

THE UKRAINIAN HOLOMODOR  
AND THE WESTERN PRESS

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In the early 1930s, Ukraine suffered through a famine that ultimately starved 7 million Ukrainians to death and was covered up by the Soviet government and Western press.<sup>1</sup> The famine was named “the Holodomor,” a Ukrainian name meaning “murder by hunger.”<sup>2</sup> As its name suggests, the Holodomor was man-made, caused by Stalin with his extreme collectivization policies of the First Five-Year Plan. The Soviet dictatorship, afraid that reports of the famine would ruin its chances of diplomatic recognition by the West, placed heavy restrictions on the foreign press. Threatened with deportation, or, in extreme cases, death, the foreign press complied with Soviet regulations and did not report the famine.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist Walter Duranty used his status as the foremost authority on the Soviet Union to conceal the famine from the American public.<sup>4</sup> Duranty’s reports were so trusted that most in the West remained unaware of the famine until 1985, when the United States Congress appointed a commission to investigate the famine. The commission concluded that the West remained unaware of the famine for 50 years because the pro-Soviet foreign press printed “Soviet

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fiction on the famine.”<sup>5</sup> Most in the West remained ignorant of the Ukrainian Holodomor until the 1980s because of extreme Soviet censorship aided by the personal ambitions of the Western press, as reflected in Walter Duranty’s deliberately false reports in his accounts of Ukraine in the early 1930s.

The Holodomor occurred as a result of the Ukrainian small farmers’ resistance to the mandatory collectivization policy in the 1928 Five-Year Plan. Following the 1861 abolition of serfdom in Ukraine, and prior to Soviet control, Ukraine fostered a socio-economic structure that relied on the partnership of the “wealthy” kulaks and proletariat farmers. The Ukrainian economy had boomed when these kulaks ceded more than 53 percent of their land to the former serfs for the development of individually-owned small farms.<sup>6</sup> Implementation of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928 called for the kulaks and small farmers to relinquish these individual land claims to the Soviet government in order to consolidate Ukraine into a single, proletariat class.<sup>7</sup> To do so, the Soviet dictatorship targeted the kulaks as “enemies” of the State.<sup>8</sup> Through lectures, Soviet commissars tried to instill in the small farmers animosity toward the kulaks. However, the small farmers were apprehensive about the Soviet anti-kulak propaganda, having gained their farms originally from the kulaks, and they resisted the first Soviet attempt at collectivization.<sup>9</sup> After numerous attempts to promote collectivization through propaganda and persuasion, the solidarity of the Ukrainian resistance became evident, and Stalin decided to collectivize Ukraine with brute force.

In 1930, Josef Stalin, the dictator of the Soviet Union, targeted Ukraine’s forced collectivization through three strategic steps. First, Stalin removed the kulaks and other Ukrainian cultural and intellectual leaders through forced labor, murder by firing squad, and deportation to Siberian concentration camps.<sup>10</sup> The loss of these leaders ended organized anti-collectivization resistance movements.<sup>11</sup> Second, Stalin’s army replaced Christian values with Communist ideals by destroying the Ukrainian Church. The Soviet commissars and soldiers smashed crosses, demolished churches, and decorated the streets with posters reading “Down with the

church!” and “Long live the Collective Farms!”<sup>12</sup> Spiritually, the Soviet commissars tried to replace the morals of the Church with those of Communism; physically the Soviet commissars transformed former churches into village theaters in which “propagandists danced on the place where the altar had stood.”<sup>13</sup> The loss of the Church brought a loss of the spirit and zeal that fueled the anti-Soviet movement. The third and final step towards collectivization was the artificially-imposed famine, the Holodomor. Stalin increased the grain output quota by an unattainable 44 percent and withheld a village’s food rations when the quota was not met.<sup>14</sup> Stalin was aware of the impracticality of these quotas, once noting “the struggle for bread is the struggle for Socialism,” and he relentlessly enforced the quotas as death tolls rose to 25,000 people a day.<sup>15</sup> This phrase, the only formal Soviet acknowledgement of the famine under Stalin’s rule, became the famine’s slogan. In his memoir of the famine, *Execution by Hunger*, Holodomor survivor Miron Dolot recalls a 1931 town meeting where a leading propagandist, Comrade “Thousander” Cherepin announced the “victory of the collective system of agriculture over the independent one.”<sup>16</sup> Dolot notes that posters bearing the slogan adorned the walls of the town hall, a room that was filled with “emaciated, walking skeletons; [and] others, on the contrary, were swollen from starvation. All were silent, depressed, and apathetic.”<sup>17</sup> But the famine’s slogan proved true, and, by 1932, a starving Ukraine was fully collectivized.

The famine did not end until May of 1933, when, after three years of hunger and death, the Ukrainian people were too weak to procure enough grain to successfully complete Stalin’s Five-Year Plan.<sup>18</sup> The legitimacy of Stalin’s regime depended on the success of the First Five-Year Plan. If the harvest were not reaped, the collectivization of Ukraine, and by association the First Five-Year Plan, would be unsuccessful.<sup>19</sup> If the First Five-Year Plan failed, the Soviet Union would not be considered legitimate enough to gain diplomatic recognition by the United States and admission into the League of Nations.<sup>20</sup> Seeking diplomatic recognition, Stalin restored food rations in 1933 so that the Ukrainian

farmers were healthy enough to harvest the grain and complete the First Five-Year Plan.

In order to further prove the “success” of collectivization and the First Five-Year Plan, the Soviet government under Stalin’s administration never acknowledged the famine’s existence. Doing so would have revealed both Ukrainian noncompliance with collectivization and its noncompliance with the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> Acknowledgement of noncompliance would suggest a weakness in the First Five-Year Plan, which would hurt both domestic and foreign respect for the Soviet government. Therefore, acknowledgment of the famine was forbidden in the Soviet Union under Stalin’s regime.<sup>22</sup> While rumors of the famine circulated, merely mentioning the famine could land one in prison for three to five years.<sup>23</sup> The state-controlled papers never printed news of the famine, and, in a 1933 interview, prominent Soviet Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov officially denounced rumors of the famine, when he lied flatly, “there is no famine.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the Soviet regime tightly controlled news of the famine in order to preserve confidence in Stalin, collectivization, and the First Five-Year Plan.

