

naya. It overlooked the Vitebsk locomotive depot, the great Badayev warehouses, the freight station and beyond toward Avtovo and the Kirov metallurgical works.

The Badayev warehouses had been built by an old St. Petersburg merchant named Rasterayev just before World War I. They were wooden buildings, put up one next to the other with gaps of not more than 25 or 30 feet between them. The compound covered several acres in the southwest quarter of the city. Luknitsky and his friend, Lyudmila Fedorovna, walked to her apartment on Borovaya in early evening. They stopped with many other Leningraders to peer at a building at the corner of Glazovskaya and Voronezh streets which had been hit by a German shell. The German shelling had started only September 4, and the building, No. 13 Glazovskaya, was one of the first to be hit. There had been many casualties, mostly women and children. The evening was pleasant and clear. There were a few white clouds in the blue sky. Suddenly a factory whistle sounded an air alert. Almost immediately they saw hundreds of incendiary bombs showering into the Vitebsk freight yards. Dozens of fires of blinding brilliance burst out.

Clouds of black and red smoke began to rise. Bombs continued to fall and the AA guns to bark. Some women gathered in the courtyard of the building, chattering in curiosity about what was going on. Luknitsky climbed to the roof. From there he could see that the whole city was gradually being covered with smoke from huge fires burning in the vicinity of Ligovo and the freight station. At first he thought it must be an oil depot. Later he learned it was the Badayev warehouses.

About 8 P.M. the all-clear sounded and Luknitsky started back to the Petrograd side. But he found the trams were halted by crowds moving toward the fires. He had to go on foot to Five Corners where the streetcars were running. Along a wall on Chernyshevsky Street he saw a group of youngsters with guitars and mandolins playing for their girl friends. The blood-red smoke spread farther and farther across the sky, and after 10 P.M. when he got back home a new air alert sounded.

To Olga Berggolts the greasy clouds brought a premonition of alarm. They reminded her of an eclipse of the sun—a red eclipse. She thought of the leaflets which the Germans had dropped: "Wait for the full moon!" And below in smaller letters: "Bayonets in the earth." Superstitious people might take panic. But as yet she had no idea that the red clouds were casting the fateful shadow of famine over her beloved Leningrad.

Vsevolod Kochetov had returned from the front to the *Leningradskaya Pravda* on September 8 and was talking with his colleagues when the alert sounded. They saw planes, high in the sky, heard the AA guns and the sound of fire trucks and ambulances. Then they went up to the roof and someone said, "It's the Badayev warehouses."

The tower of flame and smoke rising more than three miles provided an easy marker for the German planes when they returned to bomb the city

28 • The Blood-Red Clouds

VERA INBER HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH AN AUTUMN: NO RAIN; the air warm and dry; the leaves purple, amber and lemon-yellow, still rustling on the trees. Her husband, Dr. I. D. Strashun, was busy all day at the great hospital on Aptekarsky Island. Occasionally there was an air-raid alert, and Vera Inber would stand on the balcony of their apartment on Pesochnaya Ulitsa and look out beyond the pleasant trees and walks of the Botanical Gardens to the vista of the great city.

On September 8 she went with some friends to the Musical Comedy Theater to see *The Bat*. When the sirens sounded between the first and second acts, the theater director asked the audience to take seats close to the walls because there was no air-raid shelter. The performance went on to the counterpoint of AA guns.

When Vera Inber and her friends came out of the theater, they noticed a strange reddish light reflected across the square in the dusk. Suddenly their chauffeur appeared and said, "I thought I'd come for you. It's better to get home quickly."

As their car turned out of the square, they saw mountains of smoke pouring up toward the sky, the smoke shot through with long tongues of reddish flame, the flames and the smoke reaching thousands of feet over the city.

"The Germans have set fire to the food warehouses," the chauffeur said. They drove rapidly through St. Isaac's Square, past the Admiralty and its slender spire, across Palace Square and over the Neva by the Kirov Bridge. As they looked back, they could see the waves of smoke, oily-black and ember-red, curling ever higher and higher.

