

Gareth Jones – A Man Who Knew Too Much.

*Presentation at The National Press Club, Washington, D.C.
21st November 2011*



*By
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Gareth Jones
- A Man Who Knew Too Much

National Press Club
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In Memoriam
Margaret Siriol Colley
6 Jun 1925 – 20 Nov 2011

www.garethjones.org



Every year journalists put their lives at risk in exposing uncomfortable truths. According to The New York based Committee to Protect Journalists over 850 have been killed world-wide since 1992. In the West the freedom of the press is greatly prized. We are the first to criticise foreign states who censor the press and silence their critics. But what happens when a pillar of the Western media breaches its public trust and makes its own compact with despotism? One example was CNN's surreptitious bargain with Saddam Hussein to suppress negative news about his regime. In 2003, *The New York Times* published CNN's long

belated apologies. Another example, far more bitter in its hypocrisy, and with greater consequences, takes us back to the 1930's and carries us through to the present day.

I would like to tell you about my great uncle Gareth Jones, a young Welsh journalist, who fought to expose the truth about the extermination of millions of people, a campaign by Stalin designed to secure the viability of the USSR. Gareth paid for it with his life and was deliberately airbrushed out of existence for generations. I shall also tell you how the most prestigious paper in the US played a role in his demise, not only by spiking the news but also by deliberately, deceiving the reading public. The ramifications are still with us today.

In November 2009, The Wren Library, at Trinity College, Cambridge (Gareth's Alma Mater) held an exhibition of his graphic eyewitness accounts of his off-limits trek into Ukraine in March 1933, that are preserved in his diaries. His observations probably represent the only surviving contemporary independent western verification of the genocide, that is now known as the "Holodomor". 180 newspapers across the world, from the *Washington Post* to the *London Times* reported the event.

These dairies had been forgotten, and left undiscovered in a suitcase in the family home until 1990, although their significance was not fully appreciated until 2003. This summer, they were deposited for safe-keeping at the National Library of Wales.

In 2003, I visited the UN with my mother to attend the first exhibition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Holodomor. Few had heard of the great man-made famine in Ukraine and even fewer knew of Gareth's role in telling the world about it.

Gareth Jones was born in Barry, South Wales in 1905, the son of a School headmaster. After graduating from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1929 with a first-class honours degree in Russian, German and French. David Lloyd George, the former British Prime Minister then employed him as his foreign affairs advisor.

Gareth went to the Soviet Union on three occasions between 1930 and 1933. After each visit, he wrote articles for a number of newspapers about



the ever worsening conditions he had observed. These were the direct result of Stalin's Five-Year Plan. On his first trip in 1930, shortly after the Wall St Crash, Gareth had gone as the eyes & ears of Lloyd George. He went with a politically open mind as to the success of the great Soviet experiment. In the late 1890s his mother had been a governess to the Welsh family who founded the modern city of Donetz. However, following an unescorted pilgrimage to Donetz, he returned disillusioned by the brutality of the Stalinist regime against the Ukrainian people, and complete lack of food in the region.

He was subsequently invited through Lord Lothian, an acquaintance of Lloyd George, to write three articles for the *London Times*, entitled; '*The Real Russia*' in which he first mentioned the onset of famine conditions in the USSR. These were unsigned & uncensored.

He returned to the Soviet Union in 1931, after being head-hunted for his Soviet expertise by Ivy Lee Associates of Wall Street, the then leading PR agency in the world. They asked Gareth to accompany a young Jack Heinz II (heir to the Heinz food corporation). By sleeping on the 'bug-infested floors' of the Soviet peasantry, they both experienced the further worsening of starvation in Ukraine.