In order to prevent international knowledge of the famine, the Soviet government heightened restrictions on the foreign press. First, the Soviet government established a Foreign Press Department that censored all dispatches between foreign journalists and their editors. If a journalist attempted to smuggle a story across the border, the journalist’s visa was revoked, and the story was destroyed immediately.<sup>25</sup> Foreign journalists in the Soviet Union were rarely given permission to leave Moscow, and thus reported about the huge Soviet Union from a single city. Their reports became compilations of excerpts from Soviet papers, creating second-hand reporting that was laced with Soviet propaganda.<sup>26</sup> It would have been risky for a reporter to break the norm of second-hand reporting to follow the story of a rumored famine.

Malcolm Muggeridge, a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian*, was the first to break the cycle of second-hand reporting by witnessing the famine first-hand and reporting its full scale truth-

fully in March of 1933.<sup>27</sup> Muggeridge illegally caught a train to Ukraine, where he saw hordes of starving farmers and countless abandoned villages.<sup>28</sup> His articles were smuggled out in a diplomatic pouch and appeared in an anonymous series in the *Guardian* from March 25–28, 1933.<sup>29</sup> About this time, Gareth Jones, a contemporary of Muggeridge and secretary to the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, embarked on a similar illegal trip to the Ukrainian countryside. On March 29, 1933, Jones held a press conference in Berlin where he further publicized the tragedy.<sup>30</sup> The press conference sparked several articles by the Western press, increasing international attention to the famine.

The Soviet Union further tightened restrictions on the foreign press in response to the unwelcome press coverage of the famine. Eugene Lyons, the United Press correspondent in Moscow, wrote, “We were summoned to the Press Department one by one and instructed not to venture out of Moscow without submitting a detailed itinerary and having it officially sanctioned. In effect, therefore, we were summarily deprived of the right of unhampered travel in the country to which we were accredited.”<sup>31</sup> Following further complaints by the foreign press, Soviet Press Chief Konstantin Oumansky noted, “This is nothing new. Such a rule has been in existence since the beginning of the Revolution. Now we have decided to enforce it.”<sup>32</sup> To further demonstrate its iron-fist policy, the Soviet government banned Jones and Muggeridge from returning to the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> The deportation of Muggeridge and Jones became an unspoken threat to foreign journalists. While not ecstatic about their confinement to Moscow, the message from the Soviet government was clear: if the correspondents wished to remain in Russia, they would report the official Soviet position: “there is no famine.”<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet Union’s influence over the Western press jeopardized the credibility of Muggeridge’s reports. His articles did not match those of his peers, sparking confusion and skepticism among the public.<sup>35</sup> Beatrice Webb, a respected economist and Muggeridge’s aunt, was particularly furious with her nephew’s reports. Muggeridge once quoted from her diary, “Malcolm has

come back with stories about a terrible famine in the USSR. I have been to see Mr. Maisky [the Soviet ambassador in Britain] about it, and I realize that he's [Muggeridge] got it absolutely wrong."<sup>36</sup> Muggeridge adds, "Who would suppose that Mr. Maisky would say, "No, no, of course he's right"?<sup>37</sup> Muggeridge, with nothing to lose, having lost both his access to Ukraine and his job, vigorously continued to report on the famine. But he was alone in his accusations against the Soviet regime, leading many to believe the Soviet authorities and the countless stories from other foreign reporters that denied the famine. Ultimately, Muggeridge lost both his career and respect as a journalist as he fought to expose the famine in the face of the Soviet censorship.

The circumstances of Jones' death illustrate the ends to which the Soviet Union was willing to go in order to conceal the famine. On August 12, 1935, the eve of his 30th birthday, and two years after his reports on the famine, Jones was mysteriously murdered by Chinese bandits in route to the northwestern Chinese city of Kalgan.<sup>38</sup> Those close to Jones believed that his death was arranged by Soviet spies, a theory which Lloyd George supported.<sup>39</sup> Lloyd George commented, "Mr. Gareth Jones knew too much of what was going on (...) He had a passion for finding out what was happening in foreign lands wherever there was trouble, and in pursuit of his investigations he shrank from no risk. I had always been afraid that he would take one risk too many."<sup>40</sup> The connection between Jones' knowledge of the famine and his suspect death is in equal parts dubious and likely.<sup>41</sup>

The criticism Muggeridge and Jones received from Western society was in part a result of the professional necessity for the Western press to sympathize with the Soviet Union in their reports. This sympathy served to tighten the gaps that the Soviet censorship left open and to discount the facts from reporters like Muggeridge and Jones. In an interview commemorating the 50th anniversary of the famine, Muggeridge noted, "The press was not overtly pro-Soviet, but it was, as it is now, essentially sympathetic with that side and distrustful of any serious attack on it."<sup>42</sup> While some members of the foreign press were Soviet sympathizers,

many wrote pro-Soviet articles out of professional necessity. Jones' reports of the famine coincided with a major international news story, the trial of "six British engineers accused of sabotaging turbines and other machinery sold to the USSR by their own firm."<sup>43</sup> Soviet Press Chief Oumansky told the foreign reporters that, in order to cover the trial, they must repudiate Jones and the famine. This ultimatum was not unusual for the Soviet Press Department, which rewarded pro-Soviet reporters with everything from liquor and tobacco to exclusive interviews with high-ranking government officials.<sup>44</sup> Because pro-Soviet journalism advanced the careers and comforts of the foreign correspondents, the Western press rejected rumors of the famine and reported favorably on the First Five-Year Plan.

