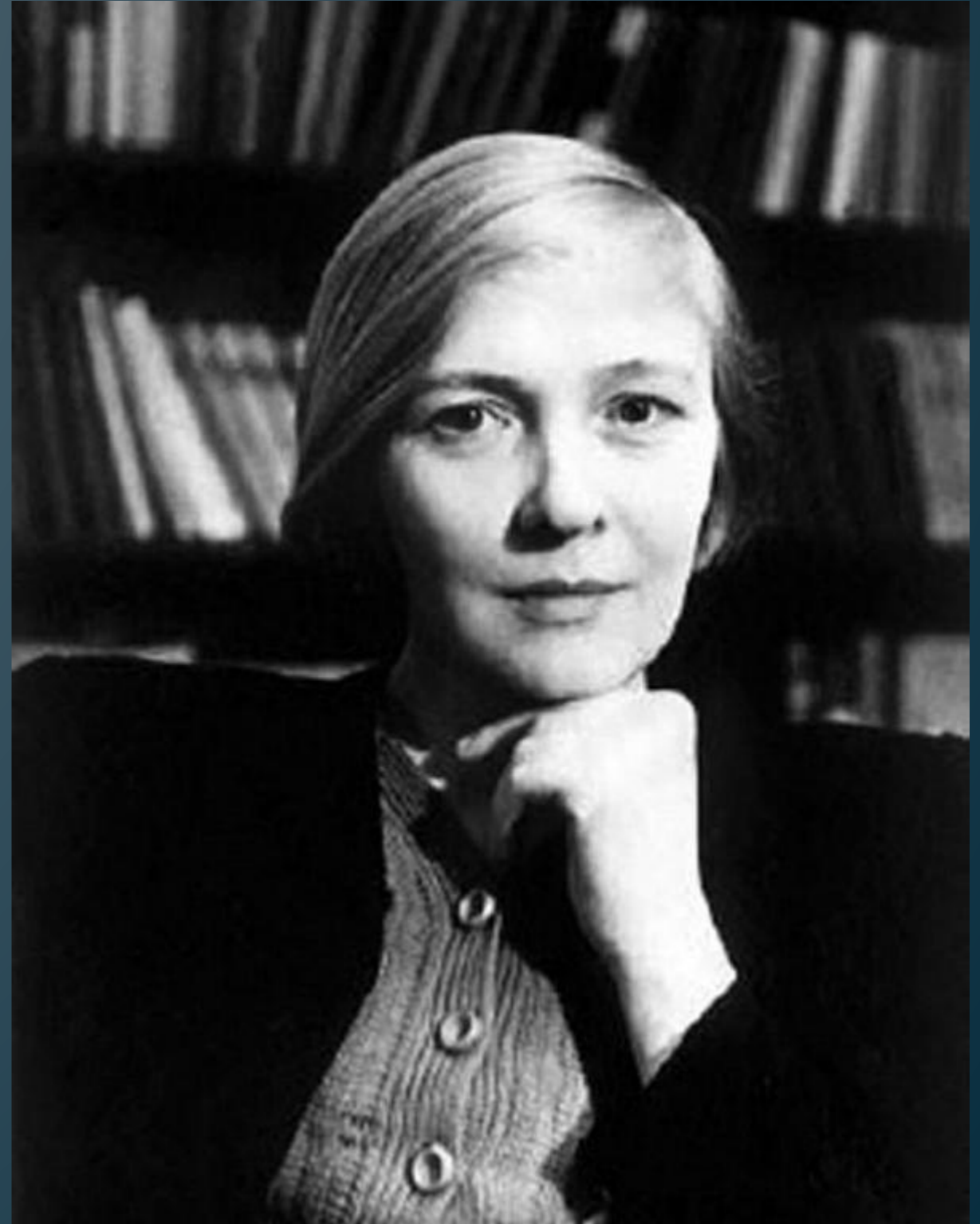


Dmitry Shostakovich



Olga Berggoltz

Olga Berggoltz spent all the 872 days of the blockade in Leningrad. She worked at the radio, encouraging hungry and depressed citizens of the city by her speeches and poems. Olga Fyodorovna Bergholz was a Soviet poet and the symbol of strength and determination of Leningrad.



Dmitry Shostakovich

After the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Germany in 1941, Shostakovich initially remained in Leningrad. He tried to enlist for the military but was turned away because of his poor eyesight. To compensate, Shostakovich became a volunteer for the Leningrad Conservatory's firefighter brigade and delivered a radio broadcast to the Soviet people. Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich was a Russian composer and pianist, and a prominent figure of 20th-century music. The greatest and most famous wartime contribution was the Seventh Symphony. It was officially claimed as a representation of the people of Leningrad's brave resistance to the German invaders.



“Nobody is forgotten, nothing is forgotten” These words are carved into the wall of the Piskaryov Memorial Cemetery where nearly half a million victims of the 900-day siege lie.