Alarm followed alarm. For the first time Vera Inber went down to the shelter. The sound of German planes was still overhead and the AA guns had not been silent.

Pavel Luknitsky had a front-row seat for the raid—the window of a friend's sixth-floor apartment at the corner of Borovaya Ulitsa and Rasstan-

again about 11 P.M. Yet it seemed to Kochetov that the Germans were being aided by rockets fired inside Leningrad, by signals sent up to guide the Nazi bombers. Who were these traitors? Former imperial bureaucrats? Elderly members of the old Russian intelligentsia? Kulaks? Old White Guard officers? Traders? Businessmen ready to greet Hitler with the traditional Russian offering of bread and salt? Kochetov, ever ready to suspect the worst, felt there was treachery all about him.

Kochetov was not the only one to see Nazi agents and traitors signaling from windows and rooftops. That night and for weeks to come rumors of Nazi activity flooded the city. The Nazis did send agents into the city. There was hardly a Leningrader who did not believe that Nazi "rocketmen" were active. The reports found their way into official accounts, police documents, military reports, personal reminiscences and official histories.

In reality, the "rocketmen" did not exist. They were a product of the hysteria and suspicion of the times.¹

Colonel B. V. Bychevsky was returning on the evening of September 8 from one of his endless trips to the front, this time to the Neva region, where he was working on a pontoon bridge. He was deep in thought when his chauffeur, Pavel Yakovlev, suddenly stopped the car, saying, "Comrade Chief, look at what's happening in the city!"

Bychevsky looked. The whole horizon over Leningrad was colored deep blood-red. The sky was crisscrossed by searchlights, and the flames of the fires, reflected back from the smoke clouds, filled the streets and squares with a strange light. People were running toward the conflagration with loads of sand and carts of water. AA guns rattled and bombs kept falling.

It was midnight when Bychevsky got back to Smolny Institute. The news was all bad. The German air attack had been going on for hours. At the front the offensive was gathering strength. Secretary Kuznetsov had been at the great Peterhof Palace, the pride of Russia, the rival of Versailles. He ordered

¹ Reports of rocketmen can be found, for example, in the official account of Pavlov, head of the Leningrad City Military Department, to Party Secretary A. A. Kuznetsov, October 23, 1943, telling of the success of the Young Communists in combating them (*900 Geroicheskikh Dnei*, p. 122). There are similar reports by Lieutenant General G. Stepanov, former chief of the Leningrad garrison (S. Bubenshchikov, *V Ognennom Koltsie*, Moscow, 1963, p. 51); I. Ya. Lorkish, writing of the struggle against Abwehr agents in Leningrad (*Nevidimyye Boi*, Leningrad, 1967, p. 11); the history of the Leningrad militia (A. Skilyagin, V. Lesov, U. Pimenov, I. Savchenko, *Dela i Lyudi*, Leningrad, 1967, p. 261); the October 31 report of the Petrograd regional council to the Leningrad City Council (900, p. 75); the official history of the Leningrad blockade (*Leningrad v VOY*, p. 98); and in many, many other works. To all these reports the men in charge of Leningrad's defenses offer a negative response. The authorities who investigated the rumors became convinced that in the vast majority of cases what Leningraders took for "rocket" signals were, in fact, tracer bullets of anti-aircraft guns firing from rooftop positions at German planes or in some instances flares dropped by Nazi aircraft. As Ye. S. Lagutkin, chief of Leningrad's wartime AA defense, put it: "If some authors of books and articles write that in Leningrad there were many rocketmen, then these statements do not conform to reality." (*N.Z.*, p. 168.) D. V. Pavlov, the Leningrad food chief, supports Lagutkin's view. (Pavlov, personal communication, April 30, 1968.)

its treasures evacuated but forbade the sappers to mine the noble buildings. By now the Germans probably were there. Bychevsky was still talking with M. V. Basov² of the Leningrad Party organization when N. M. Shekhovtsev, deputy of the City Soviet, came in from the fire, his wide face lined with deep creases and smeared with soot. He sank into a chair, letting his heavy hands fall to his lap. It was now 6 A.M., and the fight with the fire was still going on.

