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In today's Vatnik Soup, we introduce Walter Duranty, a British-born journalist. He's best known for winning a Pulitzer Prize for his Soviet reporting, and for denying the Holodomor while millions of Ukrainians starved.

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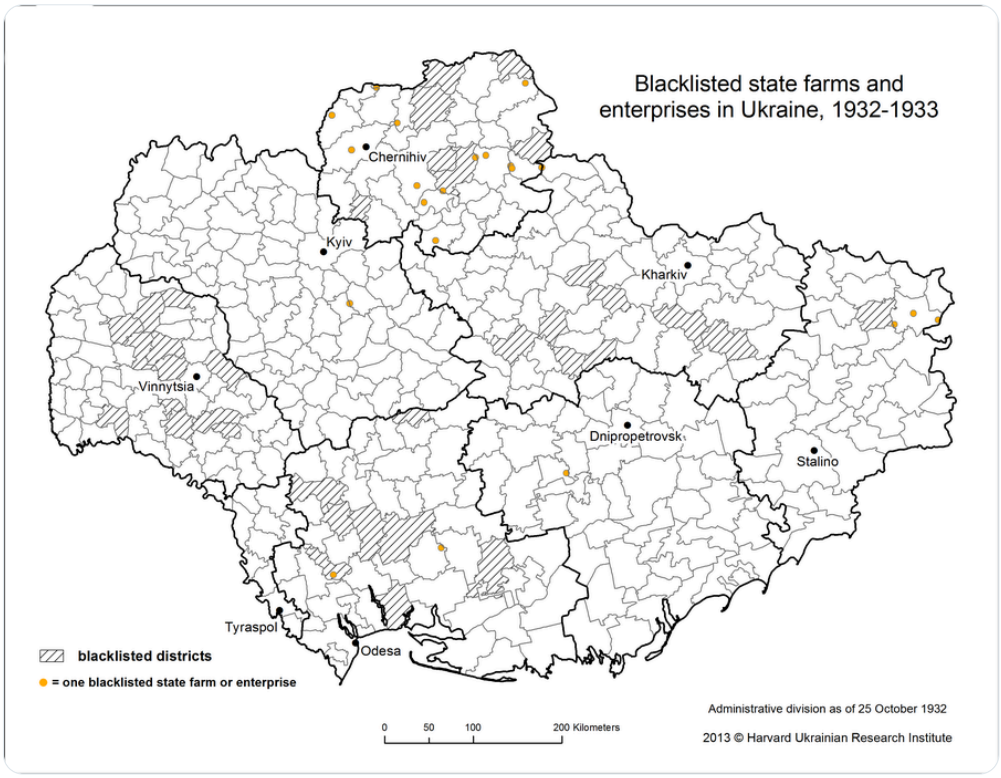
Born in Liverpool in 1884 and educated at Cambridge, he became The New York Times's Moscow correspondent. His 1932 Pulitzer rewarded reporting published in 1931.

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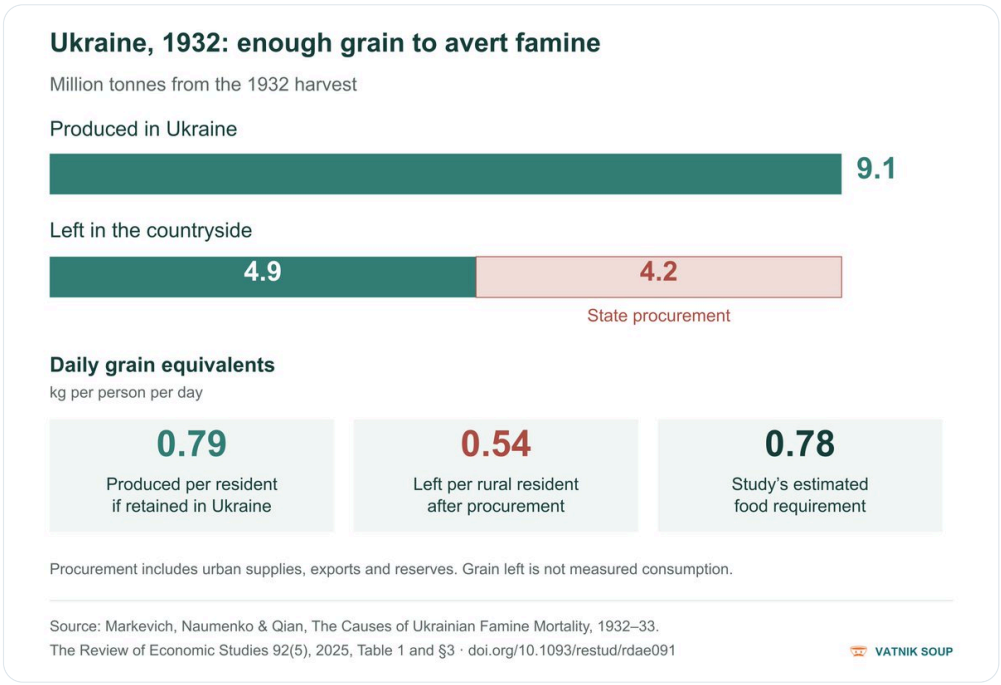



Ukraine’s 1932 harvest could have averted famine, but Stalin’s regime seized food and blacklisted villages. On 22 January 1933, Stalin and Molotov ordered peasants fleeing Ukraine and the North Caucasus to be stopped and returned.






