The New York Times and the Moscow Show Trials

By JACOB HEILBRUNN

He looked like a professor, with his scholar's stoop, high forehead, black-rimmed glasses and short redish [sic] hair... but what he told was a tale of black treason in act and intent. Here, for five long hours, was no hysterical confession of a despairing fanatic, but a detailed recital of conspirative action, little less terrible and more convincing than the indictment... 1

Thus Walter Duranty depicted Georgy Pyatakov, one of the accused, at the beginning of the 1937 Moscow purge trial. Duranty and his colleague Harold Denny were Moscow correspondents for the New York Times in the 1930s, and Duranty's dispatches dismissing reports of the Ukrainian famine engineered by Stalin are well-known. However, his and Denny's equally disgraceful coverage of the show trials has remained largely undocumented.

Though Paul Johnson's Modern Times briefly alludes to Duranty's and Denny's trial reports, neither S. J. Taylor's Stalin's Apologist, Walter Duranty: The New York Times's Man In Moscow nor Whitman Bassow's The Moscow Correspondents ever mentions their trial dispatches for the Times. 2 The paean that Western fellow-travellers such as Andre Malraux, Henri Barbusse, Bertolt Brecht, Lion Feuchtwanger, and Upton Sinclair penned to Stalin during the trials are by now very familiar, but historians and writers in Russia have begun to exhume the Stalinist past. So it is all the more important to fill the remaining lacunae in the Western, and especially the American, contribution to the tragedy of Stalin's show trials. 3

PURGE TRIALS IN SOVIET HISTORY

Purge trials occupy a prominent place in Soviet history. As early as 5 April 1918 Stalin sought to fix a trial when, before the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Press, he accused Julius Martov, the Menshevik leader, of libel. 4 The celebrated 1936, 1937, and 1938 trials, it must be remembered, were preceded by lesser-known trials—such as the 1922 trial, which aimed at crushing the Socialist Revolution party (and at which Pyatakov presided); the 1928 trial of the Shakty engineers (at which Andrei Vyshinsky was judge); the 1930 trial of the "Industrial Party"; the 1931 trial of the Mensheviks; and the prosecution of British engineers in the Metro-Vickers case in 1932.

But the true prelude to the show trials came in January 1935 when Grigory Zinoviev, Sergei Kamenev, and seventeen other defendants were accused by Stalin of belonging to a "Moscow Centre" and a "Leningrad Centre." Stalin had been confronted with direct opposition to his rule in 1932 when M. Riutin, a Moscow district party secretary, distributed a manifesto denouncing Stalin for impoverishing the Soviet Union. In 1934, district party secretaries had hoped to depose Stalin at the 17th Party Congress and replace him with the Leningrad party boss, Sergei Kirov.

Now it was alleged that these centers had engaged in conspiratorial work and had planned the murder of Kirov. (Kirov's assassination—which signalled the advent of the Great Terror—was almost certainly arranged by Stalin.) At this preliminary trial, though, the defendants were sentenced to prison terms, not death. The Georgian thaumaturge was still preparing the stage for the 1936 show trial.

THE 1936 SHOW TRIAL

The first of the true show trials, then, took place from 19-24 August 1936, when sixteen
defendants, accused of belonging to a "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre," faced the Supreme Court's Military Collegium in open session in the October Hall of Moscow's House of Unions (formerly the House of Nobles), which could accommodate 30 or so foreign journalists and diplomats in addition to about 150 hand-picked Soviet citizens. Andrei Vyshinsky, a former Menshevik, served as procurator-general. The most prominent defendants were Zinoviev and Kamenev along with I. F. Bakaev, who had headed the Leningrad Cheka. Puffs of smoke emanating from a recessed gallery above the courtroom indicated that Stalin himself was watching the trial; he also had the proceedings "transmitted by wire to his Kremlin study." So carefully did Stalin choreograph the trial that he allegedly instructed an assistant to see to it that all the defendants were served tea with lemon and cakes.

It was essential to the Soviet regime that international reaction to the trials should not be hostile; and Harold Denny was happy to oblige. In Denny's dispatches, the Soviet government was presented as responding to its citizens' outrage; it was compelled to bring the enemies of the people to court. His article of 16 August stated: "In the opinion of Russians an offense involving the life of Stalin can have but one penalty." (His source for Russian sentiment was Pravda.)

Duranty, too, defended the Kremlin. From Paris, Duranty minced on 17 August that "it is inconceivable that a public trial of such men would be held unless the authorities had full proofs of their guilt." Although some might cling to the belief that Sergei Kirov's assassin had acted on his own initiative, the writer knows beyond a doubt that the assassin was used as an instrument for the needs of political terrorism. . . . No one acquainted with present European politics can fail to realize that, whereas the Soviet government is doing its utmost to maintain peace, there are certain so-called Trotskyist organizations that are trying to cause trouble. . . . It can be taken for granted that the coming trial will reveal a dark story of treasonable intrigue, but there remains a question as to how far it was directed by or tied up with Trotsky and the principal accused.

Denny portrayed Zinoviev and Kamenev as ingrates who had squandered their talents: "Communists say Zinovieff and Kameneff despite their recantations after twice being expelled from the party, never could forget their former glory and never reconciled themselves to being relegated to the ranks." He went on to pour scorn on the defendants: "And then came this cynical part of the alleged plot reminding one of the days of Ivan the Terrible. According to Reingold [the chairman of the Cotton Syndicate] T. Bakaieff, another of the defendants, a slim, black-bearded zealot—the perfect embodiment of the outside world's picture of a Bolshevik—was to be made head of the GPU."

Denny conjured up the vision of czarist cabals and demonstrated that even Bakaev, outwardly a Bolshevnik paragon, was really a traitor. The trial could only be a proper response to such an enemy.

Still, the story of intrigues filled with double agents, sinister foreign powers, dastardly assassinations, and sheer treason in the Red Army left many observers incredulous. Denny therefore reported:

These men are marching toward the firing squad amid gales of laughter. . . . Perhaps it is part of the traditional Slavic-Oriental indifference to death . . . these defendants do not testify like men coerced and the stories they tell extemporaneously dovetail as fabricated stories hardly could. If there is more here than meets the eye, not even the most sceptical observer can guess what it is.