"Has it all burned?" asked Basov, referring to the tons of flour, sugar, meat and other provisions in the warehouse.

"It's burned," Shekhovtsev sighed. "We kept all these riches in wooden buildings, practically cheek by jowl. Now we will pay for our heedlessness. It's a sea of flames. The sugar has flowed into the cellars—two and a half thousand tons."

Shekhovtsev launched into a bitter denunciation of himself, of the city authorities for their carelessness, for not dispersing the supplies, for not putting them in secure buildings, for the shortage of fire-fighting apparatus.

"Well," snapped Basov, "the leaders are to blame—ourselves among them. The people have good grounds for hurling some nasty words at us. What are the people saying?"

"They're saying nothing," Shekhovtsev replied. "They are fighting the fire, trying to save what they can. . . ."

The German air attack on Leningrad had begun September 6, but the first intensive raid was that of September 8. The Germans came that night in two main waves. The first, at 6:55 P.M., was carried out by 27 Junkers, dropping 6,327³ incendiary bombs, of which 5,000 fell on the Moscow region, 1,311 in the Smolny region and 16 in the Red Guard region. These incendiary bombs set 178 fires.⁴ At 10:35 P.M. a second wave of bombers dropped 48 high-explosive bombs of 500 to 1,000 pounds, mostly near Smolny Institute and the Finland Station. A pumping plant at the city water-works was hit, and 24 people were killed and 122 wounded.

Almost all the city's fire-fighting apparatus, 168 units, was brought out to fight the Badayev fire, which blazed over an area of more than four acres. It took all night to bring it under control.

Not a person in Leningrad on the morning after the Badayev fire had reason any longer to doubt that the city faced the grimdest trial of its history. The smell of burning meat, the acrid stench of carbonized sugar, the heavy scent of burning oil and flour filled the air. Everyone knew Badayev was the city's greatest warehouse. Everyone knew that here the grain, the sugar, the meat, the lard and the butter for the city were stored. Now it was

² Basov was executed in 1950, one of the many victims of the so-called "Leningrad Affair." (G. Odintsev, *Voyenno-Istoricheski Zhurnal*, No. 12, December, 1964, p. 61.)

³ Pavlov, *op. cit.*, 2nd edition, p. 32. The figure is given as 12,000 by the official history. (*Leningrad v VOY*, p. 172.)

⁴ Pavlov, *op. cit.*, p. 32. The figure is given as 183 in the official ARP report. (900, p. 139.)

lost. "Badayev has burned," the babushkas said. "It's the end—famine!"

The iron ring of Hitler had closed. Indeed, Nazi troops were pounding into Shlisselburg and sealing the circle during the very hours in which Badayev went up in a pillar of flame. And even before Badayev went the city's position had been desperate.

For weeks Leningrad had glided along. To be sure, food was rationed, but no more strictly than in any other big city in Russia.

Even now Kochetov could buy at the lunch counter at *Leningradskaya Præda* luxury products without ration coupons—first-quality crabmeat, gray full-grained caviar. At a special "closed store" for generals the salesgirl pressed Kochetov to buy champagne. "It's very nourishing," she said, "full of vitamins." At first he was going to take a bottle, but she insisted that he take more. He wound up coming away with a case. Thousands of Leningraders hoarded as much food as they could buy. Luknitsky visited a photographer with whom he had once traveled in Asia. The photographer showed him a special shelter which he had built in his apartment, filled with shelf after shelf of canned goods, food of every conceivable kind. He was certain there would soon be famine in the city. Luknitsky left the apartment with a feeling of revulsion. He recalled another friend, Major Boris Likharev, chairman of the Leningrad Writers Union. Likharev's wife had found a ten-pound can of caviar in the store and bought it "just in case." Likharev made her give it to a children's home because he thought it was showing a bad example.⁵ Olga Iordani could still buy fresh caviar, real coffee, blackberry juice and sea cabbage. But shopping was getting more difficult.