The Holodomor was deliberate genocide against Ukrainians. Starvation formed part of Stalin's wider assault on Ukrainian intellectuals, churches and national institutions. Duranty helped make the regime's violence acceptable abroad.







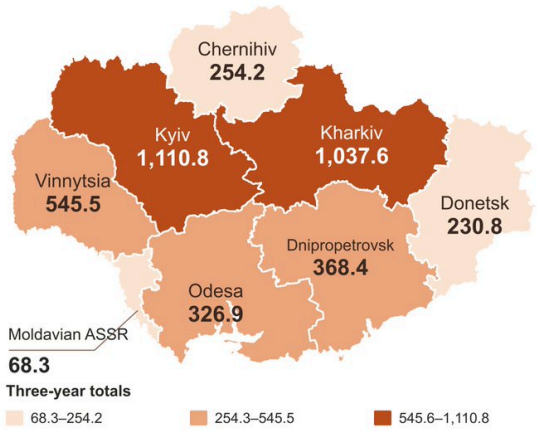
On 26 November 1932, Duranty reassured readers that Soviet citizens had merely “tightened their belts”. Starvation was presented as hardship people could endure while Soviet progress continued.

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## Regional famine losses

Ukraine, 1932–1934 · Excess deaths, in thousands

Boundaries: 1 April 1933




**Three-year totals**

68.3–254.2 · 254.3–545.5 · 545.6–1,110.8

**Annual excess deaths**

| Region | 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyiv | 83.9 | **991.5** | 35.4 | 1,110.8 |
| Kharkiv | 46.9 | **969.9** | 20.8 | 1,037.6 |
| Vinnytsia | 27.0 | **497.3** | 21.1 | 545.5 |
| Dnipropetrovsk | 20.6 | **331.3** | 16.5 | 368.4 |
| Odesa | 19.6 | **300.3** | 7.0 | 326.9 |
| Chernihiv | 17.6 | **205.4** | 31.2 | 254.2 |
| Donetsk | 28.7 | **175.2** | 26.9 | 230.8 |
| Moldavian ASSR | 5.7 | **58.2** | 4.4 | 68.3 |

Rounded estimates, reproduced as published.

Source: MAPA · Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University

Original map © 2018 The President and Fellows of Harvard College. Redrawn for Vatnik Soup.

VATNIK SOUP




On 31 March 1933, Duranty dismissed Gareth Jones's eyewitness reporting as a "scare story", admitting deaths from malnutrition while denying famine. Jones later replied in the same newspaper, setting out his evidence and challenging censorship.

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# RUSSIANS HUNGRY, BUT NOT STARVING

## Deaths From Diseases Due to Malnutrition High, Yet the Soviet Is Entrenched.

## LARGER CITIES HAVE FOOD

## Ukraine, North Caucasus and Lower Volga Regions Suffer From Shortages.

## KREMLIN'S 'DOOM' DENIED

### Russians and Foreign Observers In Country See No Ground for Predictions of Disaster.

By WALTER DURANTY.
Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

MOSCOW, March 30.—In the middle of the diplomatic duel between Great Britain and the Soviet Union over the accused British engineers 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 from starvation."

Its author is Gareth Jones, who a former secretary to David Lloyd George and who recently spent three weeks in the Soviet Union and reached the conclusion that the country was "on the verge of a terrific smash," as he told the writer.

Mr. Jones is a man of a keen and active mind, and he has taken the trouble to learn Russian, which he speaks with considerable fluency, but the writer thought Mr. Jones's judgment was somewhat hasty and asked him on what it was based. It appeared that he had made a forty-mile walk through villages in the neighborhood of Kharkov and had found conditions sad.

I suggested that that was a rather inadequate cross-section of a big country, but nothing could shake his conviction of impending doom.

**Predictions of Doom Frequent.**

The number of times foreigners, especially Britons, have shaken rueful heads as they composed the Soviet Union's epitaph can scarcely be computed, and in point of fact it has done the Soviet Union incalculable harm since the day when William C. Bullitt's able and honest account of the situation was shelved and negatived during the Versailles Peace Conference by reports that Admiral Kolchak, White Russian leader, had taken Kazan—which he never did—and that the Soviet power was "on the verge of an abyss."