A powerful confessional tradition exists in Russian history that it would be a mistake to underestimate—a tradition that had its sources in a sense of peasant conformism and in the use of torture. But Denny and Duranty were hardly the most skeptical of observers; and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that ascribing the defendants' confessions to a Slavic-Oriental heritage allowed Denny and Duranty to deny that any defendants had been tortured. Indeed at the third trial, Nikolai Bukharin was to denounce the theory that the confessions were attributable to "the Slavic soul."

In his next article, on 23 August, Denny adopted a technique that he would frequently employ in the future: he drew parallels between the United States and Soviet Union. Thus what might seem to be horrific events were made to appear rather commonplace. Denny, for example, explained that the reign of "intellectual" Bolsheviks was over:

They are part of the old 'brain trust' which is now altogether bereft of power. Thus, there has been made a clean sweep of the men who
sat closest in Lenin's counsels. In their place remain intensely practical, realistic, iron-willed executives who never let a theory interfere with a condition.13

The use of "brain trust," President Roosevelt's neologism, made it look as if Stalin had merely changed the members of his advisory circle (intellectuals out; pragmatists in), while he and his henchmen are simply stern leaders dismissing nettle-some theoreticians and putting a stop to the trahison des clercs.

In his final commentary on the first trial, Denny asserted that the execution of the accused "undoubtedly meets the approval of a majority of citizens, at least in Moscow"—while "conversations with individuals indicate a general feeling that justice has been done." He concluded by noting that Russians were understandably aggrieved by the defendants' collaboration with German spies, since "that would be treason in any country."14 His defensive tone suggests that he intended less to convey information than to persuade his readers that there was nothing unusual about the trial: it was perfectly normal to catch traitors. Vyshinsky's summation perhaps no longer seemed excessive: "I demand that the mad dogs be shot—every one of them!"

THE SECOND TRIAL

The second show trial, on 25-30 January 1937, was to set the stage further for the dramatic trial of 1938. For a whole year, the defendants had been tortured by Stalin's jailers by means of "the conveyor system" (depriving prisoners of sleep, subjecting them to endless interrogation). They confessed to belonging to an "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre" and revealed their ties to Nikolai Bukharin, who subsequently went on a hunger strike to protest against these accusations. At the Central Committee meeting of February-March 1937, the emaciated Bukharin demanded an investigation of the NKVD. Roy Medvedev's Let History Judge reports Stalin's lapidary response: "Well, we'll send you there, and you can take a look for yourself!"

On the eve of the trial, Harold Denny penned one of his most revealing dispatches, headlined:

Soviet Has Its Gayest Celebration
New Year's Trees Give Old Spirit

His dispatch certainly warranted that exuberant title, although it was written at the height of Stalin's ruthless purges that (as we now know and could have known then) struck millions of families:

Russia tonight is having the gayest celebration since the Revolution. . . . Christmas trees . . . are giving this year's celebration a spirit it never had before—a spirit much like that of old Russia or of our own bourgeois world. Indeed, Moscow tonight powerfully reminded a sojourner from the Western world of any town in America on Christmas Eve. Last-minute shoppers jammed stores, buying presents of every sort. Additional supplies of Christmas-New Year's trees, provided as a result of a government rebuke for failure to provide sufficient stocks, have been rapidly sold out. . . . The customers bore them off happily on their shoulders. . . . Loudspeakers blare popular music from a dozen concerts going on in Moscow tonight. . . . A gigantic picture of Joseph Stalin holding a smiling little girl dominates one side of the square.15 Hotels and cafes are the gayest they have ever been since the revolution and at prices that exclude all but the least affluent. . . . All the worker's clubs are having special entertainment, and in every home friends are gathered around boards groaning with solid and liquid cheer.16

What a reporter could only insinuate during the first trial now becomes explicit. Russians not only enjoyed parties as much as Americans (in my town, your town, our town, any town), they even celebrated them in the same affluent fashion. The atmosphere is one of contentment and joy; food and presents are not scarce but plentiful. Obviously the Soviet Union had made impressive economic progress "since the revolution": workers were content, and a happy Soviet populace was indulging itself with mountains of food and liquor. Denny had managed to transform 1937 Moscow into "gay Paree." Yet between 1937 and 1938, it is important to remember, some seven million Soviet citizens were either summarily executed or shipped off to the archipelago of slave labor camps stretching across Siberia and northern European Russia.

Denny did not confine his admiration for the Soviet Union to its economic progress and Stalin's benevolence toward children. On 6 January he wondered at "the tremendous changes in every phase of Russian life wrought by the Bolshevist revolution. . . ." What sort of miraculous changes had taken place? In Denny's view, under communism
the literacy rate had soared; moreover, it was unquestionably "a country of communist-minded youth." The census that revealed this astounding progress contained "no question regarding social origin, in accordance with Joseph Stalin's statement introducing the new Constitution that the class war is ended. . . . The citizens present status is all that counts."” Duranty agreed. In July 1936 he, too, had hailed this noble constitution, "under which the Russian masses emerge from their tutelage and are called upon to receive their rights and undertake their duties as a free and democratic people."”

Walter Duranty covered the second trial for the Times. Of the seventeen defendants, the most prominent were Karl Radek and Georgy Pyatakov. The trial was again held in the "October Hall" (under Judge Vasily Ulrikh with Andrei Vyshinsky as prosecutor), and in this trial, unlike the first, the defendants were permitted to have defense counsel.

Duranty was bolder than Denny in his dispatches, using his colorful style to good effect. His prose employed hackneyed imagery, condemning the defendants' "black treason," and lauding Vyshinsky, who "cut in with a savage query, repeated like the clang of a funeral bell. . . . Piatakov lost his self-possession under this pitiless hail." Pyatakov, Duranty solicitorously observed, "will sigh with relief in the last second when the rifles are levelled like lances at his breast."

But Vyshinsky's charge that Pyatakov had been duplicitously negotiating with the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1918—and the failure of the GPU to uncover traitors who had been operating with impunity for nineteen years—left even Duranty slightly uneasy. Having witnessed Pyatakov's persecution of the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1922, he wondered why the GPU had been so slow to expose the "bandits, spies, and wreckers," as Vyshinsky branded them, who had been tolling industriously in the dark corners of faction. Had they not been alert?