Yelena Skryabina had to spend long hours in queues. She was able to buy butter in the commercial stores (of which there were seventy-one in Leningrad) and sometimes sugar. But she had to scurry from one end of town to another, sometimes to Vasilevsky Island, sometimes to the Petrograd side. She had about a month's supply of food on hand September 1.

No one in Leningrad—up to September 8—had actually suffered for food. White bread was sold as late as September 10. The rationing imposed July 1 was close to the average normal food consumption. The bread ration was nearly two pounds (800 grams) a day for workers and about a pound for dependents and children. The 1940 average consumption had been 531 grams of bread a day. The cereal ration of 2,000 grams a month compared with 1940 consumption of 1,740; meat was 2,200 grams compared with 3,330 average; butter and fats 800 compared with 1,020 average, and sugar and sweets 1,500 compared with 3,630 average.

No alarm about Leningrad's food situation had been expressed until the special mission of the State Defense Committee discovered that on August 27, the date when for all practical purposes rail communications with Leningrad

⁵ Two years later Likharev admitted to Alexander Werth that he and his wife had many times regretted their action. "We were haunted by the memory of that tin of caviar. It was like paradise lost." (Alexander Werth, *Leningrad*, New York, 1944, p. 77.)

were severed, the city had on hand the following supplies: flour, exclusive of grain, 17 days' supply; cereals, 29 days'; fish, 16 days'; meat, 25 days'; dried fish, 22 days'; butter, 28 days'.

An urgent telegram was sent to the State Defense Committee in Moscow August 29 asking that emergency food shipments be sent to Leningrad. The committee decided to provide Leningrad with a 45-day reserve of food. It proposed to ship in 135,000 tons of flour, 7,800 tons of cereals, 24,000 tons of meat and fish, 3,500 tons of dried fish, 3,000 tons of butter.

It recommended that Leningrad reduce its free commercial sale of food (at high government prices) and put tea, eggs and matches on a ration basis. The government approved these recommendations and ordered the Transport Ministry to begin on August 31 sending eight food trains daily to Volkhovstroi and Lodeinoye Pole with food for the city. From those points the food was to be sent by barge, tugboat and tanker via Lake Ladoga and the Neva River to Leningrad.

In line with these decisions, on September 2 the Leningrad rations were reduced. The bread ration was cut to 600 grams—a little more than a pound—a day for workers, 400 grams for office workers and 300 grams—about half a pound—for dependents and children under twelve. The meat ration was cut to three pounds a month, cereals to the same level, fats to a pound and a half, and sugar and candy to five pounds. This meant belt-tightening. But it was not insupportable—especially since it was still possible to eat in restaurants or dining rooms attached to factories, institutions and offices without giving up ration coupons.

But behind the façade of these still generous controls a deadly picture assumed shape.

On September 6—two days before Badayev's pillar of flame—Peter S. Popkov, Mayor of Leningrad, sent a cipher telegram to the State Defense Committee reporting that Leningrad was on the verge of exhausting her food reserves. Food trains must be expedited or the city would starve.

Popkov's telegram was based on an inventory which disclosed that the city then had on hand only these supplies: flour, 14.1 days; cereals, 23 days; meat and meat products, 18.7 days; fats, 20.8 days; sugar and confectionery, 47.9 days.

In eight days—between the State Committee telegram of August 29 and Popkov's—the city's reserves of flour had dropped by three days, of cereals by six days, of meat by nearly seven.

Should Leningrad's consumption continue at these levels and delivery of supplies show no improvement, the city would be down to bare shelves within two or three weeks—possibly less. The time had come for extraordinary measures. Two days later Dmitri V. Pavlov arrived in Leningrad from Moscow, clothed with powers to handle all food questions in Leningrad, both for the civilian population and the army.

Pavlov was one of the ablest and most energetic supply officials in the

oviet Union. He was thirty-six years old, a graduate of the All-Union Academy of Foreign Trade, and had devoted his whole career to food distribution and production. He was Commissar of Trade for the Russian Federated Republic and an important executive of the Main Administration of Food Supplies of the Defense Commissariat. He was a direct, honest, vigorous man who saw from the moment of his arrival in Leningrad that only spartan measures, applied with an iron hand, offered a chance for the city's survival. The first thing he had to know was the facts, the tough, naked facts—not anyone's political or propaganda-tinged facts. What was the actual position of Leningrad so far as food was concerned? Was the city down to two or three weeks' reserves? What supplies had the army? The navy? What was the population load? What kind of supplies could be got into the city?