Walter Duranty, the *New York Times*' Moscow bureau chief since 1922, used his reputation to conceal the Holodomor and advance his status as the chief authority on the Soviet Union. Duranty's 10 years of experience in the Soviet Union allowed for a friendly rapport with the Soviets, who granted him exclusive interviews with high-level Soviet officials and access to classified government documents. In April of 1932, Duranty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his "dispassionate" Soviet correspondence.<sup>45</sup> The announcement noted that "Mr. Duranty's dispatches show profound and intimate comprehension of conditions in Russia and of the causes of those conditions."<sup>46</sup> Duranty's reports soothed American concerns over the famine and promoted the success of collectivization, leading the publisher of the *New York Times* Adolph S. Ochs to comment, "we have given Mr. Duranty the widest latitude because of our confidence in his integrity, and his alertness and ability to send us authentic news."<sup>47</sup> Duranty exercised his latitude to deny the facts of the famine for his own professional advancement.<sup>48</sup>

Duranty gained recognition as a foreign correspondent in 1919, when he was relocated to Riga, Latvia by the *New York Times*, to report on American and British aid efforts in the Baltic States. While there, Duranty learned of a Bolshevik courier who was caught smuggling \$13,000 worth of diamonds and suspicious docu-

ments from the Comintern to the American Communist Party.<sup>49</sup> These documents discussed Communist-organized anti-American plots and were seized by the Lettish authorities. The documents, although concerning the United States, were distributed to the British forces stationed in Latvia. In a stroke of luck, Duranty was offered copies of the documents from Captain Dewhurst of the British Army.<sup>50</sup> Duranty exploited his status as the only American reporter with access to the documents, later writing:

To me the effects of this capture were delightful. Most reporters know cases when they were handed a cracker-jack story on a plate, so to speak, but in this instance, it was not one story but a dozen, at a time when nothing was happening in Latvia, and when the United States was in the throes of a fantastic anti-Red scare.<sup>51</sup>

Duranty withheld the documents from the American Mission in Riga in order to maintain his exclusive story, which he broke on the front-page of the *New York Times* in a series of seven dispatches that slammed the Bolshevik-controlled Soviet Union. As Duranty released “a document a day for the next two weeks or more,” from December 22, 1919 to January 4, 1920, he established his position as a reputable foreign correspondent.<sup>52</sup>

Following his success with the Comintern courier articles, Duranty continued reporting in Riga until July of 1921 when the *New York Times* offered him the opportunity to report from Moscow. Duranty, eager to report the activity occurring in the fledgling Soviet Union, had applied for the job a year earlier.<sup>53</sup> While waiting for a visa, Duranty befriended a Soviet Press officer by the name of Markov.<sup>54</sup> In confidence, Markov told Duranty that the Soviet Press Department planned to deny Duranty a visa because of his Comintern courier articles. The articles led the department to believe that he would continue to write anti-Bolshevik reports that would portray the Soviet Union in a poor light. In order to gain entry to the Soviet Union, Duranty told Markov that the Comintern documents were invalid and pledged that he would not send “untrue or unfair reports from the Soviet Union.”<sup>55</sup> Duranty appeased the hesitant Soviet Union with an article heralding Lenin’s announcement of the New Economic Policy on August



12, 1921.<sup>56</sup> Following the report, as Duranty put it, “luck broke my way,” and he was allowed to enter the Soviet Union.<sup>57</sup> This experience proved to Duranty what it took for a foreign correspondent to remain in the Soviet Union. His report on the New Economic Policy set the bar for his reports in the years to come, which would be filled with articles that portrayed the dictatorship in a positive light to the foreign public. Duranty’s articles from within the Soviet Union would remain supportive of the Soviet government and its official views.

Throughout the 1920s, Duranty reported the Soviet Union from the right hand of the Bolsheviks, building a rapport with Soviet leaders. Through Lenin’s death, Trotsky’s exile, and Stalin’s rise to power, Duranty remained supportive of the Soviet Union. In his book, *US Intelligence Perceptions of Soviet Power, 1921–1946*, Leonard Leshuk quotes A. W. Klieforth of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, to whom Duranty admitted “in agreement with *The New York Times* and the Soviet authorities, ‘his official dispatches always reflected the official opinion of the Soviet regime and not his own.’”<sup>58</sup> In return for his cooperation, the Soviet Union provided Duranty with a large apartment, chauffeur, and a mistress, among other amenities that were usually reserved for commissars.<sup>59</sup> Through pro-Soviet reporting, Duranty earned a comfortable life in the Soviet Union.

On November 30, 1930, the Soviet Press Department rewarded Duranty’s pro-Soviet reports by giving him an exclusive interview with Stalin. The interview, only Stalin’s second in four years, was both an honor and an exclusive privilege. Duranty reiterated throughout his article recounting the interview that he was awestruck by Stalin and repeatedly praised the Premier as a “great” man with a spirit that was “far more interesting than what they say.”<sup>60</sup> In the article, Duranty mentioned Stalin’s interest in the possibility of the Soviet Union doing grain business with capitalist nations. The article lingered briefly on the minor point, before rebounding to discuss Soviet-United States relations.<sup>61</sup> Yet Stalin’s comment, microscopic within a titanic interview, foreshadowed the lengths to which Stalin would go in order to sell the grain

produced during Ukraine's forced collectivization. Duranty included the grain comment in the development of a larger point: the success of Soviet collectivization. Duranty framed the article to support Stalin's assertion to the Western world that, "Socialist production is possible and is growing and will succeed. Whether they [capitalists] like it or not, Socialist economics will develop."<sup>62</sup> Duranty received international recognition for the article covering Stalin's announcement, certifying his place as the most distinguished Moscow correspondent of the day.<sup>63</sup>

Because of the success of his 1930 interview with Stalin, Duranty's Soviet reports were widely read and respected by the West. Therefore, on September 1, 1932, when Duranty published his first article on the Ukrainian famine, his report was trusted by the West as the truth. The article mentioned an "unsatisfactory" harvest in Ukraine, and attributed it to defiant peasants.<sup>64</sup> Duranty noted that the "demoralized" peasants sowed the fields half as quickly as the prior year and stole from the collective farms, leading to a "widespread shortage" of grain. Although Duranty later acknowledged that he knew of Ukraine's forced collectivization and the famine when writing the article, he omitted both in his report.<sup>65</sup> The report exemplified Duranty's style of dishonest appeasement journalism. By attributing the grain shortages to defiant peasants, Duranty ensured that the West would not blame the Soviet regime or collectivization for grain shortages. Because Duranty dispelled Western fears of a famine in Ukraine and satisfied the Soviet Press Department, he ensured that both his access to Soviet officials and status as the most respected Moscow correspondent would not change.