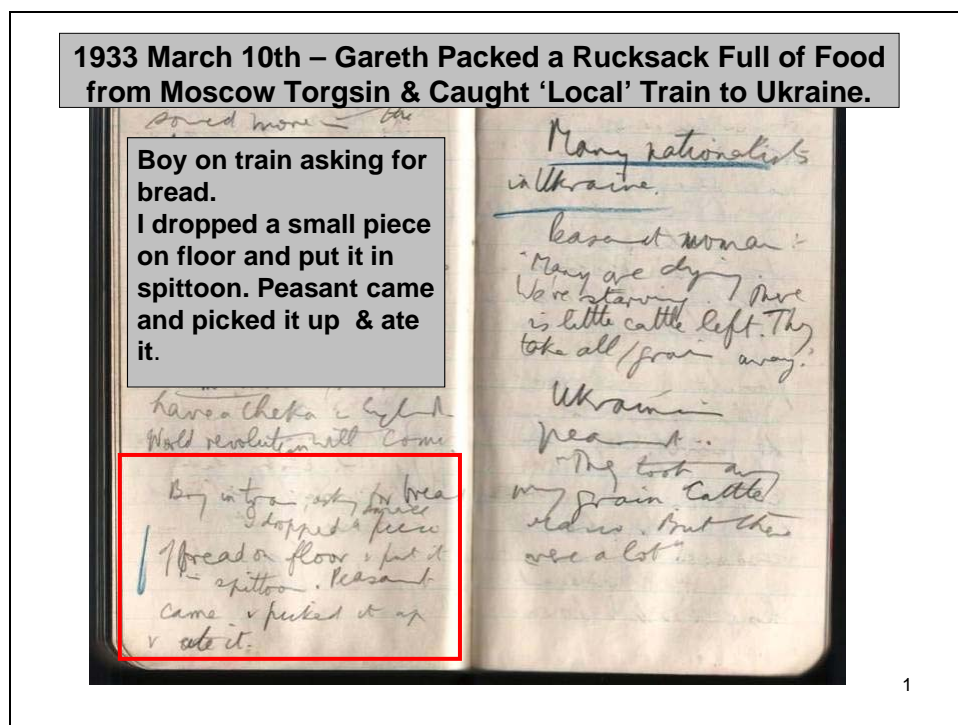
Returning to work for Lloyd George, in September 1932, Gareth learnt through several informed sources emanating from Moscow, of a severe famine in the southern part of the Soviet Union.

Professor Jules Menken (of the London School of Economics), an eminent economist of the time, told Gareth that "what he had seen was the complete failure of Marxism & dreaded this winter, when he thought millions would die of hunger" and finally stated that "There was already famine in Ukraine." Due to the censorship of the press in Moscow the world was unaware of the ongoing plight of the Soviet people.

In light of this information, Gareth published two articles in the Cardiff *Western Mail* in October 1932, entitled: "Will There be Soup?". He painted a very bleak picture of the coming Soviet winter. However, he knew that he needed to see the famine first-hand. Otherwise, Soviet sources would continue to deny its existence.

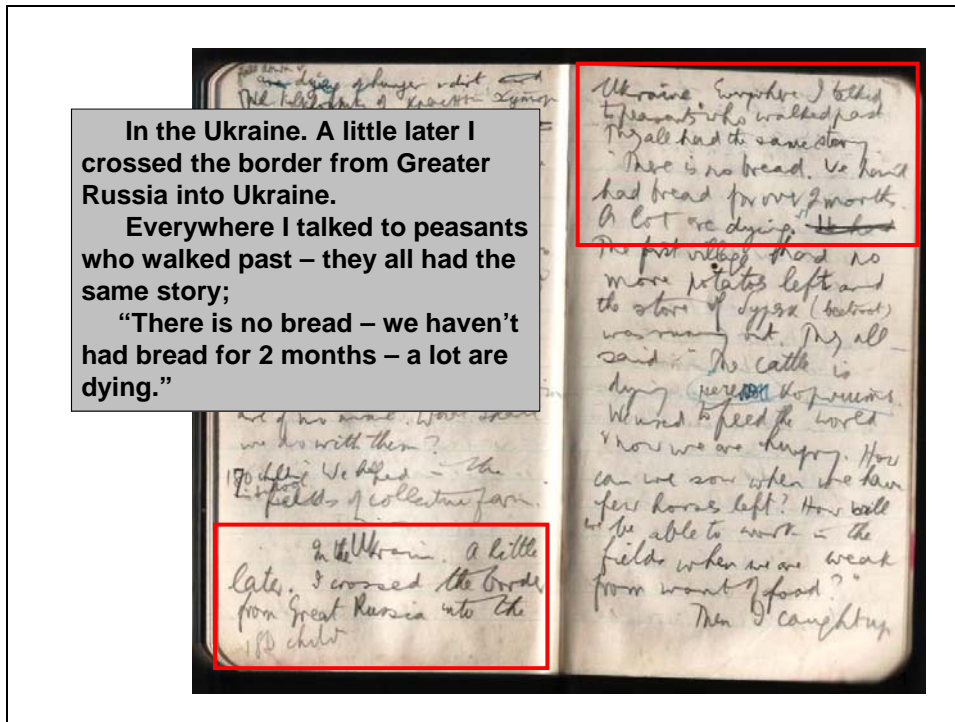
His journey to the Soviet Union was prefaced by a trip to Germany, in February 1933. This was less than one month after Adolf Hitler had been made Chancellor (and just 3 days before the burning of the Reichstag). Gareth was the first foreign journalist to fly with the newly elected dictator to a rally in Frankfurt, an event where he prophetically wrote; 'if this plane should crash the whole history of Europe would be changed'.

