

**THE GREAT
MAN-MADE FAMINE
IN UKRAINE IN 1932-1933**

**50th
Anniversary**



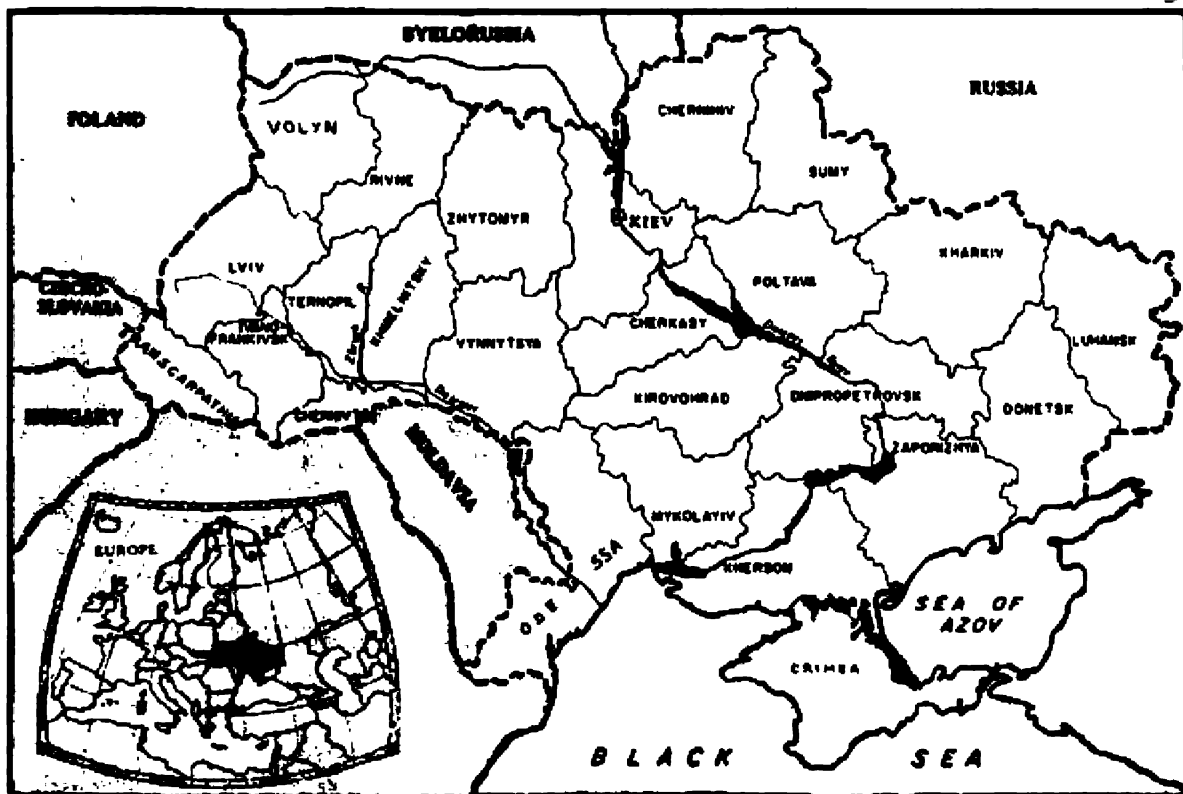
**COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GREAT FAMINE
IN UKRAINE IN 1932-1933**

Vancouver, B.C. — Summer 1983

The illustration on the cover of this booklet was composed by Ludmila Temertey, a Montreal artist. This design has been chosen as the model for a monument, unveiled in Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton in October, 1983, to commemorate the victims of the famine in 1932-33.

Temertey's model, entitled "The Broken Life Cycle", consists of a twisted circle and emaciated hands representing unnatural forces of the famine. "It symbolizes the devious twist of a political ideology, and the intense range of human suffering and defiance in the face of its brutal power, without condoning the perpetrators of this heinous famine" — as the artist explains.

The Commemorative Committee in Vancouver acknowledges with gratitude Mrs. L. Temertey's kind permission to use this design as an illustration for our booklet.