Admiral Kolchak faded. Then General Denikin took Orel and the Soviet Government was on the verge of an abyss again, and General Yudenich "took" Petrograd. But where are Generals Denikin and Yudenich now?

A couple of years ago another British "eyewitness" reported a mutiny in the Moscow garrison and "rows of corpses neatly piled in Theatre Square," and only this week a British news agency revealed a revolt of the Soviet Fifty-fifth Regiment at Dauria, on the Manchurian border. All bunk, of course.

This is not to mention a more regrettable incident of three years ago when an American correspondent discovered half the Ukraine flaming with rebellion and "proved" it by authentic documents eagerly proffered by Rumanians, which documents on examination appeared to relate to events of eight or ten years earlier.

**Saw No One Dying.**

But to return to Mr. Jones. He told me there was virtually no bread in the villages he had visited and that the adults were haggard, gaunt and discouraged, but that he had seen no dead or dying animals or human beings.

I believed him because I knew it to be correct not only of some parts of the Ukraine but of sections of the North Caucasus and lower Volga regions and, for that matter, Kazakstan, where the attempt to change the stock-raising nomads of the type and the period of Abraham and Isaac into 1933 collective grain farmers has produced the most deplorable results.

It is all too true that the novelty and mismanagement of collective farming, plus the quite efficient conspiracy of Feodor M. Konar and his associates in agricultural commissariats, have made a mess of Soviet food production. [Konar was executed for sabotage.]

But—to put it brutally—you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, and the Bolshevist leaders are just as indifferent to the casualties that may be involved in their drive toward socialization as any General during the World War who ordered a costly attack in order to show his superiors that he and his division possessed the proper soldierly spirit. In fact, the Bolsheviki are more indifferent because they are animated by fanatical conviction.

Since I talked with Mr. Jones I have made exhaustive inquiries about this alleged famine situation. I have inquired in Soviet commissariats and in foreign embassies with their network of consuls, and I have tabulated information from Britons working as specialists and from my personal connections, Russian and foreign.

**Disease Mortality Is High.**

All of this seems to me to be more trustworthy information than I could get by a brief trip through any one area. The Soviet Union is too big to permit a hasty study, and it is the foreign correspondent's job to present a whole picture, not a part of it. And here are the facts:

There is a serious food shortage throughout the country, with occasional cases of well-managed State or collective farms. The big cities and the army are adequately supplied with food. There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition.

In short, conditions are definitely bad in certain sections—the Ukraine, North Caucasus and Lower Volga. The rest of the country is on short rations but nothing worse. These conditions are bad, but there is no famine.

The critical months in this country are February and March, after which a supply of eggs, milk and vegetables comes to supplement the shortage of bread—if, as now, there is a shortage of bread. In every Russian village food conditions will improve henceforth, but that will not answer one really vital question—What about the coming grain crop?

Upon that depends not the future of the Soviet power, which cannot and will not be smashed, but the future policy of the Kremlin. If through climatic conditions, as in 1921, the crop fails, then, indeed, Russia will be menaced by famine. If not, the present difficulties will be speedily forgotten.



Friday, March 31, 1933 THE EVENING

# FAMINE RULES RUSSIA

## The 5-year Plan Has Killed the Bread Supply

*By GARETH JONES*

**Mr. Jones is one of Mr. Lloyd George's private secretaries. He has just returned from an extensive tour on foot in Soviet Russia. He speaks Russian fluently—and here is the terrible story the peasants told him.**

A FEW days ago I stood in a worker's cottage outside Moscow. A father and a son, the father a Russian skilled worker in a Moscow factory, and the son a member of the Young Communist League, stood glaring at one another.

The father, trembling with excitement, lost control of himself and shouted at his Communist son: "It's terrible now. We workers are starving. Look at Chelyabinsk, where I once worked. Disease there is carrying away numbers of us workers and the little food there is is uneatable. That is what you have done to our Mother Russia."

The son cried back: "But look at the giants of industry which we have built. Look at the new tractor works. Look at the Dniepostroy. That construction has been worth suffering for."

"Construction indeed!" was the father's reply. "What's the use of construction when you have destroyed all that's best in Russia?"

What that worker said at least 96 per cent.



MR. GARETH JONES.

"*The cattle have nearly all died. How can we feed the cattle when we have only fodder to eat ourselves?*"

"And your horses?" was the question I asked in every village I visited. The horse is now a question of life and death, for without a horse how can one plough? And if one cannot plough, how can one sow for the next harvest? And if one cannot sow for the next harvest, then death is the only prospect in the future.

The reply spelled doom for most of the villages. The peasants said: "Most of our horses have died and we have so little fodder that the remaining ones are scraggy and ill."