However, Duranty's reports denying the famine were interrupted in March of 1933 when Muggeridge and Jones each published first-hand accounts of the famine. On March 31, 1933, in the wake of Muggeridge's and Jones's deportations, Duranty published an article denouncing Jones's reports of famine.<sup>66</sup> The article was released the night after Soviet Press Chief Oumansky warned the Moscow foreign correspondents about reporting the famine, a night which reaffirmed the lessons Duranty learned

when gaining his Soviet visa. In the article, Duranty categorized Jones's judgment that "thousands [are] already dead and millions menaced by death from starvation" as a "somewhat hasty" depiction of Ukraine in comparison to Duranty's "more trustworthy" reports from personal connections in the Soviet government.<sup>67</sup> The article concluded "conditions are bad, but there is no famine," and sardonically added, "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."<sup>68</sup> While Duranty harshly denied the famine in the article, he later commented that he knew of the famine at the time but did not want to give a "second-hand description" of Ukraine's "miseries, hopes, disappointments, and struggles (...) without having seen them."<sup>69</sup> In addition to Duranty's professed reason for denying the famine, Duranty was proud of his reputation as the leading informant on the Soviet Union to the West and did not want to lose that status. Therefore, when Press Chief Oumansky threatened Duranty with the loss of his job, Duranty denied the famine.<sup>70</sup> Because Duranty was the most respected Moscow correspondent of the time, his article denying Jones' report of the famine was accepted by his Western audience as the truth. Thus, Duranty used his authority to lie to his Western audience, and he lied to his Western audience in order to keep this same authority.

Duranty was so respected as an authority on the Soviet Union that even Franklin Roosevelt contacted him for information regarding the Soviet Union prior to his 1932 Presidential election.<sup>71</sup> A detailed outline of their conversation appeared in the *Times* the next day under the headline "Roosevelt Confers On Russian Policy." At the time, Roosevelt was contemplating the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, when and if he were elected. During an afternoon, Roosevelt quizzed Duranty on the economic climate in the Soviet Union and all aspects of their industry.<sup>72</sup> A thorough overview of Soviet industry would have included the grain industry, which was primarily located in Ukraine. Yet, in both the *Times* article<sup>73</sup> and Duranty's account of the afternoon in his autobiography,<sup>74</sup> the topics of famine and grain were never mentioned. The consequences of Duranty's omission to then-Governor Roosevelt were seen on Au-

gust 25, 1933, when President Roosevelt signed the International Wheat Agreement. The International Wheat Agreement called on the Soviet Union to lower the price of wheat, in exchange for increased trade with the United States.<sup>75</sup> Upon signing the agreement, Roosevelt unintentionally promoted the harsh Soviet collectivization policy. If Roosevelt knew of the famine, he would have known of the problems that increased wheat trade posed to the recently-collectivized, and starving, Ukraine.

Duranty's role in denying the famine and supporting the International Wheat Agreement was recognized by the Soviet Union and rewarded in September of 1933, when the reporter was granted the opportunity to travel to Ukraine, where he saw the effect of the Holodomor firsthand.<sup>76</sup> While Stalin restored food rations to pre-collectivization levels in May of 1933, Ukrainians were still recovering from the famine at the time of Duranty's visit.<sup>77</sup> Because of Duranty's previous pro-Soviet reports denying the famine; the Soviet Union trusted Duranty not to report the famine, but instead the "success" of Ukraine's collectivization. Stalin clarified the Soviet Union's expectation of what Duranty would report from Ukraine in August of 1933, after the signing of the International Wheat Agreement. Stalin commended Duranty's pro-Soviet reports, noting, "You have done a great job in your reporting of the USSR, although you are not a Marxist, because you tried to tell the truth about our country and to understand it and explain it to your readers."<sup>78</sup> Duranty's report to the *New York Times* showed that he met Stalin's expectations of his visit, reporting, "The writer has just completed a 200-mile auto trip through the heart of the Ukraine and can say positively that the harvest is splendid and all talk of famine now is ridiculous."<sup>79</sup> In his report, Duranty continued to depict a thriving Ukraine that was "healthy and well nourished,"<sup>80</sup> and where citizens were "willingly obeying the Kremlin's orders."<sup>81</sup> Duranty's clearest acknowledgement of the reasons behind Stalin's efforts in Ukraine appeared in the closing paragraphs of the article, where he denounced the kulaks and attributed the rise in grain rations to collectivization.<sup>82</sup> In closing, Duranty wrote, "In short, the mechanization and collectivization

of Russian agriculture have come to stay and the Kremlin has won its battle.”<sup>83</sup> As the foremost U.S. authority on the Soviet Union, Duranty’s firsthand account of Ukraine depicted a Ukraine thriving because of collectivization and put any final rumors of famine in Ukraine to rest.

Duranty used his 1935 memoir, *I Write as I Please*, to cement the image of successful collectivization. In the memoir, Duranty recognized that his reports often sympathized unduly with the Soviet Union because it was his duty as a Moscow correspondent to understand and report Soviet news “like a true-blue Stalinist.”<sup>84</sup> Duranty noted, “I had no intention of being an apologist for the Stalin administration; all that I was thinking of was that I had ‘doped out’ the line that the administration inevitably must follow, and when it did follow that line I naturally felt that it was right.”<sup>85</sup> The memoir followed Duranty’s usual style of appeasement journalism by acknowledging his Soviet sympathies without discrediting his earlier false reports on collectivization. Duranty emphasized that while he sympathized with the Soviet Union, his reports were still factual, commenting, “It is a matter of history that the first Five-Year Plan succeeded far better than anyone abroad expected.”<sup>86</sup> To support his statement, Duranty recounted horrors of kulak mismanagement, with a reference to “grain (...) rotting unharvested in the fields.”<sup>87</sup> Duranty reiterated that it was the Soviet government that saved the poor villagers who could not collectivize on their own and helped the peasants to “accept a modern form of agriculture instead of the wasteful clumsy methods which he and his grandfather and great-grandfathers have followed.”<sup>88</sup> The memoir, published two years after the famine, was distanced enough from the famine to establish the “final word” on the famine and collectivization. With no credible opposing stories, it would seem that *I Write as I Please* and Duranty’s other reports denying the famine would conceal the Holodomor indefinitely.