Mr. Vyshinsky made much better going when he demolished the contention of Piatakov, Karl Radek and company that they were a political party. He said they might call themselves that, but they had admitted and it had been proved they were no more than a gang of spies, bandits, murderers, crooks, and traitors who had behaved with the most disgusting indecency and had not even hesitated to take money from foreign foes."

It was a lurid enough scenario, but by embellishing Soviet accounts, Duranty appeared to be heightening the absurdity of the propaganda. He noted, for instance, that espionage was conducted on a huge scale and by men in such high positions that their information was of cardinal value to prospective enemies. . . . What information they could supply about mobilisation plans and transportation throughout the inaccessible—to foreign attack—Ural region, which has become the heart of the Soviet war industry! . . . What military secrets he [General Putna] could have disclosed, if—as was stated at the trial—he really is a Trotskyist!"

On 30 January, Duranty lamented: "It is a pity from the Soviet viewpoint that no documentary evidence was produced in open court," but still he concluded that taken all in all . . . the trial did "stand up" and should go far to justify Mr. Sokolnikoff's statement that Mr. Trotsky is now revealed before the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the rest of the world as an ally of fascism and a preparer of war, and, therefore, definitely finished as a force of international importance.

Surprisingly, Karl Radek and Grigory Sokolnikov were not condemned to death at the trial; although Trotsky, in absentia, received the death penalty. Duranty sighed that it was unfortunate that Pyatakov had also received a death sentence:

But what can you do to a conspirator of this calibre? It is "either or," as Nicolai Lenin [i.e., V.I. Lenin] said. There is no middle choice, so Piatakov must die. He knowingly organised a counter revolutionary group whose activities involved . . . immediate sabotage and the death of Soviet workers. That in this country is an unpardonable sin."

Unlike Denny, Duranty did not attempt to draw parallels between Russia and the United States. Rather, emphasizing that "in this country" great importance was attached to workers' welfare, he made a virtue out of the Soviet Union's singularity. In the same dispatch, Duranty stressed that the second trial had been necessary because the first might not have successfully alerted Soviet citizens to the dangers of Trotskyism:

There is little doubt that this trial has accomplished what the Kameneff-Zinoviev affair may have failed to accomplish, the convincing of the whole Soviet Nation that Trotskyism not only is counter revolutionary but
also an ally of fascism and a stimulus to war.\(^{23}\)

The trials accomplished more than that, for Duranty perceived them as part and parcel of the progress of an industrializing nation. Western fellow-travelers also argued that this justified any toll in human lives, but Duranty went on to integrate purge trials into the maturation process of the Soviet state. He philosophized that

even such events as the recent trial—are . . . no more than “growing pains” of the Soviet Union, to use Lenin’s phrase in the sense that he doubtless intended. The amazingly rapid progress of this nation from a state of slavery to discipline and self-government, from childhood to manhood, and, last but not least, from backward agrarianism to modern industrialization cannot be accomplished without such distressing phenomena as the pimplies on the nose of an adolescent or more serious abscesses like this “Trotskyist” trial.\(^{24}\)

Duranty’s *pièce de résistance* was a 7 February 1937 article for the *Times* Sunday magazine, entitled “Why Stalin Wages Merciless War On Trotsky.” Duranty argued that, although Trotsky continued to scheme against Stalin, the trial had exposed him as nothing more than a sordid conspirator.

Stalin, Lenin’s true heir, had always feuded with Trotsky; the trials simply signified the culmination of their rivalry, with Stalin rightfully triumphing. According to Duranty’s version of history, mixing slogans with catch-phrases:

Lenin, and Lenin only, could tame this proud spirit by sheer power of facts . . . and that transcendent human quality which made Lenin the greatest figure in recent history . . . when Lenin died the contradictions flared out into the open. Like Lenin, Stalin kept in touch with the masses. Trotsky went his own way and preferred intrigue and conspirative cabals.\(^{25}\)

Trotsky, of course, had joined the Bolsheviks only after forswearing his earlier political allegiances. In raising the spectre of Trotsky’s “Menshevik heritage,” Duranty questioned his devotion to Lenin in words that were nothing less than a précis of the official Stalinist hagiography.

Trotsky’s hostility to Stalin has a deep ideological foundation and dates far earlier than the Bolshevik revolution—it goes back to the period when Trotsky was an independent semi-Menshevik continually attacking the ideas of Lenin, of whom Stalin was always a most devoted supporter.\(^{26}\)

Duranty, now the self-appointed keeper of loyalty and devotion, the guardian of true faith, pointed to an incident during the Civil War as an example of Trotsky’s dubious ideological purity. Stalin had been responsible for rescuing Tsaritsin (the city that in 1923 was renamed Stalingrad by Lenin’s orders and is now called Volgograd) from capture by the White Army, using “vigorous methods which included the dismissal or shooting of certain lukewarm officers appointed by Trotsky.”

It was inevitable that two men of such different caliber should become antagonists. Trotsky’s mainspring was personal ambition, whereas Stalin was “Lenin’s disciple and a prolonger of Lenin’s work,” as he told me himself on Christmas Day of 1933. In other words, Stalin from the outset was true to the Bolsheviks ideology, whereas Trotsky from the outset to his present lamentable position was a Trotskyist first, last, and always.\(^{27}\)

As for the Kirov murder of 1934 (which was followed by the execution of his assassin and of 116 others convicted of conspiracy), was it not part of a terrorist movement headed by Trotsky and aimed at the Soviet leaders? Could the murderer have been unaware that this was so? Duranty explained that assassins “have been impelled to the fatal deed, sometimes without their own knowledge, by a sinister force in the background.”\(^{28}\) Every detail was to be fitted into this tightly woven web of fatality, with Trotsky at its center.

What of the suspicions in some skeptical European quarters that torture had been practiced on the defendants? Duranty added spurious psychology to concocted history in
his defense of the worst excesses of Stalinism:

Russians are different. There comes a point where their resistance breaks and they say "nichivo"... to use an American expression, "spill the works." In other words: "If I am caught and they have the goods on me, why not come clean?"—corresponding to the "unburdening of the soul" which is the basis... of the confession in the Roman Catholic Church.39

Duranty assured his readers of the enlightened nature of the GPU:

[T]he GPU have come to realise that torture is not only valueless but dangerous when applied to men of sensitive nerves... a man of sensitive nerves will say anything to obtain release from pain. That is dangerous from an investigator's viewpoint because what a man says may be untrue and therefore valueless. Talk of the use of hypnotism, drugs, and so forth in connection with Soviet trials is postposterous and sheer romance.30

He concluded, imitating the sound of doom in medieval morality plays:

Russians... know—and knew before the revolution—that their people will confess if confronted not by torture but by sufficient proof. In the recent trial Russians were faced with such proofs. And accordingly confessed.31

THE THIRD TRIAL.