On the fifth of March 1933, Gareth arrived in Moscow, and privately interviewed diplomats and journalists. After five days Gareth quietly, & without permission, left by train for Ukraine with a rucksack full of loaves of white bread, butter, cheese, meat and chocolate, which he had bought at the foreign currency stores. By travelling third class he wished to discover first-hand the realities of life of the ordinary Soviet citizen.

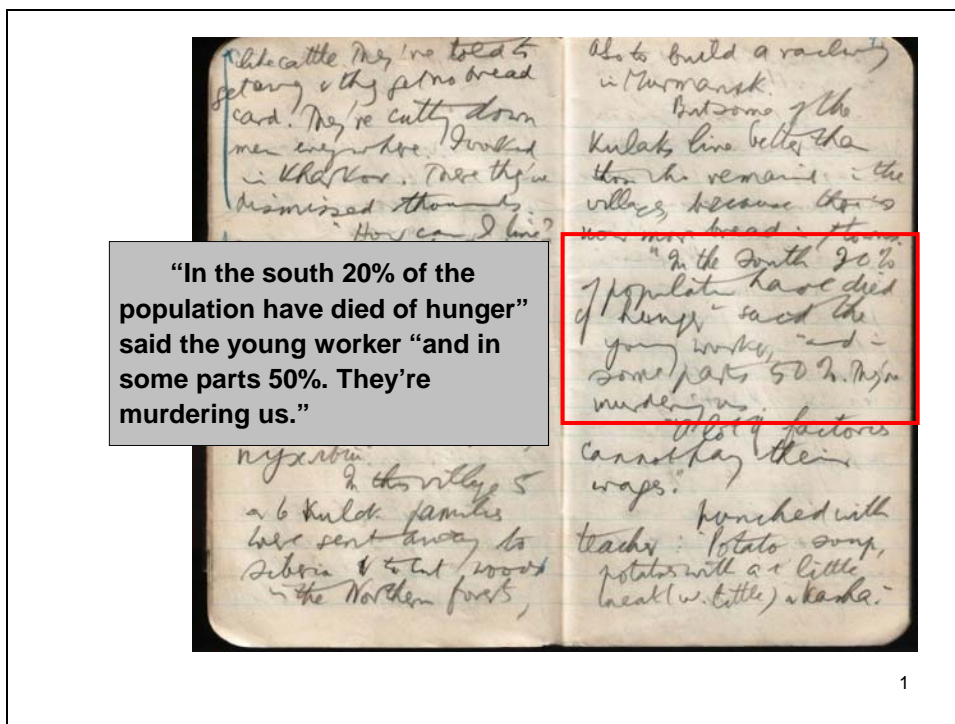


Gareth recorded in his diary; 'Boy on train asking for bread. I dropped a small piece of bread on floor and put it in a spittoon. Peasant came and picked it up & ate it.' Later he noted; 'Man speaking German, same story "Tell them in England, Starving, bellies extended. Hunger".'