Pavlov was at work almost before he clambered out of the Douglas DC-3 which brought him in low over Lake Ladoga to the Leningrad airport. He spent September 10 and 11 inventorying the city's reserves. The figures were grim—he had known they would be—but not quite as bad as Popkov's alarming telegram of September 6. Based on the actual rate of expenditure of food for the armed forces and the civilian population, the city's reserves totaled: grain, flour, hardtack, 35 days; cereals and macaroni, 30; meat and meat products including live cattle, 33; fats, 45; sugar and confectionery, 60. The only food not included in Pavlov's inventory was a small amount of "iron rations" (hardtack and canned goods) in the army and fleet reserves and a small amount of flour in the hands of the navy.

The chief differences between Pavlov's estimates and those of Popkov were that Pavlov included all the food in the city—that in military hands as well as civilian and unprocessed materials (unmilled grain and unslaughtered cattle), as well as flour and meat in cold storage. Moreover, by the time Pavlov cast his estimates the ration had been again cut (as of September 12) to 500 grams of bread per day for workers, 300 for office employees, 250 for dependents and 300 for children under twelve.

Pavlov calculated—correctly—that there was no hope for any supplies whatever from the outside for a considerable time. The only route open was across Lake Ladoga, and there were no boats, piers, highway and rail facilities or warehouses which could handle substantial shipments. To create them would require time.

Leningrad, he was certain, must live on what it had on hand—for how long no one knew.

How many people did he have to feed? This was not easy to establish. Pavlov estimated, on the basis of the distribution of ration cards, figures on evacuation, refugees and prewar population, that he had a civilian population of about 2,544,000, including about 400,000 children, in the city, and another 343,000 in the suburban areas within the blockade ring. The total was roughly 2,887,000. In addition, there were the military forces defending the city. No exact figure has ever been given for them, but they must have been in the neighborhood of 500,000. The number of mouths which he had to feed for an indefinite period of time, thus, was close to 3,400,000.⁶ It was no small

task, and he was filled with the gravest foreboding. Like all Leningrad's leadership, he inevitably lived for news that the city had been deblocked. But, unlike the others, Pavlov had to face each day the reality of the city's dwindling food reserves.

Almost Pavlov's first act was to evaluate the consequences of the Badayev fire. They were serious, but perhaps not quite so serious as most Leningraders thought. The destruction of Badayev did not doom the city to famine.

Pavlov estimated the Badayev losses at 3,000 tons of flour and about 2,500 tons of sugar, of which, in the grimmest months of the winter that lay ahead, about 700 tons, blackened, dirty and scorched, would be reclaimed and converted into "candy."⁷

Nevertheless, he took no chances on a new Badayev. Almost all Leningrad's flour was stored at the city's two big milling combines—the Lenin and the Kirov. He ordered it dispersed throughout the city. He did the same with the grain in harbor elevators and storehouses.

Despite Pavlov's insistence that Badayev was not the key to Leningrad's future suffering, many Leningraders—Pavel Luknitsky among them—remained convinced that the great fire had more to do with the city's suffering than the authorities have ever been willing to acknowledge.⁸

Pavlov blamed other causes. Ten different economic agencies had a hand in administration of food supplies. Each operated on orders from its Moscow headquarters. So long as Moscow did not forbid the sale or distribution of food, they continued. The commercial restaurants fell in this category. And they were dispersing 7 percent of Leningrad's total food consumption, 12 percent of all fats, 10 percent of the meat and 8 percent of the sugar and candy. Cattle slaughter was being carried out without care or plan. Vegetable fat was stored in commercial warehouses, animal fats in military supply dumps. Because of consumer prejudice against crabmeat it was sold without ration coupons. Invalids in hospitals and children in nurseries were fed off-ration, but got ration cards besides. In mid-September the Moscow Sugar Administration ordered its Leningrad subsidiary to send several freight cars of sugar to Vologda—although Leningrad, of course, had lost all rail connections with the rest of the country.