A purge of the Red Army preceded the third and last show trial. Soviet generals and other senior staff officers fell by the wayside. Ninety-eight out of 108 members of the Supreme Military Council, 3 of the army's 5 marshals, 50 out of 57 corps commanders, every deputy commissar of defense, 154 out of 186 division commanders, all perished in Stalin's inferno.

What effect would this have on Russia's defenses? Duranty cabled on 26 February 1938 that "The Red Army and the nation as a whole have emerged more strongly united and more loyal than ever before from the fiery purge of the past eighteen months."32 Duranty also pointed out that the party had secured its hold on the Red Army. "This dangerous, un-Bolshevik and, in the final instance, potentially counter-revolutionary tendency did not escape the notice of Joseph Stalin and his associates, who framed a plan to redress the error and restore the full authority of the central committee of the Communist party over the military machine."33

Only two days later, he surpassed even his own loyalism:

It seems a good time in the Kremlin to tear up the roots of the "Trotsky-Bukharinist-foreign enemy conspiracy" in order to convince the Russian people that internal enemies are broken, beat and lost.

One may ask why but the answer is obvious—this country knows that war is just around the corner when Russia must be united to meet attack.34

Like many fellow-travelers, Duranty was brandishing the fascist threat in order to justify ruthless Soviet measures: weakening the Red Army was only strengthening it.

It was, however, Harold Denny who covered the third show trial—of the "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," from 2–13 March 1938—and he was again rather more careful in his dispatches than Duranty. Did he not hint at some slight disturbance? "It is not pleasant for correspondents to cover such a trial as this. Many of the correspondents have had personal contacts with foreign diplomats and correspondents in Moscow."35 Possibly Denny was apprehensive that he might be branded a co-conspirator during the trial. And Denny, in any case, also invoked the threat to Russia from fascist powers and painted the by-now ritual picture of Soviet citizens demanding justice for the heinous crimes perpetrated by Bukharin, et al. "Even children," reported Denny, "call for death... Pionerskaya Pravda published today a resolution by school children in many parts of Russia demanding that the court order the shooting of all fascist reptiles and hirelings."

As for Bukharin, who delivered a speech of "Aesopian" defiance to the court and was the Koestlerian protagonist for Rubashov in Darkness at Noon, Denny wrote that

Mr. Bukharin alone... was manly, proud and almost defiant... Faced with almost certain death, possibly even before the weekend, the frail little leader of the Opposition to Joseph Stalin turned on his accusers with flashes of logic and scorn, which held the court spellbound.36

It took fifty years for the Kremlin to accede to the "rehabilitation" of Bukharin. In 1938, however, Denny concluded that "in the broad sense they [the trials] are not fakes." For Denny, this latest trial explained much that had previously seemed mysterious or improbable. The confession of the ex-
GPU chief, Yagoda, explained why honest and loyal Soviet leaders had so long remained unaware of such extensive espionage. "If Mr Yagoda," wrote Denny, "was a traitor, as I fully believe he was, that flaw disappears."38

Nor did Denny shrink from defending torture as a judicial instrument: "However much coercion may or may not have been used on the various prisoners and unseen witnesses, it does not necessarily prove that the confessions in essence were untrue."39 He would have done well to recall Hobbes' injunction that

Accusations upon Torture, are not to be reputed as Testimonies. For Torture is to be used but as a means of conjecture, and light, in the further examination, and search of truth: and what is in that case confessed, tendeth to the ease of him that is Tortured: not to the informing of the Torturers: and therefore ought not to have the credit of a sufficient Testimony: for whether he deliver himselfe by true, or false Accusation, he does it by the Right of preserving his own life.40

WALTER DURANTY AND HAROLD DENNY

What lay behind the profound errors in Walter Duranty's and Harold Denny's reporting of the purge trials? Let us consider the bare facts of their lives. Though it is difficult to decipher their motives with precision, Duranty's and Denny's careers certainly offer some clues as to their reporting of Soviet events.

Duranty was born on 25 May 1884 in Liverpool to a prosperous Quaker family. He received his schooling at Harrow and was educated at Cambridge (where he studied classics and was a fellow undergraduate of Hugh Walpole at Emmanuel College). On 1 December 1913, Charles Selden hired him as an assistant correspondent for the Times' Paris bureau, and he was to remain a foreign correspondent for the paper until 1941.

Although various attempts have been made to decipher Duranty's personality, it seems clear that he was not a Soviet enthusiast or even a fellow-traveler and that he was blinded by his early success in being the first to predict Stalin's rise to power. Rather, Duranty uncannily resembles— in his ruthless abandonment of his parents and family; his rejection of Quakerism; his insatiable sexual appetite; his fascination with mysticism and opium; his love of fame and notoriety; his ability to insinuate himself into foreign cultures at the highest levels; his misuse of his formidable talents; and his final eremitic days—the historical figures profiled by Hugh Trevor-Roper in Hermit of Peking, and Bernard Wasserstein in The Secret Lives of Trebitsch Lincoln.41 If, as Trevor-Roper informs us, Sir Edmund Backhouse, the bizarre British Sinologist who cheered on the Third Reich from Peking, was an early example of how "the empty aesthetic elitism of the late nineteenth century was converted gradually into the brutal, hollow, glittering, sadistic elitism which was one of the constituent elements of fascism," then Duranty, in his passionate, if cynical, embrace of Stalin and Stalinism, would seem to represent its culmination.42

This first becomes clear in Duranty's unusual, even deviant, life in Paris, chronicled by Harrison Salisbury in Without Fear or Favor.43 Adopting the cognomen "A.B." (which stood for Arts Bachelor) Duranty was the acolyte of the professional occultist Aleister Crowley (the "Great Magister"). "Brother Walter Duranty" (as Crowley called him) served as a "priest" in Crowley's cult and participated in various orgies and black magic rites called "the Paris Workings." Even Duranty's friend Alexander Woolcott—a noted wit, a member of the Algonquin Round Table, and a columnist for the New Yorker—was to record merrily in his foreword to Duranty Reports Russia that "as I left Paris that year, he was going into dubious cahoots with one Arthur Cravan, a Latin Quarter character who was said to be a nephew of Oscar Wilde and who, when in his cups, claimed an even closer relationship."