Since journalists were officially banned from leaving Moscow, he had to leave the train and sneak across the border into Ukraine. For two days, he walked along the railway line & stopped off in several villages along the way talking to the inhabitants and again sleeping rough in their dwellings. In his diaries he wrote...



‘A little later I crossed the border from Greater Russia into Ukraine. Everywhere I talked to peasants who walked past – they all had the same story; “There is no bread – we haven’t had bread for over 2 months – a lot are dying.”



“In the South 20% of the population have died of hunger” said the young worker “and in some parts 50%. They’re murdering us”.

Later on arrival at the city of Kharkiv, the then administrative capital of Ukraine, he noted in his diary;

Now in Ukrainian Administrative capital of Kharkiv

They did not go away but remained sometimes cart came up with bread ready with forlorn hope

Queues for bread. I walked along about a hundred ragged pale people. Militiaman came out of shop whose windows had been battered in and were covered with wood, & said: "There is no bread and there will be no bread today." Shouts, angry, peasants also there. "But citizens, there is no bread." "How long here?" I asked a man. "Two days."

Queues for bread. Erika [from the German Consulate] and I walked along about a hundred ragged pale people. Militiaman came out of shop whose windows had been battered in and were covered with wood and said: "There is no bread & there will be no bread today." Shouts from angry peasants also there. "But citizens, there is no bread." "How long here?" I asked a man. "Two days." They would not go away but remained. Sometimes cart came with bread; waiting with forlorn hope.

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They would not go away, but remained. Sometimes cart came with bread; waiting with forlorn hope.

On his return to Berlin Gareth exposed the Holodomor to the world's press at a briefing on 29th March 1933.



On 29th March 1933, Gareth held Berlin Press Conference where he exposed the Famine. First USA Newspaper reports published same evening (by two previous Pulitzer Prize Winners).

By virtue of his position with Lloyd George, his allegations were given credence. However, within 24 hours he was personally denigrated by Walter Duranty in an article in the *New York Times* called 'Russians Hungry But Not Starving'. Duranty was at that time world's highest paid foreign correspondent and had received the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. He was perceived as the expert on all matters Soviet.

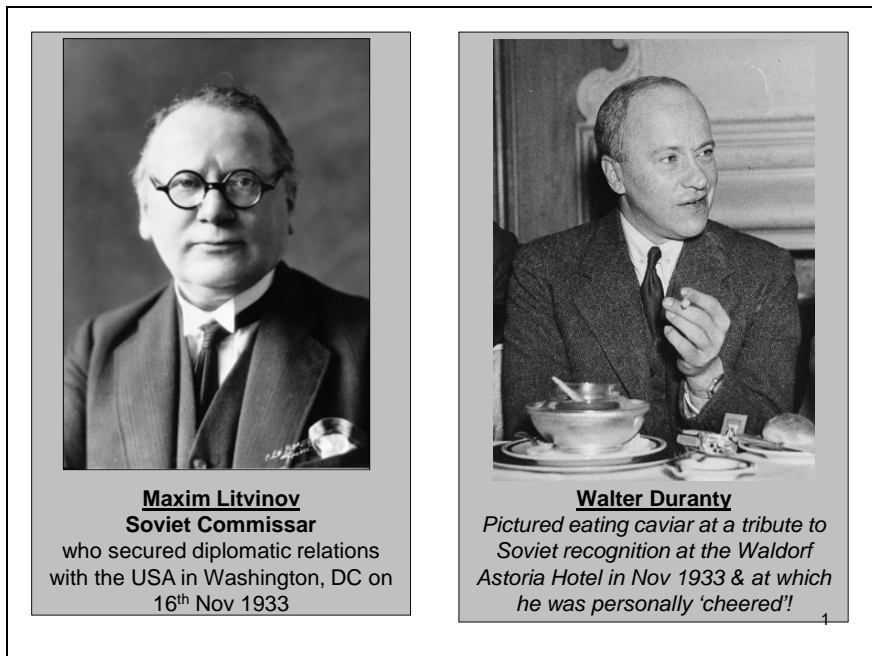
Duranty stated:

"...there appears from a British source a big scare story in the American press about famine in the Soviet Union, with "thousands already dead and millions menaced by death and starvation.