Pavlov moved in. He halted the sale of food without ration coupons. He

⁶ In July, 2,562,000 ration cards were issued in Leningrad; in August, 2,669,000; in September, 2,480,400; in October, 2,443,400. About 636,283 persons were evacuated through Leningrad from June 29 through August 27, of whom Pavlov estimates 400,000 were Leningraders, the remainder refugees from the Baltic states. (Pavlov, *op. cit.*, 1st edition, pp. 59, 60.) Karasev estimates the September 6 population at "over 2.5 million." Leningrad's population by the census of 1939 was 3,191,300. (Karasev 120, p. 17.) An unpublished document has been found in the Leningrad archives which reports "in all 227,335 persons" were evacuated up to December 4, 1941. This casts doubt on the authenticity of the 636,283 figure (which supposedly included 488,703 Leningraders) (*Voprosy Istorii*, No. 11, November, 1968, p. 167). Thus, the number trapped in Leningrad may have been 260,000 more than earlier estimated.

⁷ N.Z. claims 900 tons of sugar and 1,000 tons of flour were reclaimed. (N.Z., p. 195.)
⁸ Dmitri V. Pavlov insists his report is exact and that all other versions are "fantasies." (Personal communication, April 30, 1968.)

closed down the public commercial restaurants. He stopped the making of beer, ice cream, pirogi (meat pies) and pastry. He canceled all orders to food agencies from Moscow and took control of these supplies, insisting on immediate and accurate inventories. He eliminated ration cards for persons being fed in hospitals or children's homes, cutting the total by 80,000.

But he made mistakes—as he was later publicly to admit. Even after his first harsh cuts in rations the city was still consuming more than 2,000 tons of flour a day. He permitted an increase in the sugar and fat rations in September to make up for the cuts in meat and cereals. That took 2,500 tons of sugar and 600 tons of fats—quantities which could have been saved in September and October and used to help tide over the terrible December which lay ahead.

Leningrad had entered the war with a normal reserve of food. On June 21 she had 52 days' supply of flour and grain, including stores in the port elevators which were intended for export, 89 days' supply of cereals, 38 days' supply of meat, 47 days' of butter and fats, 29 days' supply of vegetable oils.

In July and August Leningrad received far less than normal food shipments from the nearby Yaroslavl and Kalinin regions—only 45,000 tons of wheat, 14,000 tons of flour and 3,000 tons of cereal. About 23,300 tons of grain and flour came in from Latvia and Estonia before the Germans occupied those areas. About 8,146 tons of meat were obtained from the Leningrad suburbs up to the end of the year. The Leningrad area had 25,407 pigs, 4,357 cattle and 568 goats on September 1. Total meat reserves, slaughtered and on the hoof, were 12,112 tons. Daily consumption after the September 12 ration cut was 246 tons.

The city got only a handful of the market produce she normally consumed. In 1941 Leningrad received only 6,960 tons of potatoes against a supply of 245,032 in 1940—and potatoes were the basic diet of tens of thousands. The city received 30,376 tons of vegetables against 154,682 the previous year and 508 tons of fruit against 15,234.

Leningrad used more food than usual in the weeks after the outbreak of war. The output of flour in July, for example, was 40,000 tons. In August consumption of bread went up 12.4 percent from an average of 2,112 tons to 2,305 tons daily, largely because of the influx of refugees.

Pavlov found the city was using 2,100 tons of flour per day at the start of September. This rate of consumption continued to September 11, when he brought it down to 1,300 tons. From September 16 to October 1 he cut it to 1,100 tons. In September—exclusive of the Leningrad front and the Baltic Fleet—Leningrad used a daily average of 146 tons of meat, 220 tons of cereals and 202 tons of sugar.