It was in Paris, too, that Duranty first met William Bolitho, the South African-born British journalist and author who infected him with a deeply felt contempt for the masses—a philosophy that was to be given full rein in Duranty's reports from Russia.44 His capacity for compassion was further eroded during World War I: in 1917 he briefly visited the Belgian battle-front, and the sights he saw there, he was later to declare, inured him to misery and death.

After an attachment to French army headquarters in 1918, Duranty returned to Paris to cover the Peace Conference. By 1919, however, he had already become a subject of controversy at the Times. His bureau chief,
Charles Selden, took a dim view of his work, and, characterizing Duranty as “most unreliable and tricky,” sent him packing to the Baltic states. Duranty’s reporting remained an embarrassment. His unreliable Baltic dispatches in part inspired Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz to write for the New Republic their celebrated study “A Test of the News,” in which, among other things, they noted that between November 1917 and November 1919 the *Times* had reported on ninety-one separate occasions that the Bolshevik dictatorship had collapsed. Duranty’s name figured prominently in Lippmann and Merz’s study.

Nevertheless, in 1921, the New York editors appointed Duranty as Moscow correspondent—one of the first Western journalists permitted to enter Russia, and one of the very few to master the Russian language. His reporting during the 1920s and 1930s attracted the adverse attention of Frederick Birnall and Edwin L. James, the *Times*’ managing editors. They were wary of his dispatches, while Simeon Strunsky and Joseph Shaplen—who were special writers for the *Times*—saw him, as Harrison Saisbury puts it, as “little more than a press agent not only for the Bolsheviks but for the worst Bolshevik of all, Stalin.”

The *Times* editorial page, therefore, did not hesitate to take issue with either Duranty’s or Denny’s dispatches. For example, on 28 February 1937, an editorial implicitly criticized Duranty’s constant allusions to Dostoevsky as the key to the confessions at the trials:

[T]he safer thing is not to try to explain Russia by Dostoevsky . . . . If ever there was a time to watch one’s step in Russian psychology, and not stress too much its supposed fatalism, its passivity, its wild emotional fluctuations, the time would be now. Current events in Moscow have three protagonists—STALIN, TROTSKY and the dead LENIN. Merely to recite these three names should completely outlaw the traditional formulas about the Russian character—its fatalism, its slackness, its innate anarchism, its gusts of emotional surrender.

To visualize the Russia of LENIN, Stalin and TROTSKY in terms of DOSTOIEVSKY [sic] is virtually impossible . . . . Stalin’s view on shooting down people need not be advertised. These are not feeble psychopaths from DOSTOIEVSKY’S museum [emphasis added].

Nor did the editorial page support Denny’s sanguine view of the third trial. In a 13 March 1938 editorial entitled “The Moscow Lesson,” the editors declared (in a conclusion that was “writ in water”) that “we are witnessing today the moral and intellectual collapse of communism.” Indeed:

... we come, finally, to the question of social planning in the light of the Moscow trial. Soviet Russia is our first and greatest example of a planned social order. . . . The idea of planning, in various degrees, has won prestige everywhere as the substitute for drift or blind competition. . . . [T]he picture of Soviet Russia as painted in the Moscow trials is a picture of ferocious rival planners engaged in murderous competition. It is a planned order in which the plans are determined, in the last analysis, by firing squads and assassination.

Far from the United States and USSR being so much alike, Moscow, the editors concluded, “compels us to look with a kindlier eye on our own alleged ‘chaotic’ democracy.”

The controversy that dogged Duranty into the 1930s makes it difficult to understand why Adolph Ochs, a conservative Republican and a friend of President Coolidge, retained Duranty on the *Times* staff. It was not until 1933 that Ochs himself noted that “there have been indications for some time past that he [Duranty] is relaxing in his attitudes to his duties and not keeping us fully informed.” Although Duranty officially retired as the *Times*’ Moscow correspondent in 1934, he remained on retainer, visiting Moscow for three or four months a year on behalf of his old newspaper. However, in late 1940, Edwin L. James (who had been a rival of Duranty as a reporter during World War I) sent him a curt cable informing him that from New Year’s Day 1941 he was released from any duties as a *Times* correspondent.

Of course, Duranty was one of the most famous journalists in the world, which would have made it difficult for the *Times* to
release him at an earlier date. He profited from his special relationship with the usually inaccessible Stalin—who granted him two coveted interviews and possibly permitted a personal tour of the Ukraine weeks before other correspondents were allowed to travel there. Malcolm Muggeridge, then Soviet correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, recalled that there was something vigorous, vivacious, preposterous, about his unscrupulousness which made his persistent lying somehow absorbing. I suppose no one—not even Louis Fischer—followed the Party line, every shift and change, as assiduously as he did. In Konstantin Oumansky’s [the chief Soviet censor] eyes he was perfect, and was constantly held up to the rest of us as an example of what we should be.49

Then there was the matter of the chauffeur-driven Buick sedan that, to the envy of the Moscow press corps, Stalin allowed him to import. Stalin himself praised Duranty’s efforts to secure U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, once telling him: “You have done a good job in your reporting of the USSR, although you are not a Marxist, because you tried to tell the truth about our country and to understand it and explain it to your readers.”

In 1932, after Duranty had completed a series of articles dismissing the possibility of famine in the Ukraine (millions died, as Malcolm Muggeridge accurately reported at the time), he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.50 Luminaries such as Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University; Joseph Pulitzer, son of the founder of the award; and Kent Cooper, chief of Associated Press, were on the panel of judges. They stated that Duranty’s dispatches were “marked by scholarship, profundity, impartiality . . . and are excellent examples of the best type of foreign correspondence.” In the same year, the Nation, too, awarded Duranty a prize for his “enlightening, dispassionate, and readable dispatches from a great nation in the making.”