It was not until after Stalin’s death in 1953 that information regarding the famine was again exposed. While the Soviet Union slowly acknowledged the famine, it never took full responsibility for the massacre. In his 1956 “Secret Speech,” Soviet Premier Nikita

Khrushchev alluded to a “difficult situation in agriculture,” with no further discussion of the famine.<sup>89</sup> The famine was not referenced again until 1969, when Premier Leonid Brezhnev recognized “errors” in “collective farm construction” but did not specify the Holodomor in Ukraine. Brezhnev argued that the Party did not need to recognize its mistake in collectivization, because the Party had already rectified the mistakes.<sup>90</sup> As the Soviet Union began to unravel in the 1980s, Ukrainian testimonies of the famine began to surface.<sup>91</sup> The United States Congress appointed a commission to investigate the famine in 1985, bringing the famine to international attention. In a series of reports released between 1985 and 1988, the commission concluded that millions of Ukrainians were killed in a 1932–1933 manmade famine created by the Soviet government.<sup>92</sup> The findings of the Congressional reports were reiterated in historian Robert Conquest’s 1987 book *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*.<sup>93</sup> Conquest’s book and the Congressional reports encouraged many survivors of the famine to publish their eyewitness accounts of the famine. Finally, in 1987, the Soviet Union acknowledged the Holodomor’s existence and impact but blamed it on drought and poor harvest.<sup>94</sup>

The Soviet government’s harsh censorship policy, aided by the personal ambitions of the pro-Soviet Western press, was responsible for the 55-year concealment of the Ukrainian Holodomor to the Western world. In recent years, the truth has seeped to the surface, trading Duranty’s respect for disgrace, and Jones and Muggeridge’s humiliation for honor. In 2003, the Pulitzer Prize Board met to discuss the possibility of revoking Duranty’s 1932 Pulitzer Prize. Ultimately, the Board chose to leave the prize intact, stating that the prize was awarded for 13 dispatches that were published in 1931, prior to his reports on the famine. They noted Duranty’s questionable Soviet leanings, yet stated affirmatively that the Pulitzer Prize was independent of the author’s character.<sup>95</sup> In 2008, Gareth Jones and Malcolm Muggeridge received posthumously the Ukrainian Order of Freedom.<sup>96</sup> Their courageous reporting defied both the legalities and the norms for the foreign press at the time. Finally, the Ukrainian famine is receiving the attention

it was long denied. As the truth is unraveled, it is clearer than ever that the Western ignorance of the famine was primarily due to the Soviet-sympathizing foreign press<sup>97</sup> and harsh censorship.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Miron Dolot, Execution by Hunger (Ontario: Penguin Books Canada, 1987) p. vii

<sup>2</sup> Early reports of the Holodomor refer to it as the “hidden famine” or “the Ukrainian famine of 1932–1933.” The name “Holodomor” emerged as Ukrainian testimonies of the famine surfaced following the Soviet Union’s gradual dissolution in 1980s. James Perloff, “Holodomor: The Secret Holocaust,” The New American (February 16, 2009) p. 31

<sup>3</sup> Perloff, p. 31

<sup>4</sup> Dolot, p. 33

<sup>5</sup> Victor Malarek, “Famine in Ukraine called Stalin’s worst crime,” The Globe and Mail (March 7, 1989) [www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com) (accessed March 20, 2012)

<sup>6</sup> Orest Subtelny, Ukraine: A History 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) p. 256

<sup>7</sup> Valentina Kuryliw, “The Holodomor, 1932–1933,” Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932–1933, [http://www.faminegenocide.com/kuryliw/the\\_ukrainian\\_genocide.htm](http://www.faminegenocide.com/kuryliw/the_ukrainian_genocide.htm) (accessed December 26, 2012)

<sup>8</sup> Perloff, p. 37

<sup>9</sup> M. Wayne Morris, Stalin’s Famine and Roosevelt’s Recognition of Russia (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1994) p. 37

<sup>10</sup> Kuryliw

<sup>11</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, “Deleting the Holodomor: Ukraine Unmakes Itself,” World Affairs <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/deleting-holodomor-ukraine-unmakes-itself> (accessed March 21, 2012)

<sup>12</sup> Dolot, pp. 28–29

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29

<sup>14</sup> By raising the grain quota and reducing rations, Stalin demanded that the peasants release more grain for export, not for personal consumption. Perloff, p. 34

<sup>15</sup> Perloff, p. 36

<sup>16</sup> Dolot, p. 148

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230

<sup>19</sup> Morris, p. 90

<sup>20</sup> Marco Carynnyk, “Making News Fit to Print: Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933,” in Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933 ed. Bohdan Bociurkiw, Manoly R. Lupul, and Bohdan Rubchak



(Edmonton, Canada: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1986) p. 110

<sup>21</sup> Peter Kenez, A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 100

<sup>22</sup> Felix Wemheuer, "Regime Changes of Memory," Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 10, no. 1 (2009), <http://muse.jhu.edu.prox.lib.ncsu.edu> (accessed March 20, 2012)

<sup>23</sup> Perloff, p. 37

<sup>24</sup> Maxim Litvinov, "Gareth Jones Interview with Commissar Maxim Litvinov March 1933," interview by Gareth Jones, [garethjones.org](http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/st_patricks/litvinov_famine_denia_oldl.htm), [http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/st\\_patricks/litvinov\\_famine\\_denia\\_oldl.htm](http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/st_patricks/litvinov_famine_denia_oldl.htm) (accessed December 26, 2012)