Duranty; "thought Mr Jones' judgment was somewhat hasty... Since I talked with Mr. Jones I have made exhaustive inquiries about this alleged famine situation.

And Duranty with great sophistry stated: *There is no actual starvation or death from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition . . .*"

Undaunted by the criticisms, Gareth restated his observations of the famine in a published letter to *The New York Times*, rebuking Duranty, and describing Moscow-based foreign correspondents as being "masters of euphemism". Moscow foreign correspondents who were in fear of losing their jobs in the Great Depression, were being compromised by allowing themselves to be censored. Furthermore, they were probably professionally jealous of Gareth swanning into town and meeting Litvinov, the Foreign Commissar, purely by virtue of his connection with Lloyd George. These were meetings they could only aspire to, through favourable reporting of what they all knew to be falsehoods.



Gareth's revelations had embarrassed both the Americans and the Soviets who were engaged in negotiations towards establishing diplomatic recognition between the two countries. Gareth's reward was to be banished from the international journalistic scene from more than a year, only finding work as a local reporter for the *Cardiff Western Mail*, covering stories about rural Welsh arts & crafts.

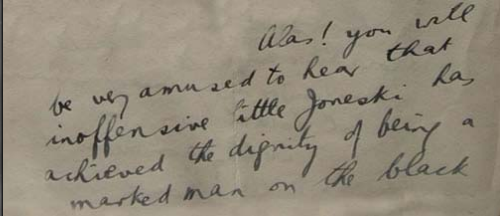

On November 16, 1933, some eight months after Gareth's revelations, Litvinov, whom Gareth had privately interviewed in March 1933, managed to secure American diplomatic recognition of the USSR. Immediately after signing the accord with Roosevelt, Litvinov addressed this very institution and used his platform at *The National Press Club* to espouse the Soviet cause.

Meanwhile Duranty reported events in *The New York Times* stating that Litvinov, was going home to Moscow with a "pretty fat turkey for Thanksgiving."

For Duranty, on Christmas Day 1933, came the greatest prize of all – an interview with Stalin himself. It was a reward for work, well done. Stalin according to Duranty said that he; 'had done a good job in ... reporting the USSR'.

To add insult to injury, Litvinov also personally banned Gareth from returning to the Soviet Union & in a 1934 letter to a friend, Gareth commented;

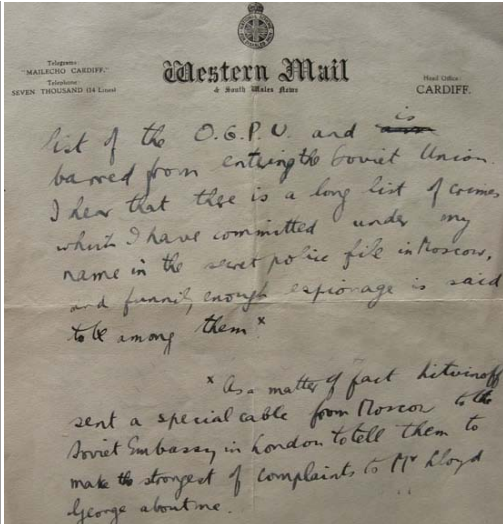

1934 – ‘Joneski’ Litvinov Ban – Correspondence from Gareth to a Friend...



1

“Alas! You will be very amused to hear that the inoffensive little 'Joneski' has achieved the dignity of being a marked man on the black...”

1934 – ‘Joneski’ Litvinov Ban – Correspondence from Gareth to a Friend...



1

... list of the O.G.P.U & I hear that there is a long list of crimes which I have committed under my name in the secret police file in Moscow and funnily enough espionage is said to be among them.”

In December 1934, Gareth travelled across the USA and delivered a keynote speech at *The Institute of World Affairs* which would not have gone unnoticed in Moscow where he stated; *‘The exile of five million Kulaks was one of the most brutal crimes in European history.’*



On New Year's Day, 1935, Gareth met Randolph Hearst for lunch on the terraces of his palatial estate at St. Simeon in California. Gareth had previously met Hearst in the summer of 1934 in Wales. At Hearst's home, he was personally commissioned to repeat his 1933 famine observations in three vitriolic anti-Stalin articles for the Hearst stable of US papers.