In July of that year, Franklin Roosevelt, then governor of New York, invited Duranty to meet with him to discuss the issue of U.S. relations with the USSR. Duranty encouraged a receptive Roosevelt to support diplomatic recognition, urging him to ignore the “nonsense” propagated by anti-Russians. It was therefore fitting that in November 1933 Duranty should sail to the United States on the Berengaria with Maxim Litvinov, Stalin’s dour commissar for foreign affairs. As Alexander Woollcott proudly chronicled: “Duranty brought Litvinov to Washington and then, on sailing away again, took with him in his dispatch case our first ambassador to Moscow. . . .” After a banquet given in Litvinov’s honor at the Waldorf-Astoria, to celebrate Washington’s decision to recognize the Soviet Union, Woollcott wrote:

For each name in the roll, whether Russian or American, there was polite applause from the seventeen hundred, but the one really prolonged panemonium was evoked by the name of a little Englishman. . . . Indeed, one quite got the impression that America, in a spasm of discernment, was recognizing both Russia and Walter Duranty.

Duranty accompanied the U.S. delegation back to the Soviet Union on the SS President Harding, where, according to Walter Issacson and Evan Thomas’ The Wise Men, he “held conversational court fueled by the boat’s best brandy.”

This was a man who consorted happily with the Soviet regime’s elite but maintained a blase distance from the tribulations of the vulgar multitude. In part, as we have seen, “Duranty had much of the British colonial’s attitude toward the Russians.”52 Thus, as Martin Ebon has noted, “Duranty’s writings, in retrospect, convey an air of the elegant and the contemptuous.” In his book Stalin & Co., Duranty explained that Americans might despise dictatorship “. . . but to the Russians it is familiar and natural enough.” Duranty’s disdain for ordinary Russians had manifested itself during the Ukrainian famine. Thus, on 30 March 1933, he noted, in a classic formula for obfuscation that merits the title “Durantyism”: “There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition.”

As Eugene Lyons recounted in his historic exposé, Assignment in Utopia, Duranty, having completed his tour of the Ukraine, told him and Anne McCormick (who was also a correspondent for the Times) that millions of Ukrainians had died of starvation. “‘But, Walter, you don’t mean that literally?’ Mrs. McCormick exclaimed. ‘Hell I don’t . . . I’m being conservative,’ he replied, and as if by way of consolation he added his famous truism: ‘But they’re only
Russians.” At the same time, the British chargé d’affaires in Moscow, William Strang, cabled to London on 30 September 1933: “Mr. Duranty thinks it quite possible that as many as ten million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year.”

An inspection of Duranty’s books further reveals the character of his extraordinary dispatches, almost unequaled in the history of modern journalism for their mendacity. He made clear that he was anything but a believing Communist. In The Kremlin and the People, he wrote that as early as 1923 he had chosen his “horse”:

The one that I picked was Stalin . . . and I picked him and backed him throughout, the way that you back a horse . . . That’s how I felt about Russia, that’s how I felt about Stalin. I don’t care a whoop for socialism, or totalitarianism, or any of their “isms.”

Although, as this nonchalant passage suggests, it is unlikely that Duranty was a Marxist Communist, there are persistent rumors that Stalin possessed compromising evidence of Duranty’s wild life in Moscow—certainly he would have been informed of Duranty’s Russian mistress, and their son, and of his abandoned wife.

It is also true that when in 1929 the American Communist party split into pro- and anti-Stalin factions, Stalin sent a secret letter to the party leadership and simultaneously publicized it through Duranty’s offices. In short, “Stalin was using the New York Times to effect the ouster of the men from the party’s leadership before the members of the party could make their own decision.”

Thereafter, Jay Lovestone, who had led the opposition to Stalin in the American Communist party, was convinced that Duranty had been an OGPU agent.

Even Duranty conceded in his best-selling memoirs, I Write As I Please, that “I . . . tried to make myself think like a true-blue Stalinist in order to find out what true-blue Stalinists were thinking, and had succeeded only too well.” But Duranty never divulged in exactly what ways he had succeeded. He certainly criticized reporters who make “moral judgements” and “prate of ruthless methods and the iron age and lament the brutality which drove through to its goal regardless of sacrifice and suffering.” He himself appeared to be immune to moral values.

Duranty never recanted; he never explained, never apologized. In all of his books, only once did he admit that he had gravely misreported the famine. Not until 1941 in The Kremlin and the People did he write: “Of course we all make mistakes . . . I myself was lamentably wrong about the extent and gravity of the ‘man-made famine’ in Russia during the fight to collectivise the farms, in 1930-33.” Even then he could not forbear from placing Stalin’s famine in quotation marks. And his coverage of the famine had not been a matter of a few “mistakes” but rather involved the deliberate deception of his readers. Indeed, eight years later, in Stalin & Co. Duranty was still lauding the bloody collectivization campaign: “Future historians may well declare that Stalin’s greatest achievement . . . was his conquest of the Russian villages for socialism.”

Nor did Duranty retreat from his adamant stance on the show trials. In The Kremlin and the People, he repeated his old line: “there seems to be little doubt that the accused in these ‘Trials were guilty of treason according to Article 58 of the Soviet penal code.” Duranty here stylishly qualified, legallyistically, his previous unconditional endorsement. (The tactic is related to his self-justification of his dispatches from the Ukraine.) Later in this book Duranty dispensed with such pettifoggery, opining that “their words rang true [at the trials] and it is absurd to suggest that men like this could yield to any influence, against their own strong hearts.” In U.S.S.R.—against all evidence of the weakness of Stalin’s armies in the first stages of the war—published in 1944, Duranty held that “the purge had a certain value. It eliminated completely Nazi plans for a Fifth Column in the USSR.”

THE CASE OF HAROLD DENNY

The case of Harold Denny is more difficult to understand than Walter Duranty’s. Perhaps because of Duranty’s notoriety, Denny has unfortunately escaped the scrutiny of journalists and historians. Yet as the Times’ Moscow correspondent from 1934-1939, he defended the indefensible; he was a classic example of the partisan journalist. When he replaced Duranty in 1934, Denny also traveled through the famine area—and his reports mirrored Duranty’s. “Thus far,” Denny cabled to New York, “no famine has
been found nor an indication of famine in the year to come, though many peasants must draw in their belts and eat food they do not like until the 1935 harvest.”