<sup>25</sup> Morris, p. 82

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86

<sup>28</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, "Malcolm Muggeridge on Stalin's Famine: 'Deliberate,' 'Diabolical' Starvation," interview by Marco Carynnyk, The Ukrainian Weekly 51, no. 23 (June 1983)

<sup>29</sup> The articles appear on Gareth Jones's website, with all the citation information from The Manchester Guardian. The Guardian published the articles anonymously, later noting Muggeridge as the author. Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Soviet and the Peasantry," The Manchester Guardian (March 25, 1933), [http://garethjones.org/soviet\\_articles/soviet\\_and\\_the\\_peasantry\\_1.htm](http://garethjones.org/soviet_articles/soviet_and_the_peasantry_1.htm) (accessed June 26, 2012); Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Soviet and the Peasantry," The Manchester Guardian (March 27, 1933), [http://garethjones.org/soviet\\_articles/soviet\\_and\\_the\\_peasantry\\_2.htm](http://garethjones.org/soviet_articles/soviet_and_the_peasantry_2.htm) (accessed June 26, 2012); Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Soviet and the Peasantry," The Manchester Guardian (March 28, 1933), [http://www.garethjones.org/soviet\\_articles/soviet\\_and\\_the\\_peasantry\\_3.htm](http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/soviet_and_the_peasantry_3.htm) (accessed June 26, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> GarethJones.org, "Gareth's final visit to the Soviet Union in March 1933, exposing the Holodomor (Soviet Ukrainian Famine-Genocide)," Famine Exposure Newspaper Articles relating to Gareth Jones' trips to The Soviet Union (1930-35) [http://www.garethjones.org/soviet\\_articles/soviet\\_articles.htm](http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/soviet_articles.htm) (accessed June 18, 2012)

<sup>31</sup> Eugene Lyons, Assignment in Utopia (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937; GarethJones.org, 2009, p. 576, <http://>

www.garethjones.org/soviet\_articles/assignment\_in\_utopia.htm (accessed June 18, 2012)

<sup>32</sup> Lyons, p. 576

<sup>33</sup> Ian Hunter, "Telling the truth about the Ukrainian famine," National Post (November 2008): A.22, <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed June 18, 2012)

<sup>34</sup> Lyons, p. 576; Litvinov, "Gareth Jones Interview with Commissar Maxim Litvinov March 1933"

<sup>35</sup> Hunter, "Telling the truth about the Ukrainian famine"

<sup>36</sup> Muggeridge, "Stalin's Famine"

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Garethjones.org, "Gareth's final visit to the Soviet Union in March 1933, exposing the Holodomor (Soviet Ukrainian Famine-Genocide)"

<sup>39</sup> Jack Malvern, "British newsman who told the world how Stalin was starving his people," The Times (November 2009) p. 31, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed June 18, 2012)

<sup>40</sup> "Jones: The man who knew too much," BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cambridgeshire/low/people\\_and\\_places/history/newsid\\_8357000/8357028.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cambridgeshire/low/people_and_places/history/newsid_8357000/8357028.stm) (accessed June 26, 2012)

<sup>41</sup> Malvern

<sup>42</sup> Muggeridge

<sup>43</sup> Whitman Bassow, The Moscow Correspondents (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988) p. 69

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

<sup>47</sup> "Musical Play Gets the Pulitzer Award; Mrs. Buck, Pershing, Duranty Honored," The New York Times (May 3, 1932), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F00B10F73F5A13738DDDAA0894DD405B828FFID3> (accessed June 19, 2012)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Morris, p. 96

<sup>50</sup> Perloff, p. 37

<sup>51</sup> Walter Duranty, I Write As I Please (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1935) pp. 73–74

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75–76

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76

<sup>55</sup> In his conversation with Markov, Duranty acknowledged that he approached his position as a foreign correspondent with a style of appeasement journalism. To placate his hosts, Duranty's reports reflected the bias of the location where

he wrote them. Therefore, his articles in Latvia, which had recently gained freedom from the Soviet Union, were conducive to the anti-Soviet spirit. *Ibid.*, p. 102

<sup>56</sup> Duranty does not provide a first name for Markov, nor does his biographer S.J. Taylor. After further research, Markov's first name could not be found. *Ibid.*, p. 105

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105

<sup>58</sup> Walter Duranty, "Lenin Abandons State Ownership As Soviet Policy," *The New York Times* (August 13, 1921), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9C01E7DF1431EF33A25750C1A96E9C946095D6CF> (accessed July 6, 2012)

<sup>59</sup> Duranty, *I Write as I Please*, p. 106

<sup>60</sup> Leonard Leshuk, *US Intelligence Perceptions of Soviet Power, 1921–1946* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003) p. 76

<sup>61</sup> Robert Fulford, "Duranty was Stalin's spin doctor," *The National Post* (November 25, 2003) A16

<sup>62</sup> Walter Duranty, "Stalin Sees Capitalists Drifting Surely to War; Puzzled by Our Attitude," *The New York Times* (December 1, 1930), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F30D10FA3A5C157A93C3A91789D95F448385F9> (accessed June 19, 2012)

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> S.J. Taylor, *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty, The New York Times's Man in Moscow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 184

<sup>66</sup> Walter Duranty, "Soviet Economy Hit by Small Harvest," *The New York Times* (September 1, 1932), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FA0A1EF73B5516738DDDA80894D1405B828FF1D3> (accessed May 7, 2012)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Walter Duranty, "Russians Hungry, But Not Starving," *The New York Times* (March 31, 1933), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F00A16F63C5F1A7A93C3AA1788D85F478385F9> (accessed May 7, 2012)

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Duranty, *I Write As I Please*

<sup>72</sup> Morris, p. 95

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92

<sup>74</sup> Duranty, *I Write As I Please*, p. 321

<sup>75</sup> "Roosevelt Confers on Russian Policy," *The New York Times* (July 26, 1932), <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/>

archive/pdf?res=FB0616F63E5513738DDDAF0A94DF405B828F  
F1D3 (accessed June 21, 2012)

<sup>76</sup> Duranty, pp. 320–321

<sup>77</sup> Bociurkiw, p. 86

<sup>78</sup> Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet  
Collectivization and the Terror-Famine (New York: Oxford  
University Press, 1986) p. 281