When the calendar turned to November and then to December, Pavlov looked back again and again at those consumption figures for early September. What he would not have given for the 8,000 tons of flour that he could have saved had the cuts gone into effect September 1 instead of September

10—not to mention the hundreds of tons of meat and other foodstuffs.

The air raids did not halt with the September 8 attack on Badayev. The next night bombs fell on the Zoo. The elephant, Betty, was killed. So were some apes. Betty's death throes went on for hours and her howling terrified those who heard her. Several sables, frantic with fear, were released into the streets. Dogs in the Pavlov Institute, windows in their stomachs, howled like dirges during the attacks. The raids went on the next day and the next and the next.

Leningrad's air defenses could not hold off the Nazi bombers. Because of errors and mistakes the city ARP had been reorganized and put in the hands of a troika in August. The Leningrad fighter command started the war with 401 planes, but by September the figure was sharply reduced. The main protection came from 160 AA batteries mustering 600 guns. About 300 barrage balloons hovered over Leningrad, day and night, and there were 3,500 ARP units manned by 124,000 workers.

But the Nazi attacks continued.

"Now begins our life on the roofs," Pavel Gubchevsky, scientific colleague at the Hermitage, told his fellow ARP workers. Two posts were set up—one above the Hall of Arms of the Winter Palace and the other on the roof of the New Hermitage next to the huge skylight which gave onto the main picture gallery. For many nights no bombs fell on the Winter Palace or the Hermitage, but the rain of shrapnel from AA guns cracked and sparkled like heat lightning on the vast pavement of Palace Square. From his observation post Gubchevsky saw just across the Neva German bombers shower down incendiary bombs around the ancient Peter and Paul Fortress, where generation after generation of Russian rebels, state criminals and revolutionaries had been imprisoned. The incendiaries rolled down the thick walls of the fortress like rivers of fire and burned out on the sandy banks of the Neva. Then came a thunderous explosion and a thousand tongues of flame lashed around the "Amerikanskyye Gory"—the roller coaster which was the main attraction of the amusement park in the adjacent gardens. Night turned to day as the wooden structure blazed toward the sky. The wind blew toward the Winter Palace, and soon sparks and soot rained down on the Hermitage roof along with heavy particles of blackened paint from the gay decorations of the amusement park. The fretwork of the roller coaster, a hodgepodge of twisted girders, stood charred and twisted throughout the war, a reminder of the fire-filled night.

The air raid on September 10 was almost as big as that of the eighth. Three more Badayev warehouses burned—fortunately they were empty. But the big Red Star creamery was hit and tons of butter were lost. The Zhdanov Shipworks were badly damaged. More than 700 Leningraders were killed and wounded and more than 80 big fires were set. On that day over the Kirov metallurgical works suddenly was heard a low-flying plane. A moment later Leonid Sanin, ARP officer, reported that paratroops were attacking the

plant and hurried toward the descending chute. The next instant a tremendous shock wave knocked him unconscious. It was not parachutists the Nazis had dropped but a one-ton delayed-action bomb suspended in a parachute. There were 23 big raids in Leningrad in September and 200 shellings. More than 675 German planes took part in the raids. They dropped 987 explosive and 15,100 incendiary bombs, and they killed or wounded 4,409 Leningraders. The worst attacks were those of September 19 and 27. There were six raids on the nineteenth, four by day and two by night, with 280 planes participating. On September 27, 200 planes attacked the city.

That of the nineteenth was the worst of the war. One bomb fell on a hospital in Suvorov Prospekt. There were heavy casualties among the 600 wounded who were sheltered there. Another hit the Gostiny Dvor, the big shopping center in the heart of the city, killing 98 and wounding 148.⁹ The offices of the Soviet Pisatel Publishing house were located in the Gostiny Dvor. Eight editors, among them Taisiya Aleksandrova and Tatanya Gurevich, were killed and Director A. M. Semenov was severely wounded. Most of the victims in the Gostiny Dvor were women, many of them workers in a clothing factory. A week later Pavel Luknitsky visited the site and learned that several were still alive, trapped in the wreckage, being fed with food lowered to them through a narrow hole.