If it is grave now and if millions are dying in the villages, as they are, for I did not visit a single village where many had not died, what will it be like in a month's time? The potatoes left are being counted one by one, but in so many homes the potatoes have long run out. The beet, once used as cattle fodder, may run out in many huts before the new food comes in June, July and August, and many have not even beet.

The situation is graver than in 1921, as all peasants stated emphatically. In that year



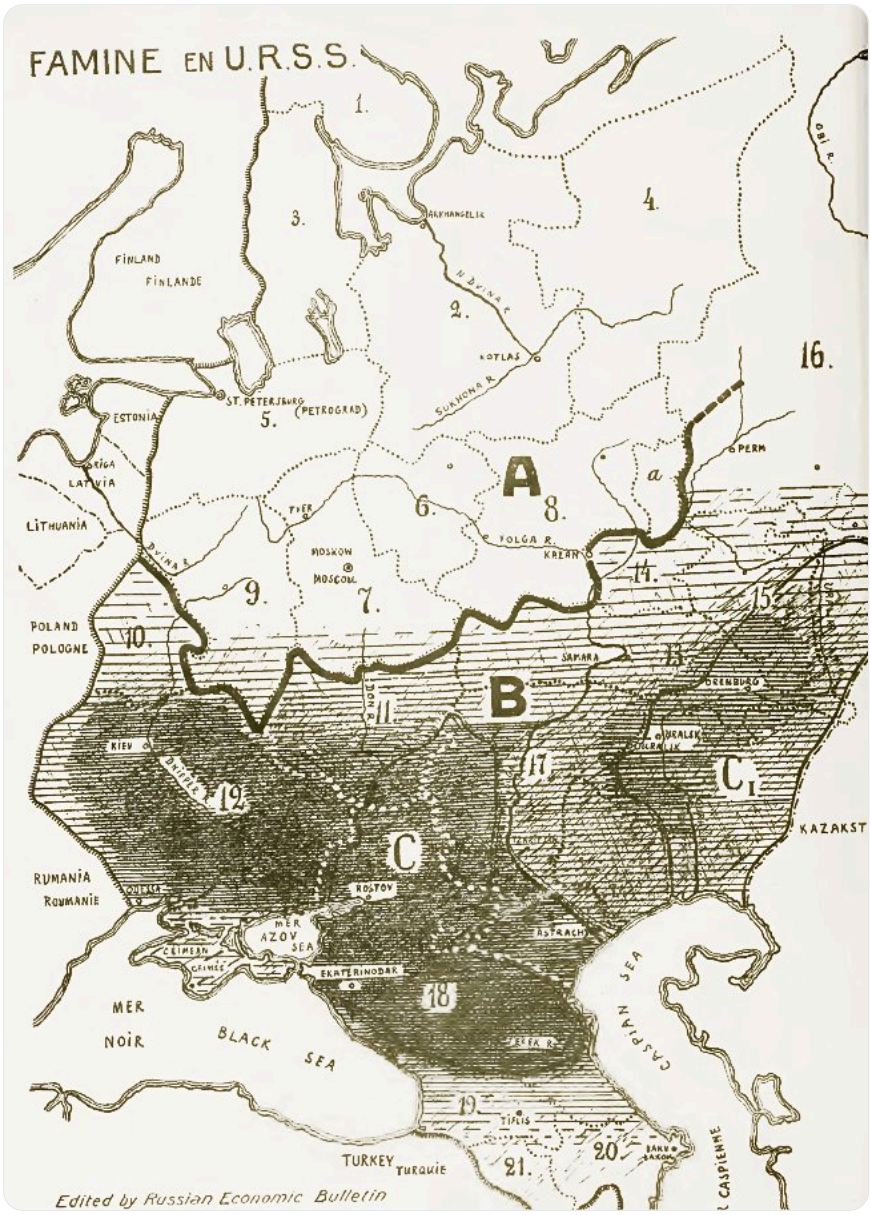
CHILD BEGGARS IN MOSCOW

there was famine in several great regions, but in most parts the peasants could live. It was a localised famine, which had many millions of victims, especially along the Volga. But to-day the famine is everywhere, in the formerly rich Ukraine, in West Russia, in Central Asia, in North Caucasia—everywhere.

What of the towns? Moscow as yet does not look so stricken, and no one staying in Moscow would have an inkling of wh

Duranty wrote: “But—to put it brutally—you can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs”. Denial and justification reinforced each other: minimise the suffering, then excuse it as the price of building socialism.






In 2003, the Pulitzer Board declined to revoke Duranty's prize. It criticised the winning 1931 reports but found insufficient evidence of deliberate deception.

By the way, in September 1933, Duranty had privately told British diplomat William Strang that as many as 10 million people might have died, directly or indirectly, from lack of food across the Soviet Union.

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Our full dossier, “The Holodomor Genocide: Starvation and the Erasure of a Nation”, will be published on 28 November.

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