

Impact Statement

Claire Kim, Grade 9.

Gareth Jones: Exposing the Holodomor, 2023.

Digital art, 11 x 15 inches.

Studio S Fine Arts, Bothell, WA

Unsung Hero: Gareth Jones

Gareth Jones was found dead with three bullet wounds, far away from his homeland. His father had been given words of hope after his son was kidnapped by bandits, but the young reporter was murdered by what was likely the Soviet secret police, just a day before he would have been 30 years old. Two years prior, he had alerted the whole world of Stalin's hideous act of man-made famines in Soviet territory, most prominently the Holodomor that devastated Ukraine. Despite his elite position in the diplomatic ranks and his strong connections in the political realm, he risked his life to witness and report the genocide himself, where starving peasants consumed the unimaginable merely to survive, a place into which no member of the affluent would dare step. Disregarding the dire and possibly fatal consequences, Jones publicly reported his findings. "He had a passion for finding out what was happening in foreign lands wherever there was trouble, and in pursuit of his investigations he shrank from no risk," said the Prime Minister of England, after Jones' death. Because of him and the journalists who followed in his steps, the Holodomor was exposed to the world. He further inspired writers such as George Orwell to raise awareness about the famine. Pursuing what is righteous in spite of grave opposition is an act of great bravery and courage, and it is what I find truly inspirational about Jones.

My artistic interpretation of Jones' story emphasizes how Jones was the first journalist of the proper exposure of the Holodomor. The newspapers highlight the dreadful event of the Holodomor. These specific articles were published several decades after Jones' initial publication. The children in the image signify the horrible effects of the Holodomor. Footage on the famine prominently captured the desperate circumstances of the children, especially how the severe malnutrition took a toll on their physical bodies. Furthermore, 1.5 to 4 million of these innocent children died of starvation. Their design in my artwork is based on real photos, where they are seen in torn clothes with somber expressions. One of them is holding a sign that says "Допоможіть нам," which means "help us" in Ukrainian. Behind them are silhouettes of the victims of the famine. Some of them are holding flowers, dropping dirt, or comforting young children. These symbolize what the Ukrainians were forced to eat during the famine: flowers, grass, tree bark, rats, dogs, and eventually each other. The silhouettes are holding sunflowers specifically, because the sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine. Several silhouettes depict Soviet soldiers taking away grain sacks from the people. In the background, there are crosses scattered on a hill. This symbolizes the numerous deaths caused by the famine, and it is also based on a real photo of the graveyards in Ukraine at that time. The central cross has the inscription "Голодомор," which translates to "Holodomor" in Ukrainian.

Researching about Jones' story caused me to think about how I should live my life. Even though his eye-witness account was met with backlash and criticism from his fellow journalists, he didn't

stop, continuing his pursuit of the truth in Asia shortly before his death. I believe everyone should follow in his steps, fighting for what is true despite rejection and even death.

I enroll in a homeschool co-op, and I take a public-speaking class there. Every two weeks, students are assigned to deliver a speech about a given topic. Previously in that class, I was able to talk about a different unsung hero (Eugene Lazowski). I intend to give a speech about Jones. I have a future assignment in my history class where students have to make a presentation about someone in the 20th century. I am planning to make that presentation about Jones. I hope that others would know about this unsung hero, and how he brought awareness to the Holodomor and its victims.