The thrust of Durandy’s and Denny’s dispatches may have been similar, but the contrast between their lives could hardly be starker. Denny was born on 11 March 1889 in Des Moines, Iowa. He was a brave man. In World War I, he fought in the ranks as a sergeant in the “Rainbow (42nd) Division.” He was primarily a war correspondent for the Times. In the 1920s, he first worked for the Times as a rewrite man and then reported the Moroccan campaign and the U.S. Marines’ battle with Augustino Sandino in Nicaragua.

After his stint in Moscow, he reported from Dunkirk in 1939. In November 1941, in Libya, he was captured by the German General, Manfred Rommel. Imprisoned in Mussolini’s Rome, and then transferred temporarily to the hands of the Gestapo, Denny was finally repatriated to the United States. Soon he returned to Europe. In 1944, he covered the invasion of Normandy. Later, he was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. He wrote two books: Behind Both Lines, a description of his imprisonment by the Gestapo, and Dollars for Bullets, a defense of the United States against charges of imperialism in Central America.

This is hardly the record of a practical ideologue but rather of an intrepid reporter—a record that is difficult to reconcile with Denny’s reporting of Stalin’s tyranny. Nonetheless, Denny’s dismissal of the Ukrainian famine—which he must have known would further impede Western efforts to aid Stalin’s starving victims—combined with his defenses of the show trials indicates that his dispatches were deliberately misleading. It is possible that Denny, regarded as a pedestrian reporter by the Moscow press corps, was in part cowed by Soviet censors. And perhaps Denny was in some measure a dupe of Soviet propaganda. Responding, so Harrison Salisbury documents, to Max Eastman’s criticisms of his coverage of the 1938 show trial, Denny wrote—although he never published his conviction—that “most of us believe that beneath all the improbabilities, if not falsehoods, of the last trial there was a substratum of truth.”

In its august and sovereign way, the Times has never acknowledged Harold Denny’s role as Stalin’s accomplice—and it was only with the publication of S.I. Taylor’s biography of Stalin, which added no essential new facts to Harrison Salisbury’s earlier portrait of Durandy, that the Times admitted in a signed editorial by Karl E. Meyer (24 June 1990) that Durandy’s “was some of the worst reporting ever to appear in this newspaper.” But even in confronting Durandy’s record, the Times misrepresented Durandy’s record: according to the editorial, Durandy’s reporting can be explained by the fact that “he saw what he wanted to see.” But (as we saw) Durandy knew that what he reported about the Ukrainian famine was fiction. It would have been more accurate to say that he reported what he wished to have seen. And the prideful Times “Company Annual Report” continues to list Durandy as one of its Pulitzer Prize winners, noting that it was awarded for “dispassionate, interpretive reporting of the news from Russia.”

In light of the Times’ long silence, it is interesting to glance at Durandy and Denny’s obituaries in the newspaper for which they worked. Durandy—who died on 3 October 1953 in Orlando, Florida, an alcoholic recluse—was properly described as being “in the early Nineteen Thirties perhaps the best known writer in the United States on the affairs of the Soviet Union.” In a lengthy recounting of Durandy’s career, however, his scandalous coverage of the Ukrainian famine was not mentioned, and only one sentence is devoted to his coverage of the show trials. The sole jarring note came at the end of the obituary:

Mr Durandy was one of the writers whose books were “purged” in 1953 from the United States Information Service libraries in West Germany. The State Department later said that some of the removals were a mistake. Mr Durandy’s books were not restored to the shelves, it was explained some time afterward, because the titles lacked “utility” in the information program.

No reader of the obituary would have known why the defender of the purges saw his own books “purged.” This was old news that still was not fit to print.

Harold Denny, who died on 3 July 1945, was the subject on the following day of a Times editorial and an extensive obituary. Little, however, was written of his tenure in Moscow. The editorial eulogized: “His by-
The Dewey Commission faced indifference and even hostility. Little credence was placed in Trotsky’s denunciations of the trials.

It was noted that Denny’s articles had been a “subject of diplomatic protest” and that Denny’s Russian secretary and interpreter, who had been arrested during the 1938 trial, “was later exiled.” Perhaps even Denny’s defense of the trials was not sweeping enough for Generalissimo Stalin.

Although Stalin may not have been satisfied with this or that detail in their reports, Duranty and Denny’s reports had been extremely influential. The Times did print special articles on the trials by Leon Trotsky—who dismissed Duranty and his votaries as “hypocritical psychologists” and at another point observed that “the more extensive the privileges of the leading stratum [of the Soviets] became...the greater became the number of its friends among the bourgeois intellectuals and the liberals...The inspirers of this state of mind became Walter Duranty and Louis Fischer, downright sycophants of the Soviet oligarchy”—but these were taken to be parti pris. Journals such as the New Republic, whose editors defended the trials, triumphantly cited Duranty’s expertise. “Mr. Walter Duranty of the New York Times,” the New Republic editorialized on 3 February 1937, “knows as much about Russia as any foreigner. He...has apparently been forced to the conviction that the confessions are true...and it seems to us that the weight of the evidence supports Mr. Duranty’s claims.” In 1941, Louis Fischer, the Soviet correspondent for the Nation, could easily refer to Duranty as “the dean of the Moscow journalists’ corps.”

Harrison Salisbury has concluded that “If a positive image of the Soviet Union began to emerge in America despite the anti-Soviet propaganda and ‘red scares’ of the 1920s, it was painted by Duranty and printed in The New York Times.” Similarly, if more colorfully, Eugene Lyons lamented in The Red Decade:

The mischief of it was that Duranty’s dispatches, in all these years of the building of the great Russian myth, had a resonance which they would have lacked in the Daily Worker. The liberals had in his true-blue reports clinching corroboration of their self-deceptions.

At the same time, news agencies and wire services such as the Associated Press had conveyed only the routine course of the trials and made no attempt to analyze them. Colonel Robert R. McCormick’s right-wing Chicago Tribune had relied on AP stories and ran scant commentary on the trials. The New York Herald Tribune instructed its Soviet correspondent, Joseph F. Barnes, to file cursory reports on the trials. Hoping to reduce its costs, the Herald Tribune had ordered all of its foreign correspondents to shorten their dispatches.

To be sure, the special Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Against Leon Trotsky, organized by Sidney Hook and headed by John Dewey in Cocoyan, Mexico, offered Trotsky an opportunity to expose the trials. However, the committee itself faced indifference and even “aggressive hostility on the part of a sizable component of the New York intellectual milieu in which it was initiated.”