Ukraine and Ukrainians

Ukraine, known at present as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, is the second largest country in Europe with an area of 232,000 square miles and a population of approximately 47 million.

Ethnographically the Ukrainians are Eastern Slavs with their own language, culture and independent history.

Ukraine is the richest agricultural region in Europe, being often called the 'Breadbasket of Europe'. It is also important as an industrial power, rich in natural resources, such as coal, iron ore and manganese. The Donbas region is a well known industrial complex, which provides most of the raw materials and heavy machinery for Eastern Europe.

Ukraine has had three distinct periods of national statehood. The first period lasting from the 9th to 14th centuries began with the founding of

the medieval state called 'Kievan Rus' which was then centred around the city Kiev (Kyiv), the present-day capital of Ukraine. It was in Kiev that Christianity was officially introduced during the reign of Prince Volodymyr the Great in 988 A.D.

The second period — The autonomous Ukrainian Cossack State — lasted from the middle of the 17th to the end of the 18th century. In 1764 the Ukrainian Cossack State was liquidated by Tsarist Russia and Ukraine was gradually absorbed into the Russian Empire.

The third, modern period, began with the fall of Tsarist Russia and the establishment of the Ukrainian government, the 'Central Rada' in March 1917 and ended in 1920 as a result of the Soviet Russian brutal invasion and occupation. Since 1923 Ukraine has been a constituent member of the Soviet Union.

I. Ukraine and Russia in politico-historical perspective

This year, 1983, marks the 50th anniversary of one of history's most horrifying cases of genocide — the Soviet-made Great Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine. The event, which Ukrainians call "shtuchnyj holod" — the man-made famine, or sometimes even the Ukrainian Holocaust, claimed an estimated seven to ten million victims. Purely in terms of mortality, it was of the same order of magnitude as the Jewish Holocaust.¹

This barbarous crime was initiated and executed on orders of Joseph Stalin and the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Their main purpose and motives were socio-political and economic aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian nation as a political factor and social entity.

The Great Famine in Ukraine can be properly understood in the context of specific political and historical relations which existed between Russia and Ukraine since the middle of the 17th century and in the light of Russia expansionistic imperialism whose goal was the political and territorial domination over and subjugation of Ukraine.

Even a telescoped presentation of political events in Ukraine discloses the basic trends of Russian governmental policies towards Ukrainians: 1764 — the liquidation of the Ukrainian Cossack State; 1775 — the Russian destruction of the Cossack Zaporizhian Sich; 1783 — the abolition of Ukrainian Courts and the transformation of Ukrainian Cossack regiments into traditional Russian military formations.

After the liquidation of Ukrainian political and legal institutions, the Russian government in the 19th century began well-planned and intensified Russification measures by issuing two decrees, in 1863 and in 1876, which not only prohibited the printing of books

in Ukrainian, but also denied the existence of a Ukrainian language and of a Ukrainian nation.

All these measures by the Russian government against Ukrainians, their history, culture and language, constituted a veritable cultural genocide, its ultimate objective being the annihilation of the Ukrainian national identity.²

The fall of imperialist Russian Tsardom in 1917 unleashed a series of national revolutions which brought long-awaited although unfortunately short-lived freedom and national independence of Ukraine.

From March 17, 1917, when the Ukrainian Central Rada was established in Kiev, to January 22, 1918, when full-fledged Ukrainian independence was proclaimed, Ukraine underwent a series of important political developments. The Rada issued four Universals, (the last of which proclaimed full independence of Ukraine on January 22, 1918) organized the Ukrainian National Army, established Ukrainian schools, introduced Ukrainian Judicial and administrative systems, and provided for vast autonomy for national minorities.

After the Bolshevik coup, Lenin and Trotsky tried to subvert the Ukrainian government and to take over Ukraine. Thwarted in their first attempt, the Bolsheviks officially recognized the Ukrainian Republic in a note of December 17, 1917, but at the same time launched an unprovoked aggression against it.

