

**Speech of Leonard Muggeridge, son of Malcolm Muggeridge  
Delivered at Westminster Central Hall, 22 November 2008, during the  
Commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holodomor**

I feel greatly honoured, in the presence of such a distinguished audience, to say a few words about what I can remember from my father. I count it a great privilege and I share with you the great tragedy that your people endured.

There must be quite a few here who have got loved ones and relatives who died in that tragic famine, artificially organised, by a brutal dictator.

My father, as you know, was a journalist. His first newspaper was to go to Moscow and report on the events there. The strange thing is of course that he was, almost, a dedicated communist himself. He and my mother had almost considered staying in the country and throwing in their lot with the communist regime.

But, as you know, it did not take him long to change his mind.

Though he was an enthusiastic supporter, the truth slowly began to dawn on him that he was not living in a free society. He was living under a brutal dictatorship that we all now know about.

He travelled a lot in the Soviet Union and saw some of the devastating effects of this terrible famine. And when he returned to Moscow he sent his articles back to his paper. They were highly critical!

Not too many of his fellow journalists shared his views. The one great exception, of course, was Gareth Jones, and we shall hear about him later on.

I would like to pay tribute to my father.

One of his favourite books, apart from the Bible, was John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress", which some of you may be familiar with. And there is a character in there called Mr Valiant-for-Truth. And that is what my father was. He didn't say much about his work. He travelled a lot. Later on, of course, he got involved in World War II and was away on assignments all over the world. And then he had a busy life as a journalist in various parts of the world.

So really, as a son and a small child then, I didn't really know much about it. Later on I gleaned most of the information from reading his memoirs.

And I must say too that it is only just within the last few weeks actually, since I knew about this event, that I have come to realise the full implications of what he was up to and how wonderful he was.

I am only sorry that he is not here to hear it all – but he isn't, so there we are.

I pay tribute to the people of Ukraine, who against incredible odds, stood up against that brutal dictatorship, tried to defend themselves and suffered tremendously.

I pay tribute to my father who was a brave journalist – as I have said; Valiant-for-Truth. He tried to spread the news about this awful event and I wish he were here tonight to hear what is being said.

And may I say just briefly, that although I do not know your language, I have learnt your word, Holodomor...

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