On the night the Gostiny Dvor was hit Dmitri Shostakovich invited some of his friends—Valerian Bogdanov-Berezovsky, the musicologist, and the composers, Gavriil Popov and Yuri Kochurov—to his fifth-floor flat. They found him surrounded by orchestration sheets on which he was scoring his Seventh Symphony. He sat at the piano and began to play with enormous enthusiasm. He was in such a state of emotional tension that it seemed to his listeners he was striving to extract from the piano every last atom of sound. Suddenly the air-raid siren sounded, and overhead the musicians could hear Leningrad's fighter planes. Shostakovich played on. When he finished the First Movement of the symphony, he asked his wife and children to go to the bomb shelter but proposed to his friends that he continue to play. He went through the Second Movement to the crashing accompaniment of anti-aircraft guns. The Third Movement was incomplete.

Shostakovich's friends made their way back home after the all-clear had sounded. They saw from their streetcar clouds of smoke rising over the city. It was the Gostiny Dvor. It burned for days.

Shostakovich's music, the roar of the guns, the fires springing up, the bombs, the sirens, the planes—all seemed to Bogdanov-Berezovsky to blend into a cacophony in which reality and art were inextricably intermingled.

On the day of the Gostiny Dvor disaster Ivan Bondarenko, a Tass man, noted in his diary: "Explosions, explosions, more explosions. Yellow dust and black smoke over Socialist Street."

And that same day a Moscow woman living on Stremyannaya Ulitsa

⁹ *N.Z.*, p. 166. The date of this disaster is mistakenly given as September 24 in *Leningrad v VOY*, p. 176.

rushed into the Leningrad radio studios. Her house had just been smashed by a bomb, and under the wreckage lay her two children, dead.

"Let me talk on the radio," she begged. "I want to speak."

She was permitted to go to the microphone, and there, her voice breaking with emotion, her words heavy with sorrow, she told of the death of her son and daughter.

"I can remember not only her words but even the sound of her breathing," Olga Berggolts wrote twenty years later.

The air of the city grew thicker and thicker with the smashing of buildings, the fall of bricks and plaster, until Vera Ketlinskaya found it difficult even to take a breath.

Army General (later Marshal) Nikolai N. Voronov, the country's top artillery specialist, returned to Leningrad in these days. Leningrad was his native city. Here he had been born, here he had spent his childhood before the Revolution, here he had grown to young manhood. Now he had been called back to aid the city in its hour of peril. Voronov was no stranger to war and siege. He had served in Spain during the Civil War. He had seen Guadalajara, Teruel and Barcelona. He had fought through the siege of University City and had lived in Madrid during the bombardment.

One day he climbed to the cupola of St. Isaac's. From a height of 260 feet he could look out on the city, could see the ARP posts and the AA guns mounted on the roofs of the tall buildings, the great gray warships of the Baltic Fleet brought into the wide Neva and moored as floating long-range batteries to fire back on the German siege guns. He could see the Red Army's ragged lines to the south and southwest and could make out the flash of the German guns as they trained in on Leningrad targets.

"Again and again," he recalled, "my thoughts returned to Madrid and what that city had survived. There also the enemy had closed in on all sides. But here it was all repeated on an even grander scale—the city was greater, the intensity of the battle, the size of the forces. Here everything was infinitely more complicated."

Complicated, it was, indeed. And it grew more complicated. One day Yelena Skryabina took a battered old *sumka*, or shopping bag. She put in it two or three bottles of very strong vodka which she had managed to buy after standing in line for hours at a small wooden street stall.

She also had a dozen packs of cigarettes, a pair of men's shoes and some women's socks. She went out into the country a few miles to see what kind of food she might get from the peasants. It was a terrifying experience. The peasants stood looking at her stolidly. She could not help remembering the days of 1918 or 1920 when the city residents had to go to the villages with their furs, their rings, their bracelets, their rugs, and haggle with the peasants for crusts of bread and sacks of potatoes. The same thing was happening all over again. She returned that evening, exhausted, with forty pounds of potatoes and two quarts of milk. "I don't know how long I can keep up this kind of trading," she wrote in her diary.