The armed defensive war of the Ukrainian National Republic against Communist Russia lasted until 1920, when the latter finally conquered Ukraine and established an Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1923 it was forced into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.³

1 James E. Mace, *The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine: What Happened and Why*, Almanac of the Ukrainian National Association, 1983, Jersey City, New York, p. 12.

2 *Ukrainian-Russian Confrontation in Historiography*, by Lubomyr R. Wynar, *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, Vol. Spring, 1974, New York, p. 13.

3 Detailed analyses of these events can be found in D. Doroshenko's, *A Survey of Ukrainian History*, Winnipeg, 1975, pp. 587-711 and Rev. I. Nahayewsky's, *History of the Modern Ukrainian State 1917-1923*, Munich, 1966

II. Ukrainian national and cultural RENAISSANCE in 1920's and Soviet Russian reaction to it

The Ukrainian national and cultural renaissance, which had been reviled and throttled by the Tsarist government, took giant steps forward even under the new Soviet regime and manifested itself in the form of so-called "Ukrainization" during the 1920's. This powerful process of awakening in Ukraine seriously disturbed all Russian imperialist expansionists and chauvinists. It also disturbed the upper echelon of the party, including Stalin. It was this ruling Bolshevik clique in the Kremlin that ordered the cruel and inhuman pogrom of Ukrainian cultural, intellectual, and ecclesiastical life, and especially the Ukrainian peasantry.⁴

The Central Committee of the Communist party, under the personal direction of Stalin, formulated a plan which at once would annihilate all the cultural achievements of the Ukrainian people and "destroy social basis of Ukrainian nationalism — individual peasant agriculture". (Proletars' ka Prawda, January 22, 1930). This "annihilation strategy" was implemented in the following stages:

1. In 1930 all the work of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (VUAN) was totally destroyed. The work of other institutions and cultural societies met with the same fate.

2. A massive physical extermination of Ukrainian scientific cadres, cultural and church leaders was started. April 1930 saw the beginning (in Kharkiv) of the trial of the members of the Union of the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) headed by the academician, S. Yefremov, and, about the same time, the trials of the leaders of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which had previously been outlawed by the governmental decree of April 8, 1919. During the following few years 35 bishops including Metropolitan, Basil Lypkivsky, and thousands of priests had been physically liquidated.⁵

The Golgota of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church ominously foreshadowed the tragedy which was to befall the Ukrainian Catholic Church 16 years later, in 1946, when it was totally liquidated by the Soviet Russian government.

III. Collectivization and the Great man-made Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933

Concomitant with this cultural genocide was the imposition of forced collectivization on the free and independent Ukrainian peasants and the planned annihilation of millions of them through a man-made famine in 1932-33. The brunt of this economic and physical annihilation was directed against Ukrainian peasants because, in Stalin's view, they constituted the social basis of a national movement; the reservoir from which such movements drew their strength. According to his

own words, "the nationality problem is by its essence a peasant problem".

As a first stage of forced collectivization was the elimination of the "kulaks" (rich peasants) as a class. This policy of "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" and forced total collectivization of agriculture was announced by Stalin on December 27, 1929, and was legalized by the Central Committee Resolutions of January 5 and 30, 1930.⁶ De-kulakization had little to do with economic considerations,

4. 50 Years Ago: The Famine Holocaust in Ukraine, by Walter Dushayck, World Congress of Free Ukrainians, New York-Toronto, 1983, p. 17; Ukraine: A concise Encyclopedia Vol. I, University of Toronto, Press Toronto, 1963, pp. 814-827.

5. W. Dushayck, op. cit., p. 18.

6. James E. Mace, op. cit., p. 29.



A pack of starving children — a common sight in Ukrainian villages in 1932-1933

but was primarily intended to rid the countryside of peasants, rich and poor alike, most likely to organize and lead resistance to forced collectivization. It is estimated that some two million people were chased out of their homes and off their land. Those who resisted collectivization were either executed or sent to prison camps and their families were deported to Siberia or the Russian far north. The suffering among these peasants was terrible — yet it pales in comparison with what happened during the famine of 1932-33.

