

REWRITING HISTORY

How Ukrainian nationalists imposed their doctored history on our high-school students.

By Jeff Coplon



In 1982, the New York State Department of Education set out to blaze a new trail: a definitive high-school curriculum on the Nazi genocide. The department assembled a distinguished review committee, including such Holocaust experts as Terrence Des Pres and Raul Hilberg. It assigned the actual writing to three top-rated social studies teachers. The finished two-volume project, which went to classrooms in the fall of 1985, does credit to everyone involved. It is a balanced mix of archival documents, survivor memories and scholarly essays.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the high schools. A third volume was added to The Human Rights Series, on an entirely different topic: the famine in the Ukraine region of the Soviet Union in 1932-33.

"On the eve of Hitler's assumption of power," the book begins, "Ukraine experienced a tragedy which rivals in magnitude the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis. Precise estimates vary, but it is generally accepted that about 7 million Ukrainians or about 22 percent of the total Ukrainian population died of starvation in a government-planned and -controlled famine."

This act of "genocide," the introduction continues, has been "consistently obliterated from world view." At this point, a reader might stop and wonder: How could such a terrible story have been suppressed so long?

Here is how: The story is a fraud. Along with *The Harvest of Sorrow* by Robert Conquest and *Harvest of Despair*, a documentary film shown on PBS, the state's new cur-

Jeff Coplon, a Schenectady native, lives in New York City and writes regularly for The Village Voice.

riculum promotes the most cynical of swindles—a disinformation campaign played out from the White House and Congress to the halls of Harvard. Pressing every

million—Ukrainians died from starvation itself and related diseases. By any scale, this is an enormous toll of human suffering.

In 1932, the Soviet Union was in crisis.



*The texts:
A funny thing happened on the way to the high schools.*

pedal, pulling all the strings, is a Ukrainian nationalist lobby that strains to cloak its own history of Nazi collaboration. By revising their past, these émigrés help support a more ambitious revisionism: a denial of Hitler's Holocaust against the Jews.

There was indeed a famine in the Ukraine in the early 1930s. It appears likely that hundreds of thousands—possibly one or two

The cities had suffered food shortages since 1928. Grain was desperately needed for export and foreign capital, both to fuel the first Five Year Plan and to counter the growing war threat from Germany. In addition, the Communist Party's left wing (led by Stalin) had come to reject the New Economic Plan, which had restored market capitalism to the countryside in the 1920s.



In this context, Stalin's collectivization plan was truly a "revolution from above," a drastic move toward socialism and an epochal change in the mode of production. There were heavy casualties on both sides—hundreds of thousands of Kulaks (peasants) deported to the north, thousands of party activists assassinated. Vast disruption of the 1932 harvest ensued (and not only in the Ukraine), and many areas were hard-pressed to meet the state's grain requisition quotas.

Stalin and the politburo played major roles. "But there is plenty of blame to go around," as Sovietologist John Arch Getty recently noted in *The London Review of Books*. "It must be shared by the tens of thousands of activists and officials who carried out the policy and by the peasants who chose to slaughter animals, burn fields and boycott cultivation in protest."

Such a balanced analysis, however, has never satisfied Ukrainian nationalists in this country and Canada, for whom the "terror famine" is an article of faith and communal rallying point. From the end of World War II, their obsession had been confined to émigré journals. But now they have found a much broader potential audience—including every 10th-grade social studies class in New York State.

In mounting their curriculum campaign, the nationalists were well-organized and well-connected. Their point man was Bohdan Wytwycky, a New Jersey attorney and author who was invited to join the state's advisory council, which would steer the curriculum's development. Wytwycky's first move was to gain inclusion of an excerpt from his book on Slavic victims of the Nazis. His second victory was to elim-



Mass graves: Aren't 3.5 million deaths enough?

inate all but passing mention of Ukrainian war criminals.

"I took the position they should be dealt with," said Stephen Berk, a Union College history professor and advisory council member, "but Wytwycky insisted there should be no dwelling on [Nazi] collaborators." (The Catholic lobby didn't fare so well; over its protests, the curriculum includes a critical assessment of Pope Pius XII's inaction.)

But Wytwycky's major coup, helped along by a nationalist letter campaign, was to install material on the Ukrainian famine. In the curriculum's second draft in 1984, the famine was treated as a 17-page precursor

chapter to the second Holocaust volume—a plan rejected by the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish groups. By the time the material reached the schools in the fall of 1986, however, it had swollen into a separate third volume, with 90 pages on the "forced famine," and another 52 pages on "human rights violations" in the Ukraine. (As if in afterthought, 21 pages were appended on the Cambodian massacres under Pol Pot during the '70s.)

A major player in the transition was Assemblyman William Larkin (R-C, New Windsor), an assistant minority whip, retired Army colonel, and old friend of Gordon Ambach, then the State Commissioner of Education. Larkin had ample incentive to help; he has about 8,000 ethnic-Ukrainian constituents. He arranged "four or five" meetings between State Education staff members and 20 upstate Ukrainian nationalists in 1985. He also enlisted several other Republican assemblymen to press for the famine book, and says he spoke personally to Ambach.

"He offered to do anything he could," Larkin said. "But if we hadn't gone up there in force, if we hadn't pushed it, it wouldn't have happened."

By most accounts, the political pressure was intense—enough to squeeze a department deemed relatively apolitical. The Ukrainians mounted "an enormous letter-writing campaign with the Board of Regents," said Robert Maurer, the department's Executive Deputy Commissioner. "There were phone calls and visits. There's not often that much interest in curriculum matters; it was very unusual."

The famine boosters found an especially sympathetic ear in Regent Emlyn I. Griffith, then chairman of the committee that unani-

TOP PHOTO BY RANDALL PERRY

mously endorsed Volume III in 1985—a vote that ensured its future use. “As a member of a minority people put down by a majority government, I empathized with the Ukrainian nationalists,” said Griffith, an ethnic Welshman. “There was a significant lobbying effort.... It was persuasive. It wasn’t threatening; it was positive.”

“I did receive a great number of letters and literature, but it wasn’t passed because of that,” added Regent Willard Genrich, who was chancellor at the time. “I was very supportive because this was another example of man’s inhumanity to man.” The board’s consensus was “so unanimous,” Genrich added, “that there wasn’t any controversy” on the matter.

It’s difficult to pinpoint exactly who made the decision on Volume III. Griffith said his committee acted on a strong staff recommendation. Ambach failed to return phone calls for this story. Maurer lodged responsibility with Deputy Commissioner Gerald Freeborne, who in turn pointed to program development director Edward Lalor, who referred questions to a low-level curriculum development official named George Gregory, the chairman of the Human Rights Series advisory committee.

Shrouded by such corporate buck-passing, Wytwycky ran in an open field. No one challenged his basic premise. The famine “certainly does represent another example of genocide,” Gregory asserted. “It was a planned attempt by Stalin to eliminate the Ukrainian people.”

“George is the consummate bureaucrat,” said one educator involved with the series. “His experience is mainly in grade-school curricula—like *Appreciating Our Indian Heritage*, or *The Importance of the Finger Lakes Region*. When I started up there, he really didn’t know anything about the Holocaust.”

To write the famine material, Gregory hired Walter Litynski, a Troy High School biology teacher and a local chairman of Americans for Human Rights in Ukraine. For the job of potential reviewer, Litynski recommended James Mace, the Robert Conquest protégé who also directs the Ukraine Famine Commission under a \$382,000 Congressional appropriation. Mace and Litynski proceeded to stack the review committee with Ukrainian academics, the omnipresent Wytwycky, and four upstate nationalists. “No contrary [review] letters were either solicited or received,” Berk acknowledged. “I’m sorry this [volume] came out, because it was distorted—but I felt it was a fait accompli. We never saw anything typed, just the final printed draft. It was made clear that we [the advisory committee] were only consultants.”

Berk wasn’t the only local expert displeased by Volume III. “It does what lots of people would like to do—it rewrites history,” said Norma Ball, former director of the New York State Museum Holocaust Research Center and exhibit. “It makes the famine an equivalent of the Holocaust, and



Textbook illustrations: These photos of starving children, reprinted in Volume III of the Holocaust series, actually derive from film footage of an earlier famine.

it’s not—it’s apples and pears.”

When asked about contrasting viewpoints from leading scholars like Moshe Lewin (University of Pennsylvania) or Lynne Viola (SUNY at Binghamton), who roundly reject the famine-as-genocide thesis, Gregory was unmoved. “Quite frankly, we have not heard of any of them,” he said. “We tried to present a balanced point of view. We didn’t ask for the Soviet opinion, since the Soviet view was that the famine never happened. [In fact, the Soviets now concede that a famine was “impossible to avoid” because of drought, mismanagement and kulak sabotage.] We relied heavily on James Mace; he’s the leading historian of

that time period.”

This paean would startle academe, where Mace’s work is infrequently read and rarely found in footnotes, the baseline of a scholar’s importance. He is widely regarded as a right-wing polemicist, an indifferent researcher who has made a checkered career out of faminology.

“He couldn’t have gotten a real academic job,” said veteran Sovietologist Roberta Manning of Boston College. “Soviet studies is a very competitive field these days—there’s much weeding out after the Ph.D. If he hadn’t hopped on this political cause, he would be doing research for a bank, or running an export-import business.”

The Mace-Litynski partnership yielded a predictable end product—the undistilled nationalist line. The state curriculum on the Ukraine famine bears a heavy resemblance to both *The Harvest of Sorrow* and *Harvest of Despair*—a film disowned by its own researcher, Marco Carynnyk, who confirmed that most of its footage and still photos are bogus. (The State Education Department now supplies the embattled documentary, as an audio-visual supplement, to any interested teacher.) Like the film and the Conquest book, the curriculum features faked photos from anti-Semitic sources—such as *Und du Siehst Die Sowjets Richtig* (Berlin, 1935) by an ardent Nazi named A. Laubheimer. The schoolbook’s most striking photograph, that of a malnourished boy feeding his younger brother, actually derives from film footage of an earlier Russian famine in the 1920s. Volume III also reprints dubious atrocity tales (including 16 selections from that unattributed émigré favorite, *Black Deeds of the Kremlin*) and sections of a fraudulent Hearst series from 1934, all without caveat.

In typical nationalist style the famine volume red-baits anyone who challenged the genocide scenario, such as *New York Times* reporter Walter Duranty. It goes Conquest one better by referring to the region as “Ukraine,” with no article, in deference to a sovereignty that exists only in nationalist fables.

The curriculum is most obviously exposed in its estimate of a famine death toll: “...it is generally accepted that about 7 million Ukrainians or about 22 percent of the total Ukrainian population died of starvation in a government-planned and -controlled famine.”

How did Litynski arrive at this talismanic figure, cited over and over again in émigré literature? “I don’t pretend to be an expert on this subject,” the biology teacher said. “This is not my field. I had a list of people who went from 1.5 million to 10 million. In my reading I saw 7 million used more than any other figure, and I decided that was realistic. It got to the point where it was so confusing that you had to decide.” Mace has opted for 7.9 million Ukrainian famine

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HISTORY

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deaths in his own work, with an "irreducible minimum" of 5.5 million. Conquest fixes on 7 million famine deaths, including 6 million Ukrainians, with no appendix to show how his numbers are derived.

But the magic number, like the genocide theory it shoulders, simply can't pass scrutiny. Sergei Maksudov, a Soviet émigré scholar much cited by Mace and Conquest, has now concluded that the famine caused 3.5 million premature deaths in the Ukraine—700,000 from starvation, and the rest from diseases stimulated by malnutrition.

Even Maksudov's lower estimates are open to challenge. Writing in *Slavic Review*, demographers Barbara Anderson and Brian Silver maintain that limited census data make a precise famine death count impossible. Instead, they offer a probable range of 3.2 to 5.5 million "excess deaths" (deaths over and above those that could be expected to occur normally in a population) for the entire Soviet Union from 1926 to 1939—a period that covers collectivization, the civil war in the countryside, the purges of the late '30s and major epidemics of typhus and malaria. According to these experts, and Maksudov as well, Mace and Conquest make the most primitive of errors: they overestimate fertility rates and underrate the impact of assimilation, through which many Ukrainians were "redesignated" as Russians in the 1939 census. As a result, the cold warriors confuse "population deficits" (which includes *nonborn* children) with "excess deaths."

Which leaves us with a puzzle: Wouldn't one or two or even 3.5 million famine-related deaths be enough to make an anti-Stalinist argument? Why seize a wildly inflated figure that can't possibly be supported? The answer tells much about the Ukrainian nationalist cause, and about those who abet it.

"They're always looking to come up with a number bigger than 6 million," observed Eli Rosenbaum, former general counsel for the World Jewish Congress. "It makes the reader think: 'My god, it's worse than the Holocaust.'"

The losers, of course, are New York State's schoolchildren, who will absorb this disinformation between algebra and chemistry—and may even be asked to parrot the fraud for a higher score on their Regents exam.

Still, the nationalists aren't entirely satisfied. Many Ukrainians felt insulted when the famine material was bounced out of the Holocaust volume.

But Larkin is content. He hosted a cocktail party to celebrate Volume III's publication. He sent a copy to every high school in his Assembly district. And when constituents complained that the famine deserved even better billing, he answered them heartily, as a good politician should: "We've come a long way, baby." □

LETTERS

You Can Call Me Sara

IN RESPONSE TO several letters, we received the following correction from political writer E. J. McMahon:

My "Politics" column on Lieutenant Governor Stan Lundine in your February issue contained an error that is as difficult to explain as it is to excuse.

The column's sole mention of the Lieutenant Governor's wife, Sara Sibley Lundine, managed to get her name wrong.

My apologies to Sara Sibley and Stan Lundine.

E. J. McMahon

Moving Up on The New Yorker

CAPITAL REGION HAS always been entertaining and we have especially enjoyed the sprightly pieces of Kerry Sherin.

But the February issue places it in a different category. With Dardis McNamee on commitment, David Schuster on AIDS and particularly Peter Golden's "Wrong Place, Wrong Time," you are moving up on *The New Yorker*.

Roy and Cornelia Holben
Kinderhook

EACH MONTH, I look forward to receiving my copy of *CAPITAL Region* and enjoy reading your various articles. It is nice to see a magazine of its caliber in this area. Congratulations on your success.

Andrew W. Prescott
Albany

Roger Adams— Not a Victim?

I READ WITH interest the article "Wrong Place, Wrong Time," in the February 1988 issue.

I was employed at Parsons Child and Family Center when Roger Adams was placed there in 1975. I was there a number of years and came to know him pretty well.

I feel your article makes Roger appear a poor victim of the system and circumstance. I see Roger as a person who never took advantage of a system that could do more for him than most families could do for their children.

He had psychiatric and psychological services beyond compare furnished for him. He had counseling services with a social worker. He had specialized teachers to educate him. His everyday care and supervision was second to none.

Some kids get tough breaks and deserve sympathy for the situation they are in. Roger Adams was and is not one of them in my opinion.

The saddest thing of all is when you come right down to the heart of the matter; let's look at it in dollars and cents:

Services before Parsons (estimate) \$20,000
Parsons placement 135,000
Trial and pre-sentencing services (estimated) 30,000
Cost of imprisonment for 20 years (\$15,000 per year) ~~300,000~~
\$485,000

Costs of further appeals and trial services—???

Hell, lets call it a cool half million with the realization that it could stretch to an awful lot more. I wish I had a half million dollars to spend on each of my children in the course of the first 40 years of their life.

Name withheld upon request

PERHAPS THEN, THE answer is not money. However we all might wish we had a half million dollars to spend on our children. I doubt that even that sum could guarantee their personal peace or happiness.

—Peter Golden

Mean Street Not for Martians

CUSTOMARILY, THE JOB of creating magazine articles for the public is turned over to artisans and persons of knowledge, i.e., experts. However, being an American magazine, *CAPITAL Region* has apparently made an effort to be democratic and/or patriotic thereby allowing anyone to express their opinions regardless of their qualifications or lack of same. In the case of "Mean Street" [Culture, February], it appears the actual work in creating such articles has been relegated to (assuming Jim Kunstler is not a crook) morons.

Not only does "Mean Street" contain factual errors in logic and errors of exaggeration (the size of Albany County); but, worse than that, the whole article is unmitigated by any coherence. Certainly this is proof positive that the automobile has played hell with the order of things in America. Why, before there were cars all over the place, you could find a magazine article that actually made some sense.

I was amazed that somehow a 10-mile straight stretch of highways had been squeezed between two cities that are seven to seven and a half miles apart. And I was amazed that those concrete walking paths along Central Avenue aren't sidewalks. Perhaps they are small, bumpy, landing strips for small Martian UFOs. To make a further

mockery of what was a terrible article to begin with, I was also amazed to learn that Central Avenue is a "six-lane" monstrosity. I always thought for the most part, it was a four-lane monstrosity (except around Wolf Road).

The Guy Who
Johnstown

The stretch of Central Avenue in question is 17 miles long. We apologize for the typographical error.

—The Editors

Responding to 'Rewriting History'

THE ARTICLE "REWRITING History" [March] by Jeff Coplon says that I was a "major player" in getting the New York State Department of Education to teach high school students about the Ukraine famine in 1932-33.

I am proud of the role I played in convincing the Education Department and the Board of Regents to develop a volume on the Ukraine famine for inclusion in the Human Rights Series on Holocaust and Genocide. That Mr. Coplon chose to question the credibility of the writers, researchers and Ukrainian nationalists involved in this project is regrettable.

There is undeniable proof that the famine did indeed take place. The exact events and the specific number of Ukrainian lives lost are clouded because the famine was covered up by Stalin and ignored by the American media. However, this should not preclude students from learning about an atrocity that cost millions of lives.

Whether the famine death toll was higher or lower than the number of Jews who perished in concentration camps is not the point. The purpose of the course is to teach the horrible lessons of genocide. A study of the forced famine in the Ukraine, the Jewish holocaust, the massacre of Armenians, and Pol Pot's reign of terror in Cambodia keeps this history alive in hopes that it will never be repeated.

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We welcome letters from our readers. Please send all correspondence intended for publication to Letters to the Editor, *CAPITAL Region Magazine*, 4 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210. All letters must be signed and include address and daytime telephone number (for verification). We will withhold name and/or address upon request (but they must be furnished). We reserve the right to edit all letters to conserve space or improve clarity.

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LETTERS

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Genocide committed by any nation or people against any group cannot be tolerated in our world or we cease to be a civilized people. Mr. Coplon says if New York's schoolchildren are taught of the Ukraine famine, they will be "losers." I believe Mr. Coplon is the loser for even suggesting that our young people shouldn't have their eyes opened to a real world where it is possible that millions can die against their will for no reason.

I helped initiate the Holocaust and Genocide study program and will continue to support the teaching of lessons that should not be forgotten.

William J. Larkin, Jr.
New York State Assembly
95th District

JEFF COPLON RESPONDS: Mr. Larkin is either disingenuous or a poor reader. Like Ms. Burkart, he confuses the Ukraine famine (a historical fact never questioned in the piece) with the famine-genocide theory, a product of gross distortion.

To prove genocide, you must demonstrate intent and effect. Mr. Larkin, like the Ukrainian nationalists whose votes he counts on this fall, demonstrates neither. To support his conclusions, he cites the state curriculum's "writers" and "researchers"—a stacked deck of far-right Ukrainians and 3rd-string academics like James Mace, a lock-step Cold Warrior generally ignored in his field. But Mr. Larkin is apparently unaware that leading Sovietologists like Alexander Dallin and Moshe Lewin roundly reject his position. Lewin, generally deemed the nation's top scholar on Soviet collectivization, calls the famine/genocide theory "rubbish."

Mr. Larkin is a politician, of course, not a scholar or educator, and so it's no surprise to find him short on historical objectivity and expertise. The shame—and the scandal—is that the same can be said of the state curriculum he helped to spawn.

—Jeff Coplon

WHY IS MR. Coplon upset? History is always being rewritten.

The majority of people know that the Holocaust took place. It is well documented.

However, when history is being taught I don't think it should be limited to one example of man's inhumanity to man or woman. Is the suffering of one group of people worse than the suffering of another group of people? We have so many examples: the Chinese peasant, Indians in Central and South America, what took place in Argentina and Africa, etc. Should we be concerned about what happens to innocent people when ruthless leaders come into power?

Frances M. Burkart
Albany

CAPITAL Region/May 1988

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Dangerous Revisions

JEFF COPLON'S ARTICLE "Rewriting History" [March] contains so many errors and absurdities that it almost does not deserve a reply.

To begin, Mr. Coplon seems to consider everyone connected with bringing the forced famine in the Ukraine to the surface as a "Ukrainian nationalist," a label which Mr. Coplon apparently believes is synonymous with being a former Nazi collaborator, a swindler, a master of disinformation.... Really, Mr. Coplon—I never knew how rotten I was until I read your article.

It is not true that I arrived at the seven million casualty number arbitrarily. This figure is not only widely accepted by what Mr. Coplon calls "émigré sources," it is gradually being confirmed by Communists themselves. For example, *Ogonek*, a literary magazine published in Moscow, in its December issue quoted a figure of 10 million people having lost their lives during the events of the 1930s. In 1987, V. Shcherbytsky, general secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, publicly admitted that there was a famine in the Ukraine in 1932-1933. And John Kolasky, former member of the Communist Party of Canada, states in his book *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine* that several high Soviet officials estimate the number of deaths during this time to be 10 million individuals.

At the conclusion of the article, Mr. Coplon rhetorically asks "Wouldn't one, two or even 3.5 million deaths be enough to make an anti-Stalinist point?" A little further on he states that as a result of "disinformation" about the forced famine in Ukraine, the losers are the New York State children.

Regarding the first point, I would like to say that it isn't a matter of anyone's preference. As one who values human life, I would be elated if not a single human being died as a result of the famine. Ukrainians, perhaps more than most peoples, have had their share of tragedy. Unlike Mr. Coplon, we do not turn human lives into a numbers game. We must try to deal honestly with history.

Equally ridiculous is the claim that New York State children are being made the victims of disinformation. Quite the opposite is true. Our children deserve to be taught the truth. Denying or withholding of information uncomfortable to the few is a pattern typical of any totalitarian system. Fortunately, the State Department of Education had the courage and wisdom to offer our schools a balanced curriculum on genocide and holocaust.

Walter Litynsky
Principal author
Volume III, The Human Rights Series
Troy

MY HUSBAND AND I read "Rewriting History." The situation is disturbing, isn't it? Do you know if something is being done about it?

Now how about an article on another history rewritten—that about Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust?

Ann Morrier
Saugerties

THE TRAGEDY OF the Ukrainians, which was suffered over a half century ago, has ceased to be the exclusive property of the Ukrainians. It is part and parcel of world history, a property of concern of all humanity. The extreme enormity of the famine's crimes obliges all people to deed the memory of their suffering to the human collective of which they are members.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America—United Branches of the Capital District is deeply distraught and angered at such a sinister distortion of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 in *CAPITAL Region* magazine. The muckraking reporting of Mr. Coplon exists clearly on efforts for hatred, sensationalism and a "Ukrainophobia," which also seems to be displayed by the editors of *CAPITAL Region* magazine.

The entire Ukrainian community of the Greater Capital District has been deeply affected and definitely insulted by Mr. Coplon's biased statements and, therefore, demands an apology from the editors to help rectify the Ukrainian people's history and self-preservation! We demand Mr. Coplon's article to be fully and completely retracted, as well as to provide the Ukrainian community with an opportunity to retort Mr. Coplon's hysteria and provide your readers with the comprehensible, knowledgeable facts of the terror-famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine!

The Ukrainian Congress
Committee of America—

United Branches of the Capital District

A FAMINE BECOMES an unspeakable crime against humanity when it derives from planned genocide. Genocide is perpetuated as an atrocity when ignored and denied by civilized individuals.

"Rewriting History" represents an insult to the sensibilities of civilized Americans.

Harvest of Despair, an award-winning documentary (Gold Medal, International Film Festival 1986-1987), is depicted as fabrication despite years of intensive, reputable academic research. Mr. Robert Conquest, author of *Harvest of Sorrow*, is an internationally renowned author and historian whose work has garnered academic plaudits. In comparison, the author of this jaundiced article is a nonentity.

The article compounds the atrocity of the Ukrainian genocide by first contesting its very existence and then by asking "isn't 3.5 million [people] enough?" In reply, no, it is not enough; each man, woman and child

who perished in Ukraine at the hands of Stalin deserves an accounting before the world.

As an American of Ukrainian descent, I demand an equal forum to counter this perpetuation of an atrocity.

Alexander K. Mandych
Class of 1988
Albany Medical College

JEFF COPLON RESPONDS: *It's quite a spectacle to see a fanatical anti-Communist like Walter Litynsky embrace contemporary Soviet sources in his desperation to support the famine-genocide campaign. We should note, however, that these sources have their own reasons to revise history—namely, to avoid crossing the regime of Mikhail Gorbachev, the world's leading anti-Stalinist.*

Alexander Mandych stands on similarly flimsy ground. That "award-winning documentary," Harvest of Despair, has been disowned by its own researcher, Marco Carnynnyk, who confirmed that most of its footage and still photos were taken from other famines. The "renowned" Robert Conquest, meanwhile, is no longer taken seriously within academe—"an obsessed man who writes about atrocities without any scholarship," according to the distinguished Moshe Lewin of the University of Pennsylvania.

Simply stated, there is no evidence that Stalin set out to "annihilate" the Ukrainian people, whose farming he needed to feed his young state. At the same time, there's no question that the Communists opposed Ukrainian nationalism, a narrow movement with little following among the region's peasant majority.

