



U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness

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Duranty Revocation Campaign

What is the Duranty Revocation Campaign 2021?

You are invited to join a national campaign to rescind the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism awarded in 1932 to The New York Times’ Moscow correspondent Walter Duranty for his articles on Stalin’s Five Year Collectivization Plan. The campaign strives toward public awareness and education. The US Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness is leading this effort.

Who was Walter Duranty?

Walter Duranty was a British journalist who served as Moscow bureau chief for The New York Times from 1922-1936. He came to prominence in 1928 after he secured an exclusive interview with Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Communist Party, about the Soviet Union’s new economic plan. Duranty maintained close relationships with Lenin, Stalin and other members of the Soviet leadership and was considered by many in the West to be not just a reporter but an expert and interpreter of the USSR.

In 1932 and 1933 reports of a terrible famine in the Ukrainian SSR began to circulate. The Soviet Union denied there was a famine and gave prominent Western visitors—such as George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells and French Prime Minister Edouard Herriot—carefully staged tours of villages with supposedly well-fed, content farmers. Duranty knew that millions of people were dying but chose to parrot Soviet propaganda in his dispatches to The New York Times in order to enhance his career. In return the Kremlin granted him a lavish lifestyle in Moscow.

How bad was the Holodomor?

It was horrific and it was done on purpose. Stalin ordered his Soviet regime to create an artificial, genocidal famine in Ukraine in 1932-33 to speed up agricultural collectivization and fulfill his vision of the USSR becoming an industrial superpower. The Communists deliberately used mass starvation to break the resistance of Ukrainian farmers to Soviet authority in general, and confiscation of their land, grain, and animals in particular. Communist militia went door to door searching for any food, even for several grains of wheat. For hiding five grains (Law of Five Grains) people were shot or sent to Siberia. At the height of the famine in June

1933, an estimated 28,000 Ukrainians were dying each day. Within 18 months, about one in six Ukrainians in rural areas had died. . Academics, artists, clergy and other leaders were imprisoned or executed. In 1988, the U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine reported to Congress that Joseph Stalin and his henchmen committed genocide, as defined by Rafael Lemkin, against Ukrainians, beginning in 1929. Ukrainians call Stalin's famine Holodomor—which means “murder by starvation” in Ukrainian.

Why didn't anyone say anything? Surely other journalists knew about it.

In spite of a near lockdown across Soviet Ukraine, news of the famine got out. By the summer of 1932, European newspapers were writing about it. Ukrainian-Americans protested and tried desperately to get aid to their countrymen in the USSR. Pope Pius XI offered to help. To maintain “plausible deniability,” the Soviet Union forbade many leading foreign correspondents based in Moscow to enter Ukraine. Few were defiant such as Gareth Jones, whose bravery is depicted in the recent film *Mr. Jones*. The Welsh journalist evaded his NKVD agents and spent weeks walking through the Ukrainian countryside where he witnessed mass starvation and death.

After Gareth Jones wrote about what he saw, Walter Duranty denounced him in print.

[:https://www.garethjones.org/tell_them_we_are_starving.htm](https://www.garethjones.org/tell_them_we_are_starving.htm),

https://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/russians_hungry_not_starving.htm

Duranty was a traitor to his profession, and to humanity as well. Duranty's high-profile denial of the famine made it easier for the rest of the world to accept Soviet denials of any famine. In fact, while the Holodomor was happening, the USSR exported more grain than ever before. Within the Soviet Union, mentioning the famine became a serious crime; statisticians who worked with Soviet census data were arrested and executed.

What did Walter Duranty win the Pulitzer Prize for?

Duranty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for a series of thirteen articles that ran in The New York Times in 1931 about the Soviet Union's economic plans. The articles can be accessed on our Duranty Revocation website page (ukrainegenocide.com).

Did he deserve to win the Pulitzer?

No. The New York Times knew that Duranty's dispatches in the early 1930s were filled with Soviet disinformation and his contemporaries knew he was a liar:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeojJZ5QhKM&t=1542s>

In 2003, in response to pressure from the Ukrainian-American community, The New York Times hired Columbia University Professor Mark von Hagen to analyze Duranty's prize-winning articles. He assessed that they were “some of the worst journalism [the Times] ever published”. Bill Keller, the executive editor of The New York Times, told the Pulitzer Prize Board, “It's up to you to decide whether to take it back. We can't ‘unaward’ it. His work was clearly not prize worthy”.

The Pulitzer Prize Board refused to rescind. Avoiding passing judgement on whether Duranty's writing lived up to the Pulitzer Prize's standards for excellence, they concluded that "there was no clear and convincing evidence of deliberate deception".

We disagree! The proof is in Duranty's own words. In June 1931, Duranty admitted to the American consular diplomat A.W. Kliefoth in the American Embassy in Germany that The New York Times knew his dispatches would always reflect the official opinion of the Soviet regime and not his own. <https://www.garethjones.org/Embassy-1.pdf>

Why does this matter in 2021?

Duranty's famine denial helped the Soviet Union cover up its orchestrated genocide of its own citizens before the world. It gave cover to the Roosevelt Administration to recognize the Soviet Union and open trade negotiations in 1933. In 1934, the USSR was even given a permanent seat in the League of Nations, an international peacekeeping body. The cover-up led to the continuation of the brutal Soviet system for 70 years and still today Russia continues to deny Ukraine's Holodomor and Ukraine's right to exist as a free nation.

No one was held accountable for the Holodomor. No one from the leadership ranks to the henchman, to actual perpetrators who killed with bullets, or confiscated every grain of edible substance from ravished farmers was ever brought to account for his inhumanity to man. Stripping Walter Duranty of his Pulitzer Prize would be the right thing to do. This act would show the world that justice in this symbolic way has prevailed for the victims of the Holodomor and for the victims of all genocides.