The famine of 1932-33 was artificial, meaning that it would not have naturally occurred. It was the direct result of Moscow's imposition of draconian grain procurement quotas on Ukraine, quotas which were simply beyond Ukraine's capacity to fulfill. The 1932 harvest, for example, was larger than the worst harvest during the 1920's when there had been no famine. In fact, the total crop harvested in the critical of 1932-33 alone was sufficient to feed the Ukrainian population for two years and four months and to seed all the fields. From this harvest Moscow requisitioned 4.2 million tons of grain plus the 2.3 million tons that were set aside as provisions for the population. This left the average Ukrainian peasant household of 5 or 6 people with less than 180 pounds of grain for an entire year.

At the same time as millions of Ukrainian farmers were starving, **their requisitioned grain was being exported abroad by Moscow.**

When international relief organizations offered to assist the starving peasants, the offer was rejected by the

Soviet government on the grounds that there was no famine in Ukraine and hence no need to aid its victims. Moreover, the borders of Ukraine were sealed off, and starving Ukrainian peasants were not allowed to cross into Russia in search of bread, where there was no starvation. Stalin had ordered, in effect, an economic blockade of the entire Ukraine.

Every conceivable method was used by the Red Army and police to extract grain. It was during the 1932 harvest, in August, that the infamous law was passed stipulating a minimum of five years in labour camp and a maximum of the death penalty for "theft of socialist property". Starving peasants were sentenced to five years in labour camps for taking an unripened ear of corn from the field. For the theft of a sack wheat grown by them on what used to be their land, hungry peasants were sentenced to the firing squad.

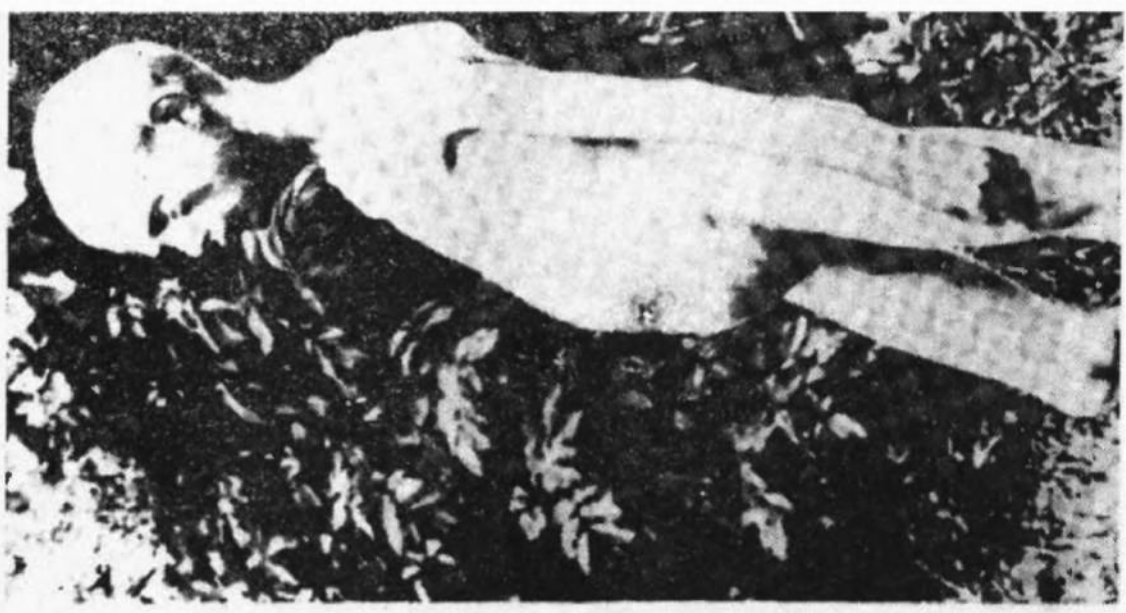
The slow and agonizing death of hundreds of thousands of children was perhaps the most brutal scene to be observed in Ukraine. They would lie on the streets and in the ditches trying to gather their remaining force to look for something to eat. But they were to week that they would remain lying there, until death released them from their agony. People attempted survival by eating everything in sight: dogs, cats, birds, and the bark of trees and all sorts of roots. Hundreds of thousands of children were orphaned and many of these foraged the countryside in search of food and were ultimately eliminated by troops and the police by means of mass execution.⁷

7. B. Kravchenko, *The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-33*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1983, p. 2.