Again, little credence was placed in Trotsky’s denunciations of the trials.

Even those who were in Moscow at the time were misled. Joseph E. Davies, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow from 1936-1938, who wanted to be misled, lent his support to the show trials. He confided to his diary on 8 June 1938 that “I shall always feel under a special obligation to Walter Duranty who told the truth as he saw it and has the eyes of genius.” The movie Mission to Moscow, which was based on Davies’s memoirs, and which Davies personally showed to Stalin, who then ordered it to be shown in Soviet cinemas throughout the Soviet Union during
the war, was reviewed by Washington’s Office of War Information in glowing terms: “The presentation of the Moscow trials is a high point in the picture and should do much to dispel the fears which many honest persons have felt: with regard to our alliance with Russia.” In the United States, the movie reached a large and enthusiastic audience.

During World War II, Davies, as far as possible, continued to laud the purge trials, declaring:

It is quite clear that all these trials, purges and liquidations which at the time seemed so harsh, and shocked the whole world so much, were part of a decisive and energetic effort on the part of Stalin’s Government to protect itself not only from a coup d’état from within but also from an attack from without. The purge established order in the country and freed it from treason.

(At war’s end, on 18 May 1945, Stalin awarded Davies the Order of Lenin “for successful activity.” Davies was the only foreign diplomat in the history of the Soviet Union to be so honored.)

And Duranty’s influence lingered on, even after his death. In his memoirs, C. L. Sulzberger fondly recalled Duranty as “a talented writer and brilliant conversationalist who had been highly regarded by the Kremlin. He was instrumental in furthering the recognition that followed Roosevelt’s election in 1932.” As late as 1977, diplomat and politician W. Averell Harriman—who had been U.S. ambassador to the USSR from 1943-1946 and had first met Duranty in Moscow in the mid-1920s—believed that he had possessed “sound judgement,” and was “accurate” and “wise.”

Nor have American revisionist historians hesitated to defend Duranty. J. Arch Getty, who has asserted that, at most, tens of thousands perished during the purges, recently contended that it is easy from our vantage point to hold Duranty to a strict standard of moral conduct. But our choices were not his. . . . Fascism had reared its ugly head in Asia and in Europe and the Western democracies were unable or unwilling to respond. . . . [T]he Soviet Union seemed to offer a stark contrast. With full employment and an array of social services, a country of poor people was trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps.

If Duranty slanted his coverage of the 1932 Ukrainian famine, wrote Getty, then it was only because he was “working to influence American public opinion in order to facilitate diplomatic recognition of the USSR.”

In my view, the Times’ coverage of Soviet Russia during the 1930s is of historical importance not merely because their reporters’ mendacity was politically influential or journalistically unique. (We have, after all, many other such examples in contemporary newspaper history: recall the encomiums Herbert Matthews showered upon Fidel Castro in the pages of the Times during the 1950s and early 1960s.) The story deserved to be recounted at some length, I think, because Duranty and Denny appear to provide the first example of deliberate and systematic misreporting of a Communist country.

Of equal importance, perhaps, their tendentious coverage anticipated U.S. government and press efforts during World War II to depict the freedom-loving Soviet Union as a friendly, reliable, progressive country, fighting for humane goals identical to those of its Western allies. Forewarned might have been forearmed, and fifty years of Cold War might have been foreshortened.

Above all, there is the moral lesson: of how two able and civilized journalists from America’s most distinguished newspaper could willfully distort the facts and promulgate fiction, could concur with the deliberations and conclusions of a tyrant’s court and his “hanging judges” — could collaborate with what John Dewey called “the Stalin school of falsification.”

NOTES

1. Walter Duranty, “Plot With Reich and Japan Confessed at Soviet Trial,” New York Times, 24 January 1937, p. 1. All quotations from Duranty’s and Denny’s dispatches have been rendered precisely as they appeared originally in the Times.

tioned in Moscow, he never mentions Denny's name in the *The Moscow Correspondents*. Yet Denny was the *Times* Moscow correspondent from 1934-1939.

3. For a review of Russian efforts to confront the Soviet past, see David Remnick, "Dead Souls," *New York Review of Books*, 19 December 1991. Paul Hollander details the praise the trials earned among Western intellectuals in *Political Pilgrims* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). For instance, Bertolt Brecht derided "all the scum, domestic and foreign, all the vermin, the professional criminals" who had made common cause with the accused, while Lion Feuchtwanger observed that after attending the second trial "my doubts melted away as naturally as the salt dissolves in water" (Hollander, p. 163.)


10. Ibid.


15. Denny's allusion to Stalin's portrait suggests a parallel. Hitler, too, frequently made a point of posing for photographs with smiling children. Similar photos abound in the Soviet Union. Was this unconnected with Stalin's promulgation in 1934 of a law stating that children of twelve years and older would be punished for failing to reveal any treasonous acts their parents might commit? Any child could confide in Uncle Joe.


17. Harold Denny, "Count Is Expected to Disclose 180,000,000," *New York Times*, 7 January 1937, p. 3. "The new constitution," write Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, "granted equality to all in the sense that all were equally unequal."

18. This was the conventional wisdom of the day on the Left: the radical weekly, the *New Republic*, exulted (24 June 1936) that the constitution "goes a long distance toward liberal, democratic organisation on the model of the United States or Great Britain."


20. Ibid.


23. Ibid., p. 2.


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 22.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.


38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.


42. Trevor-Roper, p. 296.

44. See Taylor, pp. 93-94.
46. Salisbury, p. 463.
50. For the full story of Duranty and Denny's coverup of the Ukrainian famine, see Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the 'Times' Couldn't Find," Commentary, November 1983.
54. Ibid., p. 67.
62. Ibid., p. 131.
66. Cited in Arkady Vaksberg, Stalin's Prosecutor: The Life of Andrei Vyshinsky (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), n. 22, p. 343. Vaksberg notes that "Davies' energetic efforts did not pass unnoticed. Immediately after the war, on 18 May 1945, he was awarded an Order of Lenin, the only foreign diplomat in the entire history of the Soviet Union to be deemed worthy of such an honour, and, what's more, with the short but expressive formulation—'for successful activity.' To mark the presentation of the award the Soviet Embassy in Washington held a sumptuous reception in his honour on 21 November of the same year."
68. Taylor, p. 140.
70. Ibid.