

**Speech of Margaret Siriol Colley,
Delivered at Westminster Central Hall, 22 November 2008, during the
Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Holodomor**

Your Excellency, Dr Ihor Kharchenko, distinguished guests, and all who love Ukraine.

I am very honoured and privileged to receive the posthumous award, "The Order of Freedom" on behalf of my late uncle, Gareth Jones.

I appreciate that it is the highest award that the Ukrainian Government can give to a non-Ukrainian national.

How proud his parents, Major and Mrs Edgar Jones, would have been to know that such a prestigious tribute of recognition has been granted today.

It is good to know that his endeavours were not in vain in his attempt to tell the world about the devastating Great famine, the Holodomor, in Ukraine brought upon by Stalin's ambition to carry out his Five year Plan.

On March 29th 1933 Gareth gave a press release from Berlin about the famine and wrote at least 20 articles. But within days he was silenced by the British establishment, denigrated by The New York Times correspondent Walter Duranty and called a liar by the coterie of Moscow Correspondents. He was placed on the black list of the secret police and accused of espionage by Maxim Litvinoff, the Foreign Affairs commissar.

The Bolsheviks effectively suppressed knowledge of the tragedy and it became the forgotten famine of the 20th century when Millions died.

As a child I remember the famine. I remember being shown by Gareth those well known pictures of starving Ukrainian children with bloated tummies seated in row. Though the provenance was 1921 the impact on me is unforgettable.

I also remember hearing the shock of Gareth's mysterious death two years later in Inner Mongolia. A shadow was cast over the house and my grandmother never really recovered from the tragic loss of her beloved son. It was she that treasured the rich legacy of his writings for posterity.

I shall quote briefly about his trek in Ukraine.

"In one of the peasant's cottages in which I stayed we slept nine in the room. It was pitiful to see that two out of the three children had swollen stomachs. All there was to eat in the hut was a very dirty watery soup, with a slice or two of potato.

Fear of death loomed over the cottage, for they had not enough potatoes to last until the next crop. When I shared my white bread and butter and cheese one of the peasant women said, "Now I have eaten such wonderful things I can die happy." I set forth again further towards the south and heard the villagers say, "We are waiting for death."

We as a family are very proud today. May I thank President Yushchenko for bestowing the award, The Order of Freedom', Ambassador Kharchenko for making it possible and the

Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain for the part they played in arranging this great honour to our uncle, Gareth Jones.

Wales mourned the death of a son. Today Ukraine mourns all those Millions who died in the Great Famine of 75 years ago.

Margaret Siriol Colley

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