STARVATION OF PEASANTS



This corpse is that of the father of the boy pictured to the right. The orphaned child was unable even to bury the parent. There were no shovels in the village since the last raid of the OGPU, and the boy could only cover the body with straw. (All photos copyright, 1935, by American Newspapers, Inc.)



Villages Depopulated by Hunger in Ukraine as Soviet Punish Their Opponents

IV. Reports about the Famine in Ukraine in World Press

Despite official denials by Moscow of the existence of famine in Ukraine, reports of the gigantic famine began appearing in the world press. The famine, however reached its full magnitude in the spring and summer of 1933, and it was only then that the world press carried articles and reports dealing with the famine catastrophe in Ukraine. Several English, French, German and American correspondents wrote extensively on what they found in Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union.

The noted British journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge, then a young correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, travelled in Ukraine at that time, and wrote:

...A merciless war is being waged by the Soviet government against the peasants. The battlefield is truly ruined, but the struggle is going on. One can see... millions of peasants dying from hunger, and the soldiery of the GPU implementing the orders of the proletarian revolution. They have thrown themselves upon Ukraine as famished vultures. They have executed and deported millions of peasants, sometimes entire villages. Thus they have succeeded in transforming the richest country in the world into a desert, full of melancholy..

Suzanne Bertillion, a correspondent for *Le Matin* in Paris, wrote:

...The present-day state in Ukraine: ruin, hunger and a graveyard silence. Entire villages are dying out. In a village which had 800 people, 150 have died since the spring. The famine in Ukraine was created by Moscow artificially from political considerations. In order to completely destroy all aspirations toward independence, the Soviet government organized a man-made famine with the purpose of destroying the entire people whose only

sin is the longing for freedom...

But perhaps the most forceful indictment of Communist Russia for her attempt to destroy the Ukrainian nation, as such, came from Dr. Ewald Ammude, secretary of the Inter-Congressional and International Aid Committee for the Starvation Districts in the USSR. In his German-language report, *Muss Russland Hungern?* (Must Russia Go Hungry?) he stated:

...An important role in the hunger problem is played by the national factor, which is not solved to this day. In the USSR, as once in Tsarist Russia, there exists the state people (Russians), who wage a struggle against the other nationalities, above all Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The purpose of this struggle is to impede their independence aspirations. I must say with all determination, clearly and openly, that on the basis of the present great differences and antagonisms with respect to the Ukrainian people, Russia aspires directly toward the extermination of a great part of the present generation in Ukraine.⁸

Some leaders of the Ukrainian Communist Party (mainly M. Skrypnyk, Commissar of Education of the Government of the Ukrainian SSR., and V. Chubar, head of the Ukrainian Communist Government) pleaded with Moscow for a downward revision of Ukraine's agricultural obligations, asserting that the plans were not only unconscionable, but wholly disproportionate to the existing possibilities.

But the Kremlin did not pay any attention, even to these sober voices of members of the Communist Party. Instead of undertaking appropriate measures to prevent a full catastrophe of famine, the Central Committee of the Communist Party sent a number of "strong men" such as Molotov,

8. The above quotations from the World Press have been taken from W. Daulnyck's op. cit., pp. 40-43.



"Collection of Corpses" in Ukraine during the man-made Famine in 1932 - 1933

Kaganowich and Mikoyan to supervise affairs in Ukraine. Later on a special "Plenipotentiary", Pavel Postyshev, was dispatched. He brought along several thousands of special agents (so-called "shock activists") to keep an eye on the party activities in Ukraine mainly connected with collectivization and the fulfilment of grain procurement quotas. V. Molotov, speaking at a meeting of these "shock activists" stated: "The work has to be done regardless of how many lives it may cost. There is no room for softness or sentimentality."