<sup>79</sup> Morris, p. 94

<sup>80</sup> Walter Duranty, “Big Ukraine Crop Taxes Harvesters,”  
The New York Times (September 18, 1933), [http://query.  
nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0C16F63E5B137A93CA  
A81782D85F478385F9](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0C16F63E5B137A93CA<br/>A81782D85F478385F9) (accessed May 1, 2012)

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Duranty, I Write As I Please, p. 278

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 283–284

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301

<sup>90</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, Speech to 20th Congress of the  
C.P.S.U. (February 24, 1956) [http://www.marxists.org/archive/  
khrushchev/1956/02/24.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/<br/>khrushchev/1956/02/24.htm) (accessed January 25, 2013)

<sup>91</sup> Wemheuer

<sup>92</sup> Dolot

<sup>93</sup> Wemheuer

<sup>94</sup> Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization  
and the Terror-Famine

<sup>95</sup> Malarek

<sup>96</sup> “Statement on Walter Duranty,” The Pulitzer Prize Board  
<http://www.pulitzer.org/durantypressrelease> (accessed June 6,  
2012)

<sup>97</sup> Hunter

## Annotated Bibliography

## Primary Sources

Dolot, Miron, Execution by Hunger Ontario: Penguin Books Canada, 1987

A survivor of the Holodomor, Dolot provides a firsthand account of the Ukrainian Holodomor from a town in the Cherkasy province of Ukraine. Dolot details the process of Ukraine's forced collectivization, interweaving facts with his personal experience.

Duranty, Walter, I Write As I Please New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1935

Duranty's memoir of his time as a foreign correspondent from the Soviet Union was critical in understanding Duranty's approach to journalism and what motivated his work as a foreign correspondent.

Garethjones.org, "Gareth's final visit to the Soviet Union in March 1933, exposing the Holodomor (Soviet Ukrainian Famine-Genocide)," Famine Exposure Newspaper Articles relating to Gareth Jones' trips to The Soviet Union (1930-35), <http://www.garethjones.org/soviet/articles> (accessed June 18, 2012)

This website, hosted by Jones' family, provides copies of several articles relating to Jones, Muggeridge, and Duranty's reports during the famine. The website provides a variety of primary sources from these reporters, including pictures, diary entries, and reports.

Khrushchev, Nikita, Speech to 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U., February 24, 1956, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/khrushchev/1956/02/24.htm> (accessed January 25, 2013)

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's famous "Secret Speech" acknowledged the mistakes of the Stalinist administration, but blamed these mistakes on a "cult of personality" around Stalin. Khrushchev blamed the Stalin regime for straying from the Leninist plan for the Soviet Union, thereby acknowledging the agricultural "difficulties" that occurred through collectivization as a side effect of Stalin's ignorance. While Khrushchev did not formally recognize the 1932-1933 famine in Ukraine, the "Secret Speech" was the Soviet government's

first acknowledgement that the collectivization of the Soviet republics was not seamless.

Litvinov, Maxim, “Gareth Jones Interview with Commissar Maxim Litvinov March 1933,” interview by Gareth Jones, GarethJones.org, March 1933, [http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/st\\_patricks/litvinov\\_famine\\_denia\\_oldl.htm](http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/st_patricks/litvinov_famine_denia_oldl.htm) (accessed December 26, 2012)

This interview between Soviet Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov and Gareth Jones is significant because at the time Jones was preparing for his March 29, 1933 Berlin press conference exposing the famine. It shows that Jones inquired on the famine at the peak of its intensity, and the Soviet government outright denied it.

Lyons, Eugene, Assignment in Utopia New York: Harcourt Brace. 1937, GarethJones.org, 2009, [http://www.garethjones.org/soviet\\_articles/assignment\\_in\\_utopia.htm](http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/assignment_in_utopia.htm) (accessed November 4, 2008)

Lyons, a Moscow correspondent in the 1920s and 1930s, provides a firsthand account of the restrictions placed on the foreign correspondents within the Soviet Press Department. Later in his life, Lyons served as a biographer of the United States President Herbert Hoover.

Muggeridge, Malcolm, “Malcolm Muggeridge on Stalin’s Famine: ‘Deliberate,’ ‘Diabolical’ Starvation,” interview by Marco Carynyk, The Ukrainian Weekly 51, no. 23, June 1983

Muggeridge, the Manchester Guardian’s Moscow correspondent at the time of the Holodomor, is interviewed on the famine’s 50th anniversary by Marco Carynyk, a Ukrainian historian. In the interview, Muggeridge explains the harsh public reaction to his reports of the famine.

#### Secondary Sources

Bassow, Whitman, The Moscow Correspondents New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1988

Bassow, a former Moscow correspondent with United Press International, delivers a history of the Moscow correspondents until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. While not a correspondent during the 1930s, Bassow provides

a more thorough understanding of the climate for the foreign correspondents in the Soviet Union during the Holodomor.

Bociurkiw, Bohdan, Manoly R. Lupul, and Bohdan Rubchak, eds., Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933 Edmonton, Canada: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1986, p. 8

This compilation of short essays depict the various components of the Holodomor and its secretive nature. At the time of the book's release, Bociurkiw was a professor of political science (with emphasis on Soviet Ukraine) at Carleton University. Lupul was a professor at the University of Alberta, and Rubchak a professor at the University of Chicago. The book gave a good comprehensive view of the famine, from many key angles. Especially helpful is an essay from historian Marco Carynnyk that discusses the role of the Foreign Press in reporting the famine.

Conquest, Robert, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine New York: Oxford University Press, 1986

The Harvest of Sorrow was the first book describing the origins, actions, and implications of the Holodomor. Conquest, a research fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, is often credited for exposing the famine to the West because of his authority in the field of Ukrainian studies and the depth of the book's discussion of the Holodomor.

Kuryliw, Valentina, "The Holodomor, 1932–1933," Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932–1933, [http://www.faminegenocide.com/kuryliw/the\\_ukrainian\\_genocide.htm](http://www.faminegenocide.com/kuryliw/the_ukrainian_genocide.htm) (accessed December 26, 2012)

Kuryliw, a Ukrainian world history teacher in Ontario, has shared her Ukrainian heritage in a series of teaching materials and articles on Ukraine's history. This article provides a thorough history of the Holodomor, its origins, and Ukraine's forced collectivization.

Leshuk, Leonard, US Intelligence Perceptions of Soviet Power 1921–1946 London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003

Leshuk, a Soviet historian, discusses the nature of the New York Times' relationship with the Soviet Union, with a thorough discussion of Walter Duranty's motivations. Leshuk is known for his work in revealing the Holodomor.

Malarek, Victor, "Famine in Ukraine called Stalin's worst crime," The Globe and Mail March 7, 1989, [www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com) (accessed March 20, 2012)

Malarek, a Canadian journalist, discusses Stalin's effect on the Holodomor. The article discusses Stalin's many crimes, arguing that the forced collectivization of Ukraine was the worst. Malarek blames Stalin's regime and the censorship of the Soviet Union for the brutality of the famine and lack of Western knowledge of the famine.

Morris, M. Wayne, Stalin's Famine and Roosevelt's Recognition of Russia Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1994

Morris, a historian, compiles and analyzes Roosevelt's impressions of the Soviet Union during his presidency. The book discusses Walter Duranty and his deliberate lies to President Roosevelt regarding the Soviet Union and Ukraine. The book provides many useful statistics and a unique perspective on the Holodomor.

Motyl, Alexander J., "Deleting the Holodomor: Ukraine Unmakes Itself," World Affairs, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/deleting-holodomor-ukraine-unmakes-itself>, March 20, 2012

Motyl, a political science professor at Rutgers University, discusses the struggle that Ukraine has gone through in recent years regarding the Holodomor. He mentions the revisionist policies and tendencies of Ukraine's most recent president, Viktor Yanukovich. The article outlines the execution of the Holodomor and the steps that the Soviet government took to force collectivization.

Perloff, James, "Holodomor: The Secret Holocaust," The New American February 16, 2009

This article is heavily accusatory, but highly insightful as Perloff depicts the realities of the Holodomor. Perloff provides a concise analysis of the crimes Stalin committed and the deaths Ukraine suffered.

Subtelny, Orest, Ukraine: A History, 3rd ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000



Subtelny, a professor at York University in Toronto, provides a thorough history of Ukraine. Subtelny discusses Ukraine's stratified social structure prior to the 1861 abolition of serfdom, providing context for understanding the social implications of Ukraine's 1928 collectivization.

Taylor, S.J., Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times's Man in Moscow New York: Oxford University Press, 1990

Taylor, Duranty's biographer, follows Duranty's duration as a Moscow correspondent. Following the progression of I Write as I Please, Taylor provides additional opinions and outside commentary on Duranty's actions in Moscow. The biography was helpful in providing information on what Duranty did not cover in I Write as I Please, but did not provide much new information otherwise.

Wemheuer, Felix, "Regime Changes of Memory," Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 10, no. 1 (2009), <http://muse.jhu.edu.prox.lib.ncsu.edu> (accessed March 20, 2012)

Wemheuer, a professor at Suffolk University, provides an extensive comparison of Stalin's Soviet Union to Mao Zedong's China. In detail, Wemheuer discusses the Soviet Union's track record with recognizing the Holodomor.

Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*

New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 232-233

An activist recalls [Stalin's forced famine in the Ukraine]:

"I heard the children...coughing, coughing with screams [from government-planned famine]. And I saw the looks of the men: frightened, pleading, hateful, dully impassive, extinguished with despair or flaring up with half-mad, daring ferocity.

'Take it. Take everything away. There's still a pot of borscht on the stove. It's plain, got no meat. But still it's got beets, taters 'n' cabbage. And it's salted. Better take it, comrade citizens! Here, hang on. I'll take off my shoes. They're patched and repatched, but maybe they'll have some use for the proletariat, for our dear Soviet power!'

It was excruciating to see and hear all this. And even worse was to take part in it...and I persuaded myself, explained to myself. I mustn't give in to debilitating pity. We were realizing historical necessity. We were performing our revolutionary duty. We were obtaining grain for the socialist fatherland. For the Five Year Plan."

He adds, "With the rest of my generation I firmly believed that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the universal triumph of Communism, and for the sake of that goal everything was permissible—to lie, to steal, to destroy hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, all those who were hindering our work or could hinder it, everyone who stood in the way. And to hesitate or doubt about all this was to give in to 'intellectual squeamishness' and 'stupid liberalism,' the attribute of people who 'could not see the forest for the trees.'

That was how I reasoned, and everyone like me, even when...I saw what 'total collectivization' meant—how they 'kulakized' and 'de-kulakized,' how they mercilessly stripped the peasants in the winter of 1932-1933. I took part in this myself, scouring the countryside, searching for hidden grain, testing the earth with an iron rod for loose spots that might lead to buried grain. With the others, I emptied out the old folks' storage chests, stopping my ears to the children's crying and the women's wails. For I was convinced that I was accomplishing the great and necessary transformation of the countryside; that in the days to come the people who lived there would be better off for it; that their distress and suffering were the result of their own ignorance or the machinations of the class enemy; that those who sent me—and I myself—knew better than the peasants how they should live, what they should sow and when they should plough.

In the spring of 1933 I saw people dying from hunger [eventually about 14.5 million human beings were made to starve to death]. I saw women and children with distended bellies, turning blue, still breathing but with vacant, lifeless eyes. And corpses—corpses in ragged sheepskin coats and cheap felt boots; corpses in peasant huts, in the melting snow of the old Volgoda, under the bridges of Kharkov...I saw this and did not go out of my mind or commit suicide. Nor did I curse those who had sent me out to take away the peasants' grain in the winter, and in the spring to persuade the barely walking, skeleton-thin or sickly swollen people to go into the fields in order to 'fulfill the bolshevik sowing plan in shock-worker style'.

Nor did I lose my faith. As before, I believed because I wanted to believe."