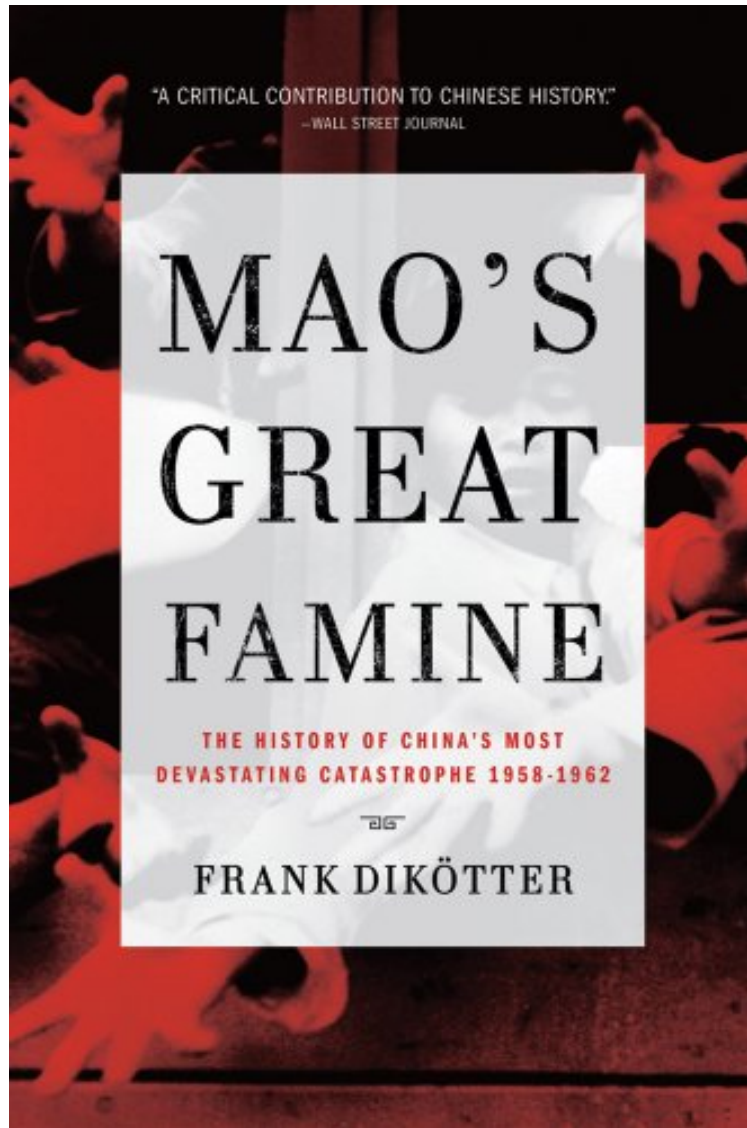


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Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962

Frank Dikter

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Frank Dikter : Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How does this happen??By jmc2So sad that people can be lead

blindly by powerful political leaders. He did an injustice to his people, yet they immortalize him in a see-through casket. How morbid. It is an interesting book about a very power hungry man, which the Chinese placed their trust in. All they have to show for it is needless death of thousands of people. How sad. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Read and weep. By Bill Pearson Must rank as one of the most powerful, moving and yet frightening insights into The Great Leap Forward. Readers cannot help but be distressed by this book for when one tragedy leads to another and then another you cannot read this historical truth without being moved. Of course the tragedies that are revealed involved tens of thousands of citizens leading to the largest human disaster of all time. And this was followed by the Cultural Revolution! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fabulous research and incredibly well written. By hckondos The scholarship and research are amazing, but the book is still imminently readable to the average reader. I cannot say enough positive things about Dikotter, and I recommend all of his books.

An unprecedented, groundbreaking history of China's Great Famine that recasts the era of Mao Zedong and the history of the People's Republic of China. "Between 1958 and 1962, China descended into hell. Mao Zedong threw his country into a frenzy with the Great Leap Forward, an attempt to catch up to and overtake Britain in less than 15 years. The experiment ended in the greatest catastrophe the country had ever known, destroying tens of millions of lives." So opens Frank Dikter's riveting, magnificently detailed chronicle of an era in Chinese history much speculated about but never before fully documented because access to Communist Party archives has long been restricted to all but the most trusted historians. A new archive law has opened up thousands of central and provincial documents that "fundamentally change the way one can study the Maoist era." Dikter makes clear, as nobody has before, that far from being the program that would lift the country among the world's superpowers and prove the power of Communism, as Mao imagined, the Great Leap Forward transformed the country in the other direction. It became the site not only of "one of the most deadly mass killings of human history,"--at least 45 million people were worked, starved, or beaten to death--but also of "the greatest demolition of real estate in human history," as up to one-third of all housing was turned into rubble). The experiment was a catastrophe for the natural world as well, as the land was savaged in the maniacal pursuit of steel and other industrial accomplishments. In a powerful meshing of exhaustive research in Chinese archives and narrative drive, Dikter for the first time links up what happened in the corridors of power--the vicious backstabbing and bullying tactics that took place among party leaders--with the everyday experiences of ordinary people, giving voice to the dead and disenfranchised. His magisterial account recasts the history of the People's Republic of China.

.com Product Description Between 1958 and 1962, China descended into hell. Mao Zedong threw his country into a frenzy with the Great Leap Forward, an attempt to catch up to and overtake Britain in less than 15 years. The experiment ended in the greatest catastrophe the country had ever known, destroying tens of millions of lives." So opens Frank Dikter's riveting, magnificently detailed chronicle of an era in Chinese history much speculated about but never before fully documented because access to Communist Party archives has long been restricted to all but the most trusted historians. A new archive law has opened up thousands of central and provincial documents that "fundamentally change the way one can study the Maoist era." Dikter makes clear, as nobody has before, that far from being the program that would lift the country among the world's superpowers and prove the power of Communism, as Mao imagined, the Great Leap Forward transformed the country in the other direction. It became the site not only of "one of the most deadly mass killings of human history,"--at least 45 million people were worked, starved, or beaten to death--but also of "the greatest demolition of real estate in human history," as up to one-third of all housing was turned into rubble. A Look Inside Maos Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962 (Click on Images to Enlarge) Autumn 1955 Spring 1956: Mao, displeased with the slow pace of economic development, pushes for huge increases in the production of grain, cotton, coal and steel. November 1957: Mao visits Moscow. Impressed by the Soviet sputnik, the first satellite launched into orbit, he declares that the East wind will prevail over the West wind. Summer 1958: Farm collectives are amalgamated into gigantic peoples communes of up to 20,000 households. Famine conditions appear in many parts of the country. From Booklist In 1958, Mao Zedong, perhaps influenced by Khrushchev's boast that the Soviet Union would surpass the U.S. in key aspects of industrial production within 10 years, launched China's Great Leap Forward. This was a tragically delusional effort to dramatically improve agricultural and industrial production, far beyond any realistic possibility, given China's limited economic base. The human costs of this folly were catastrophic. Dikter, professor of modern history of China at the University of London, utilizes newly available material, including Communist Party archives and accounts by individual Chinese citizens, to chronicle these horrors in stomach-churning detail. By the time even Mao recognized his failure in 1962, Dikter credibly asserts that as many as 45 million Chinese died from starvation, execution, and maltreatment under forced labor. Ultimate responsibility rests with Mao and his indifference to individual human suffering, but Dikter also condemns other high-ranking party officials who recognized the failures early on but lacked the courage to challenge Mao. This is an important work illustrating the dangers of one individual holding power to force millions to fulfill his personal fantasies. --Jay Freeman The most authoritative and comprehensive study of the

biggest and most lethal famine in history. A must-read. Jung Chang, author of *Mao: The Unknown Story* Mao's Great Famine is a gripping and masterful portrait of the brutal court of Mao, based on new research but also written with great narrative verve, that tells the gripping story of the manmade famine that killed 45 million people, from the dictator and his henchmen down to the villages of rural China. Simon Sebag Montefiore, author of *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* Despite Beijing's new openness over the past few decades, there are still whole parts of contemporary Chinese history that Party officials have managed to keep largely hidden from the scrutiny of the outside world. The 1959-60 Great Leap Forward, Mao's epic effort of revolutionary will power to force China's peasantry into socialism through the rapid communization of agriculture, is such a period. However, by managing to gain access to unplumbed regional Chinese archives and other new materials, Frank Dikotter has helped throw back the shroud on this period of monumental, man-made catastrophe. With both narrative vigor and scholarly rigor, Mao's Great Famine documents how Mao Zedong's impetuosity was not only the demise of many of his far more politically level-headed comrades-in-arms, but also of tens of millions of ordinary Chinese who perished unnecessarily in this spasm of revolutionary extremism. Orville Schell, Author and Director of the Center on US-China relations at the Asia Society A direct, hard-hitting study of China's Great Leap Forward in light of newly opened archival material A horrifically eye-opening work of a dark period of Chinese history that desperately cries out for further examination. Kirkus (starred review) An intensively researched litany of suffering, packed with statistics, grim anecdotes, and self-serving explanations by leaders responsible for the devastation. Publishers Weekly Dikotter has done a service to history and, when they are allowed to read it, to the Chinese themselves. Bloomberg This is an important work illustrating the dangers of one individual holding power to force millions to fulfill his personal fantasies. Booklist Uses newly opened archives and original interviews to detail the calamity in calm, if unavoidably grisly, detail. New Yorker.com Aided by newly released historical documents detailing the savage infighting and backstabbing of those in power and the extent of the nationwide damage, Dikotter has produced one of the best single-volume resources on the topic. Library Journal This emphasis on how party violence exacerbated the death toll sets Dikotter's book apart from other studies of the Great Leap Forward Books like his may help force the atrocities, and the debate, back to the surface. Newsweek Dikotter tells the story with vivid new details His relentlessly clinical, morally intense account of filth, disease, and hunger is both fascinating and numbing. Foreign Affairs In Mao's Great Famine, historian Frank Dikotter assembles a treasure chest of these historic facts, but more important, he strokes them together into a masterly and memorable story ranks among the best documentation available on the Great Leap Forward. Christian Science Monitor Haunting Dikotter succeeds in his dark task of cataloguing the awesome scale of [Mao's] crime. New Republic Groundbreaking Dikotter found new evidence of the massive and spectacular violence. Minneapolis Star Tribune Frank Dikotter's thoroughly researched book will help ensure that the country's present-day insecurities do not allow this dark past to be forgotten entirely His findings are astounding "Mao's Great Famine" makes for very grim reading in parts. But the sheer volume of previously hidden facts allows a much clearer and more damning picture to emerge, making a critical contribution to Chinese history. Wall Street Journal A riveting and heartbreaking and illuminating read by an expert in the field Mao's madness comes through on every page. A MUST READ. Travel Watch In terrifying detail, Dikotter elucidates the cult-like world of Maoism and the sycophancy of the Chairmans inner circle precise details of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution wouldnt emerge until much later and in the case of Dikotters book, which is the most detailed account published in English, a half century later [a] masterpiece of historical investigation. Commentary [A] tour of the follies, inefficiencies, and deceptions of Mao's commandeered economy [a] vivid catalogue of horrors Focussing relentlessly on Mao's character and motivations, Dikotter confirms the man's reputation as sadistic, cowardly, callous, and vindictive. [a] bold portrait. New Yorker [A] seminal and must-read book. Sify.com For those Chinese students who want a reliable and readable account of what really happened, my standard advice has been to read *Hungry Ghosts*, by the British journalist Jasper Becker.⁴ But Becker's work has now been largely superseded by the pathbreaking *Mao's Great Famine* by the social historian Frank Dikotter This is a first-class piece of research. [Mao] will be remembered as the ruler who initiated and presided over the worst man-made human catastrophe ever. His place in Chinese history is assured. Dikotter's book will have done much to put him there. New York of Books