How many millions perished during the Great Famine in Ukraine? It is very hard to give an exact and definite answer to this question. The Soviet government prohibited all information about the death rate in Ukraine and forbade the publication of statistics on the natural population growth. Physicians certifying the cause of death were forbidden to name the "natural" cause of death — starvation. The word **HOLID** (hunger or famine in Ukrainian) was decreed a counterrevolutionary rumor.⁹

But despite the official silence, numerous estimates of the number of the

victims were made. These numbers range between 7 to 10 millions.

D. Solovey, who worked under the Academician, M.V. Ptucha, an Ukrainian demographer and president of the Demographic Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, estimates 6,500,000 on the basis of an official report by the **Derzhplan** (State Plan of USSR). The aforementioned M. Skrypnyk, commissar of Education gave 8,000,000 as the number, and V. Balytsky, former head of the Ukrainian GPU in Kharkiw — 8,500,000. A Polish historian, J. Radziejowski, comparing the Soviet census of 1926 and 1939, calculated that there were 9.3 million fewer Ukrainians in 1939 than would have been expected from the population trends of 1920's.¹⁰ Even Stalin himself in a conversation with Winston Churchill agreed that the collective farm policy was a great struggle not because of the opposition of aristocrats or big landowners, but because of the opposition of millions of small men. Stalin then added, as a casual matter of course, that there were some ten million of these small men — the bulk of which had to be wiped out because of their opposition.¹¹

9. Fiftieth Anniversary of the Famine Holocaust in Ukraine, Editorial *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, Vol. No. 1, Spring, 1982, New York.
10. Janusz Radziejowski, "Collectivization in Ukraine in Light of Soviet Historiography", *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, No. 9, 1980, p. 17.
11. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, pp 447-448.

V. CONCLUSION

Although for over three years — 1932-1934 the international press was replete with eyewitness reports and accounts of the famine in Ukraine, Western industrialists and businessmen proceeded to “do business as usual” with the USSR, buying Ukrainian wheat at cheap prices, heedless of the fact that millions of Ukrainians were perishing from hunger because Moscow had taken away this wheat to sell for profit abroad.

There is not the shadow of a doubt that the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33 was **deliberate genocide**, a crime for which the West collectively shares partial responsibility in having shut its eyes and minds to that most sinister aspect of Communism in Russian garb.¹²

This pamphlet cannot include even a portion of the mass of documentation, eyewitness reports, and testimonials that are evidence of this crime. Suffice to say, that history repeats it-

self. In Ukraine alone mass death did not end with the famine, and continued during the purges of the ‘Great Terror’ unleashed by Stalin in 1937-38. Despite the millions of deaths the West again said and did nothing.

It is this very kind of obliviousness to crimes against humanity that allowed Hitler, a fellow psychopath of Stalin’s, to proceed unimpeded as he, in his turn, murdered many millions, among them six million Jews.

Humanity must forever remember these holocausts, and the many millions of victims, and must recognize that they are the tragic consequence of allowing the tyranny and paranoia of political messianism to go unchecked.

As the world commemorates the 50th anniversary of the holocaust — famine in Ukraine and its seven million victims, it must vow to never forget, and vow to never let such a crime to occur again.

12. W. Dushnyck, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

FAMINE IN UKRAINE

A

73rd CONGRESS
2nd SESSION H. RES. 399

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 28, 1934

Mr. FISH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

RESOLUTION

Whereas several millions of the population of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the constituent part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, died of starvation during the years of 1932 and 1933; and

Whereas the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, although being fully aware of the famine in Ukraine and although having full and complete control of the entire food supplies within its borders, nevertheless failed to take relief measure designed to check the famine or to alleviate the terrible conditions arising from it, but on the contrary used the famine as a means of reducing the Ukrainian population and destroying the Ukrainian political, cultural, and national rights; and

Whereas intercessions have been made at various times by the United States during the course of its history on behalf of citizens of states other than the United States, oppressed or persecuted by their own governments, indicating that it has been the traditional policy of the United States to take cognizance of such violations of human rights and liberties: Therefore be it

(PART OF RESOLUTION)

NEW YORK CITY

1934

UNITED UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES