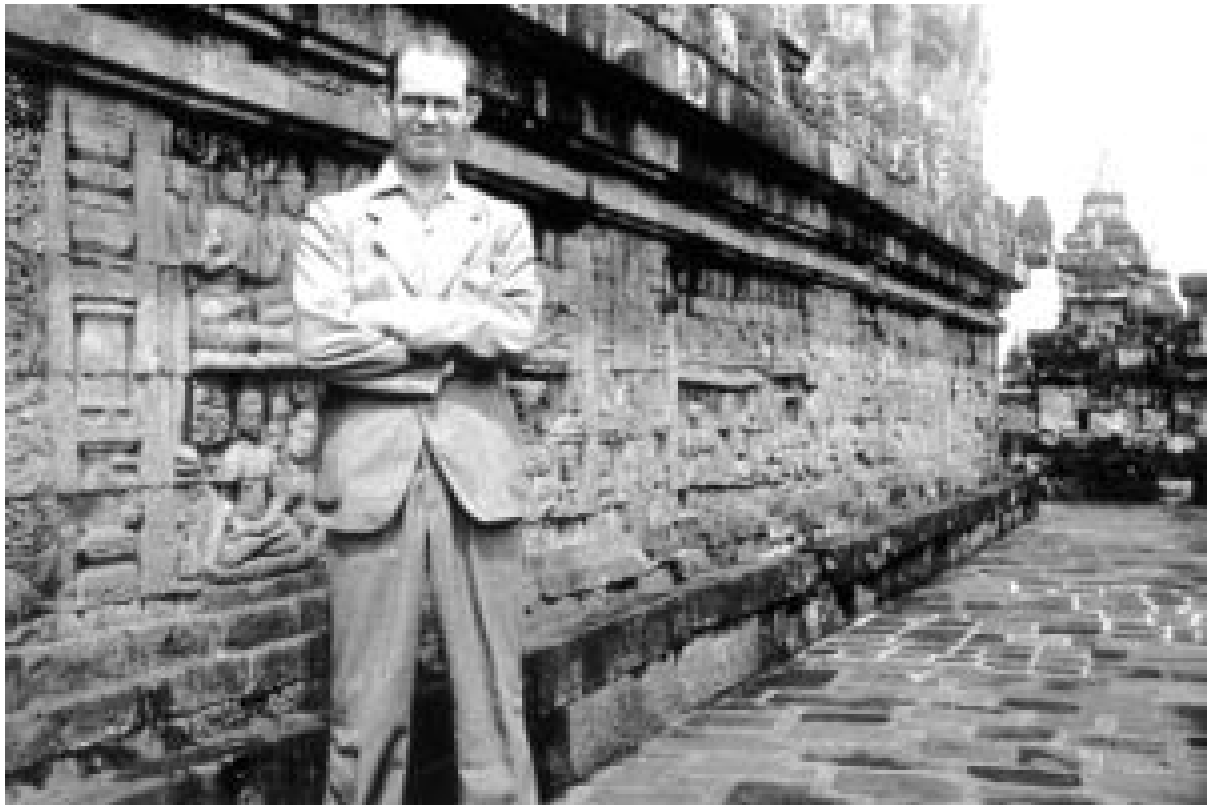


Genocide by Russia Again



Gareth Jones

by Michael Curtis

No reasonable person can doubt that the Russian aggression by Putin against Ukraine is characterized by war crimes, by atrocities, mass murder, brutality against and murdering civilians, bombarding and targeted killings of civilians, corpses in the streets, mass graves and forced deportations of refugees. Even appreciating that care must be used in terminology, it is not an escalation of rhetoric to argue that those war crimes have reached the level of genocide, defined as the destruction and extermination of a state and of a people. The concept, defined by the UN 1948 Genocide Convention relates to a number of acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.

The intent is not simply to use violence and annihilate specific individuals but an intent to destroy the whole group

as a collectivity.

The term of genocide was first used as a legal concept at the Nuremberg trials of 24 Nazi leaders, and thus has powerful emotional echoes of World War II and the Holocaust. More than 50 years later, the concept again became the basis for trials and convictions: in 1999 Jean-Paul Akayesu was convicted for his part in mass killings in Rwanda, and Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic were convicted over the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

It is appropriate that Vladimir Putin be charged with genocide. He has denounced the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation, argued that Ukraine is an illegitimate state, that Ukrainians can be identified as Nazis. He is aiming at the destruction and extermination of a people, at what the Geneva Convention calls "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

The actions of Putin closely resemble those of Joseph Stalin, and even though history doesn't exactly repeat itself, a historical parallel can be drawn with events ninety years ago concerning an almost unknown heroic figure.

Gareth Jones, Welsh born journalist, attended Cambridge University, became a gifted linguist in three foreign languages, and was for a short time in 1930 foreign affairs advisor of former prime minister David Lloyd George, fellow Welshman. As a journalist, Jones visited the Soviet Union on three occasions between 1930 and 1933, writing articles critical of Stalin's five-year plan. Among them, in October 1932, were articles. "Will there be soup?" concerning shortages in the Soviet Union.

In February 1933, he was in Germany and was the first foreign journalist to fly in a plane with the newly elected Chancellor of Germany, Adolf Hitler, to a political rally in Frankfurt.

A month later, Jones at 27 made his third visit to the Soviet Union to examine the conditions of famine in Ukraine and went on a 40 mile walking tour through villages around Khartov. He found there was no bread and that people were starving. He revealed the truth, first in a press interview in Berlin on March 29, 1933, and then in print.

The villain in the story is Walter Duranty, Moscow correspondent of the *NY Times* who was the most influential foreign correspondent on Russia. His favorable false reporting on the country and praise of Stalin is said to have influenced President F. D. Roosevelt's decision to grant official recognition to the Soviet Union in 1933. Because of his *NY Times* articles and his declared "scholarship, profundity, impartiality, sound judgment, and exceptional clarity," Duranty in 1932 was awarded the Pulitzer prize. But before long it was revealed that Duranty was a liar, a betrayer of his own profession, a disgrace to journalism, in his praise of Russia, and denial of the famine in Ukraine and the death from starvation, "malnutrition," and other factors of more than 4 million, the so called Holodomor. In apologizing for the Stalinist regime Duranty coined the phrase, now often used, "you cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs."

The *NY Times* years later publicly acknowledged the errors and lies of Duranty. Nevertheless, it kept him on the payroll until 1941. To its discredit and in spite of criticism, the Pulitzer Board twice refused to withdraw the award from him, saying in November 2003, against clear evidence to the contrary, "there was no clear and convincing evidence of deliberate deception."

Duranty denounced Jones in the *NY Times* on March 31, 1933, in an article which said that Russians were hungry, but not starving, and that there was no actual starvation, but only widespread mortality "from diseases due to malnutrition." To a lesser extent, Jones was also denounced by Eugene Lyons who later apologized in 1937 for his unfair attack on Jones, and

juggling facts to please a dictatorial regime.

Jones bravely persisted. On April 11, 1933, in the *Financial News* he published details of the famine, explaining it was mainly due to the forced collectivization of private farms, removal of millions of kulaks from their land, forced revisionism of grain and farm animals, and greater export of foodstuffs from the USSR. The main reason for the catastrophe in Russian agriculture was the Soviet policy of collectivization.

Jones explained that journalists in USSR were allowed to write but that the censorship had turned them into masters of euphemism and understatement. "Famine," became "food shortage;" starvation became "malnutrition." Jones was forthright: the policy of creating large collective farms, where the land was to be owned and cultivated in common, led to the land being taken away from more than two-thirds of the peasantry, and the incentive to work disappeared. Moreover, Jones indicated, nearly all the crops were violently seized, and the peasants were left with almost nothing for themselves. Russian agriculture had collapsed. Peasant uprisings were brutally suppressed by the Red Army and special police units. Thousands of peasant families were sent from Ukraine to remote areas of Siberia and Middle Asia. In those areas they were put into "special settlements."

Stalin, like Putin today, was committing genocide, eliminating Ukraine as a nation and as a culture with a separate language, in destroying the intellectual, professional, religious, life of the country, all of whom were executed or deported, as well as the peasantry. The Ukraine area was to be useful only as a fertile farmland.

Jones was banned from entering the Soviet Union, but also ostracized by British authorities including Lloyd George and newspaper people, able only to find a job for the local *Cardiff Western Mail* covering stories on Welsh culture.

However, as a result of a meeting with William Randolph Hearst, he was commissioned to write more articles on the famine in Ukraine, the exile of five million kulaks, and the Stalinist terror and purges. The story became wider known, though Duranty persisted in his lying.

Jones went in search of news went in late 1934 to Asia, to Japan and China, and then Inner Mongolia, in newly occupied Manchukuo. In a short time he was kidnapped, together with a German journalist, supposedly by Japanese controlled Chinese bandits. The German, who was a communist, was released unharmed, but in August 1935 Jones at age 40 was murdered in Inner Mongolia by three bullet wounds, almost certainly by the Russian NKVD. Jones was the man who knew too much and spoke the truth. For Stalin, Jones had been conveniently liquidated, and genocide continued. In the words of the Genocide Convention, serious bodily or mental harm was occurring.

On May 2, 2006, a plaque, in English, Welsh, and Ukrainian, was unveiled in the memory of Jones at Aberystwyth University, Wales, where the Ukrainian ambassador to the UK described Jones as an “unsung hero of Ukraine.”

Jones is to be honored for telling the truth. Stalin policy in 1930s meant mass deportation of individual landowners, kulaks, forceful resettlement of hundreds of thousands of rural families to remote areas of Siberia and Asia. His idea, forerunner of Putin, was to eliminate Ukraine as a nation, as a culture, as a language, eliminating all segments, intellectual, clergy. and peasantry. The area was, and for Putin still is, to be a rich farmland to be used by Russia for its own welfare while thousands are to be arrested, tortured, executed, deported.

The ICC, International Criminal Court should openly announce its inquiry into genocide by Russia, and hasten its investigation, which takes some time, of Putin crimes. It

would be fitting if the case would be called the Gareth Jones investigation.