And despite the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America's efforts to muddy this issue, it is hardly "Ukrainophobia" to point out that the Ukrainian nationalist movement (and particularly its dominant Banderite wing) had been fascist—and explicitly anti-Semitic—from the start. Consider this letter from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists to the German Secret Service in 1941:

"Long live greater independent Ukraine without Jews, Poles and Germans. Poles behind the [river] San, Germans to Berlin. Jews to the gallows."

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, a Banderite front, sits squarely within that tradition. The UCCA's national chairman, Lev Dobriansky, is a founder of the World Anti-Communist League, a notorious haven for neo-Nazis and anti-Semitic extremists from around the world. The Ukrainian Quarterly, published by the UCCA, regularly eulogizes top figures of the OUN and the Waffen-SS. (The Quarterly's editorial board is home to the likes of Dr. Austin J. App, a leading proponent of Holocaust revisionism—the theory that the Nazis

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slaughter of the Jews never happened.) In 1985, the World Jewish Congress cited the UCCA for its efforts to block prosecution of émigré war criminals and collaborators—like John "Ivan the Terrible" Demjanjuk—by the U.S. Justice Department. In judging the famine-genocide theory, we would do well to consider those who shout the loudest.

How Do You Like Your Egg?

IT IS CLEAR that Pat Snyder and ESIPA are world-class. Your article, "Wolf at the Door" [April], suggests that their detractors don't appreciate the herculean effort to create such excellence, or the ease with which barbarians can destroy it.

James W. Corbett
East Berne

Raft Rift

A MEMBER OF our office staff recently received the March 1988 issue of *CAPITAL Region* magazine and called my attention to your article on white-water rafting on the Indian-Upper Hudson.

Your writing style is certainly to be commended; you take the reader on the entire action-packed roller coaster ride...and it is terrific!

There are, however, some problems with facts that may give the reader a sense of excessive danger and portray the rafting process as a freelance operation exploiting a priceless natural resource.

First, the comment about the death at Jim's Hole (which must be just beyond Mile-Long Rapids) just isn't true. For the past seven years of commercial activity, we have no records of deaths on the Hudson resulting from rafting accidents. The only fatality from a rafting accident in the last seven years was on the Black River in Watertown. Don't misunderstand that the sport isn't dangerous. It can be, and should only be attempted under the control of a qualified (licensed) guide.

Second, there have never been several hundred rafts on the Indian-Hudson system. The D.E.C., the Town of Indian Lake (who owns the Abanakee Dam which supplies the rafting water or "bubble") and the professional rafters association have worked closely to maintain a safe level of use for the river.

The level of use carries a maximum of about 100 rafts per day, all launched in a two-hour period to capture the dam release. The level of use is most governed by safety but is also a reflection of the natural resources' capacity to withstand use. Rafting companies have modified their schedules to avoid "pit" stops, extensive lunches or cookouts,

all to minimize the impact of man on the natural setting.

Third, for the past two years, New York State has required river guides to be licensed, a process that requires experience on specific rivers, first aid training and river rescue training. There are over a dozen commercial outfitters employing over one hundred licensed guides (there must be at least one licensed guide per boat) and I would encourage you to refer your readers to one of these firms to book a trip. (Whitewater Challenges is a commercial outfitter with a cadre of licensed guides.) A complete list is available from the Warren County Tourism Department in Lake George or the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce in Indian Lake.

Richard J. Cipriety
Associate Forester
New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation.

The story of the death in Jim's Hole was given to CAPITAL Region in good faith by a source that believed it was true; obviously, this is how North-country legends get started. We apologize if this caused anyone undue concern.

Skip Grant, although he no longer has the time to guide full time (and thus has not licensed), still manages to take a few friends down the river each spring. —The Editors

Ill-Fitting Fashions

JUDGING FROM THE poor fit of the dresses featured on pages 58 and 59 ["Passions & Fashions," March], either your stylist isn't doing a good job or you don't have a stylist. You need one. After all, what is the point of publishing a fashion feature if the clothes are too long (sleeves), bag, sag and are poorly pressed (you are guilty of all these "fashion sins," I'm afraid). A fashionable feature deserves a "fitting" presentation!

Nina Fitt
Albany

We welcome letters from our readers. Please send all correspondence intended for publication to Letters to the Editor, CAPITAL Region Magazine, 4 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210. All letters must be signed and include address and daytime telephone number (for verification). We will withhold name and/or address upon request (but they must be furnished). We reserve the right to edit all letters to conserve space or improve clarity.