RUSSIA'S STARVATION

What Lies Behind Wave of Official Murders That Followed the Assassination of Kirov

Grim Hunger of Peasants Witnessed By Former Foreign Adviser To Lloyd George

By GARETH JONES

This is the first of three articles on Russia by Gareth Jones, formerly research adviser on foreign affairs to Lloyd George, now commissioned by The Manchester Guardian to write on world affairs. In Russia he was received by Lenin's widow, by Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinoff, by the Commissar of Finance, and by the president of the Athletics. In this article he begins his explanation of the reign of terror which began with the killing of Stalin's friend, Kirov, on Dec. 1.

GARETH JONES

GARETH JONES

"THERE IS NO BREAD!"

Gareth Jones Hears Cry of Hunger All Over Ukraine, Once Russia's Sea of Grain

And Then a Second Phrase Occurs: "We Are Swollen," Victims of Famine Complain

By GARETH JONES

This is the second of three articles on Russia by Gareth Jones, formerly research adviser on foreign affairs to Lloyd George, now commissioned by The Manchester Guardian to write on world affairs. In Russia he was received by Lenin's widow, by Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinoff, by the Commissar of Finance, and by the president of the Athletics. In this article he describes his visit to the North Ukraine, once known as the granary of the world.

GARETH JONES

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12, 13, 14th January 1935,
New York American, Los
Angeles Examiner & Other
Hearst Papers.

The consequences of Gareth's outspoken anti-Communist articles were swift. His US tour was followed by a fact-finding mission to the Far East.

Spring 1935 - Gareth Investigates Far East



Within five months, he had been kidnapped by Chinese bandits, supposedly 'Japanese-controlled', and two weeks afterwards was suspiciously murdered in Inner Mongolia on the very eve of his 30th birthday.

1935 – 12th August – Gareth Murdered
on Very Eve of his 30th birthday

The Evening News

**GARETH JONES
FOUND MURDERED
FORMER SECRETARY
TO MR. LLOYD GEORGE**

Troops Chasing the
Chinese Bandits Who
Had Held Him to
£5,000 Ransom
Find His Body



THREE BULLET WOUNDS

1

His last mode of transport was a vehicle which was 'kindly' provided gratis by a German company called Wostwag - now known from British Public Records, to have been a major trading front of the NKVD, Soviet Secret Police. [He was kidnapped along with the German journalist, Dr. Herbert Mueller, who had invited him on the trip to Inner Mongolia, promising Gareth that it was; '*Absolutely Safe – No Bandits*'!]

Mueller was released, unharmed after two days in captivity (a most unusual occurrence for Chinese kidnappings of the time). Further British Intelligence records at the Public Records Office in London, released only in the past few years, now reveal that they had kept a secret dossier on Mueller for 34-years citing him as a known Communist; a representative of the Third International (Comintern) in China. He had also at one time lived in the Soviet Consulate in Hankow, under the alias of 'Gordon' and also ran a covert Soviet courier business within China...

Thus one of the very few western witnesses of a Soviet atrocity was effectively silenced. Gareth's story would have ended there if it weren't for fate that his precious diaries survived. Apart from oblique references to Jones in a couple of George Orwell's writings his memory and role in exposing the Holodomor were forgotten, for almost 70 years.

When Lloyd George was told of Gareth's tragic fate, he commented to the *London Evening Standard*:

“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.” “That part of the world is a cauldron of conflicting intrigue and one or other interests concerned probably knew that Mr Gareth Jones knew too much of what was going on...”

“...I had always been afraid that he would take one risk too many. Nothing escaped his observation, and he allowed no obstacle to turn from his course when he thought that there was some fact, which he could obtain. He had the almost unfailing knack of getting at things that mattered.”

I now want to turn to the part that was played in Gareth's tragic story by Walter Duranty.

There has been some debate in recent years as to whether Duranty's Pulitzer Prize should be returned because of the alleged Soviet bias in his reporting. He had won the prize in 1932 for a series of 13 articles, published between June 13th and December 20th 1931, on the situation in the Soviet Union.

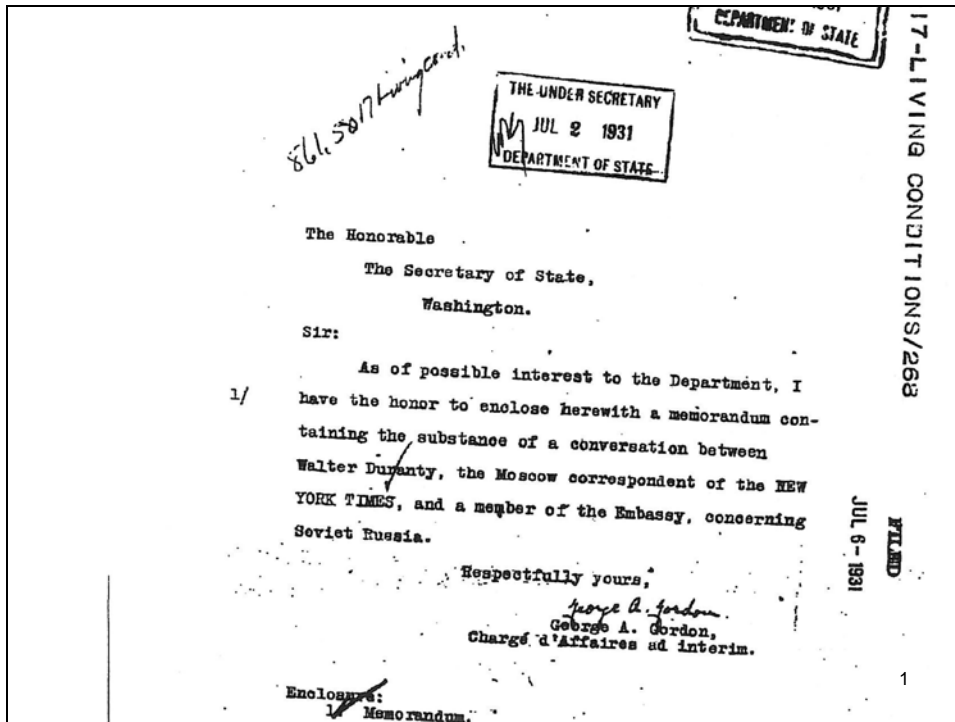
The Pulitzer Committee gave its award to Duranty for *“his dispassionate, interpretative reporting...marked by scholarship, profundity, impartiality, sound judgement and exceptional clarity, an excellent example of the best type of foreign correspondence.”*

In 2003, the Pulitzer Board commissioned a review of Duranty's 13 articles by Mark von Hagen of Columbia University. Von Hagen recommended that there were grounds for revoking the prize, but the Board did not agree.

It determined that, and I quote, *“Mr. Duranty's 1931 work, measured by today's standards for foreign reporting, falls seriously short. In that regard, the Board's view is similar to that of ‘The New York Times’ itself and of some scholars who have examined his 1931 reports. However, the board concluded that there was **no clear and convincing evidence of deliberate deception**, the relevant standard in this case”.*

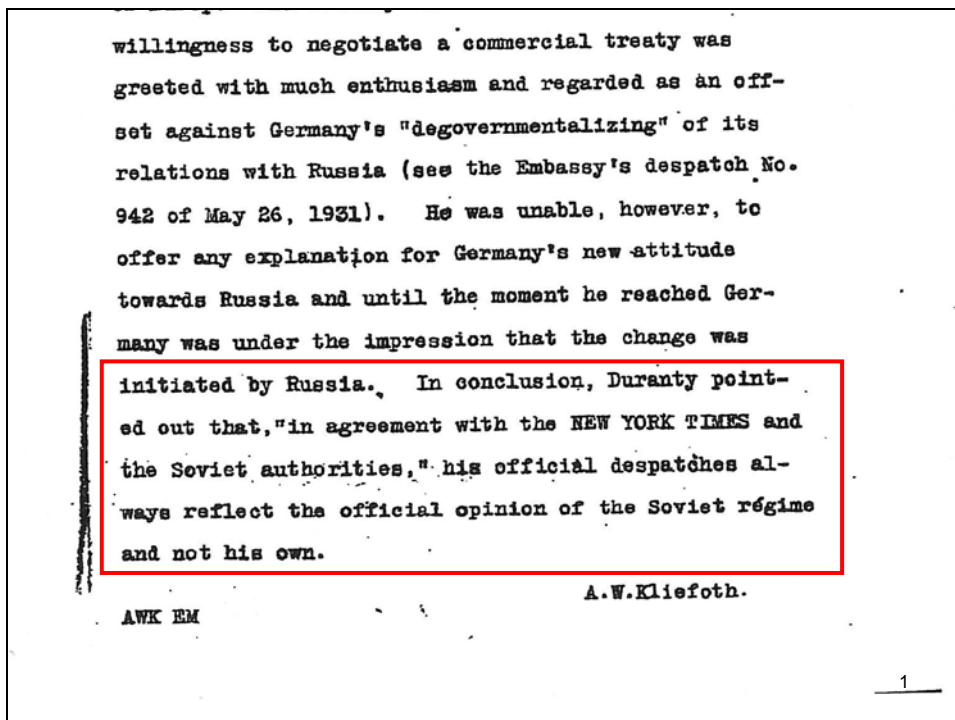
Let us remember that phrase *“deliberate deception”*.

Just nine days before the publication of Duranty's first Pulitzer prize-winning article he met with a member of staff at the Berlin US embassy AW Klieforth, while on a two-day trip to Berlin, where he openly discussed the shortcomings of Stalin's 5-year plan and the need for a good harvest in 1931.



This meeting was recorded in a memo by Klieforth which was forwarded by the Chargé d'Affaires to the Secretary of State in Washington in dated June 3rd 1931, 10 days before the publication of Duranty's first Pulitzer article.

After reporting Duranty's opinions on the state of the Soviet Union and on its foreign policy, Klieforth notes:



"In conclusion, Duranty pointed out that, 'in agreement with the New York Times and the Soviet authorities', his official despatches always reflect the official opinion of the Soviet regime and not his own."

Was Duranty still reflecting 'the official opinion of the soviet regime' when writing his 1933 article doubting the validity of Gareth Jones' observations on the famine in Ukraine? Was he deliberately undermining the credibility of another journalist purely because it did not concur with the official Soviet view?

According to Klieforth's memo, Duranty's reporting was not only reflecting the official opinion of the Soviet regime in agreement with the NYT and the Soviet authorities but the US authorities in Washington had been made aware of this fact in June 1931, if not before.

Can we still concur with the conclusions of the Pulitzer board that "there was no clear and convincing evidence of deliberate deception"? Arthur Sulzberger, the NYT publisher, argued in 2003 that to return the Pulitzer would set a precedent for anyone who challenged a prize winner on the basis that their analysis of a story has been shown to be incorrect. But the challenge is not about the incorrect story, it was actually the 'deliberate deception' by the NYT, with the possible collusion of other parties.

Mr Sulzberger, only two days after you published CNN's *mea culpa* about its bargain with Saddam, you ran full page plaudits to your Pulitzer prize winners, including Duranty. His Pulitzer Prize still adorns the walls of your newspaper. 80 years later you are still adamantly refusing to distance yourself from a Stalinist apologist whose support of the Soviet regime may, indirectly, have led to the murder of a valiant journalist determined to report the genocide.

Mr Sulzberger, my mother & I wrote to you 8 years ago & until my mother's sad passing away last night, you still owed us both an answer. However I am still here & on my mother's behalf, let me tell you Mr Sulzberger, I am still waiting...

In conclusion Ladies & Gentleman, Gareth's diaries remind us that the witness of ordinary people provides unique insights into the past. The truth mattered then as it matters today. Journalists are still risking their lives, by putting their heads above the parapet, exposing state crimes of today across the world. I salute you all...



And finally, to my mother, to everybody who ever met you, you were a truly remarkable woman; your family and friends will dearly miss you. May your soul rest in peace... Thank you.