

Book Reviews

Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962 by Frank Dikotter, 420 pp, paperback, \$16.20, ISBN 9781408886366, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

It is seen as gauche, hateful, and unenlightened on college campuses and like-minded places to quote Winston Churchill, because he was an imperialist and colonialist. Churchill said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all others. He could have added that capitalism is the worst economic system except for all others.

My personal library has plenty of books that detail the abuses that have occurred under both systems. Many of them expound on the failings of the U.S., including slavery, genocide against Native Americans, and experiments with mercantilism and imperialism.

Judging by the mindset on college campuses and the entrenched beliefs that many college graduates carry with them after graduation, college libraries and curricula consist of only this genre.

Plenty of other books in my library have an opposite theme. They detail the benefits of the U.S., and the unequivocal, inherent evils of communism and other forms of totalitarianism and collectivism. *Mao's Great Famine* joins these books.

The book is a masterpiece of research into archival documents of the Chinese Communist Party and correspondence between high-level party apparatchiks.

If I were a billionaire, I would gift a large supply of the book to universities to make them free for the taking to students, with the condition that they be displayed in the school's food court.

If students were to read the horrors described in the book, campus safe zones and student counseling centers would soon be overflowing with sobbing fragile students.

Starvation is a terrible way to die. Even more terrible during Mao's famine was the horror of parents watching their children die of starvation before they did,

and their emaciated corpses left in fields and roadsides, along with the corpses of neighbors, because no one had the energy to bury them.

Equally horrible was the rendering of bodies to make fertilizer. This came after farmers had torn down their own homes to spread any organic material contained therein on fields as fertilizer. This desperate and futile effort left them exposed to the elements without shelter.

The book claims that more property was destroyed during the Great Leap Forward than by all the bombing campaigns of the Second World War. "Up to 40 percent of all housing was turned into rubble, as homes were pulled down to create fertilizer, to build canteens, to relocate villagers, to straighten roads, to make room for a better future or simply to punish their occupants."

The primary cause of the disaster was Mao's establishing the ultimate in cancel culture. Anyone who brought him bad information about his Great Leap Forward was called a reactionary, a rightist, or a capitalist, and was cancelled from the Party or worse. Some party officials saved themselves by groveling and admitting their disloyalty in public shaming sessions. Almost all of them learned to keep the truth from Mao, to produce reports full of bogus statistics, and to demand the same loyalty and lies from their subordinates.

In that sense, Mao was parroting the leadership methods of Stalin, who, decades earlier, had starved tens of millions of kulaks while punishing party members who told him the truth. Also like Stalin, Mao and his cadres eventually resorted to reeducation camps, forced-labor camps, and torture. Women, children, the elderly, and the infirm were particularly vulnerable, as survival of the fittest became the norm.

In total, an estimated 45 million people died from starvation or related causes under the Great Leap Forward. The communist goal of perfect equality of results was achieved in the grave,

where everyone ended up equal.

The Great Leap Forward was Mao's egomaniacal fantasy of surpassing in short order the West in agricultural production, steel production, and industrial development. Farms were collectivized, the collectives were given impossible agricultural production goals, and villages were required to build small furnaces to make steel, typically by melting household items and farm implements, which in turn lowered agricultural output.

As people were dying in the hinterlands, Mao and his top cadres were living a life of privilege in Beijing—not the comparatively benign kind of privilege bemoaned by class and race warriors in America today, but the privilege that comes from having the absolute power of life and death over the masses. In a monument to themselves and the Party, and to deceive the outside world into believing that the Chinese version of communism was a success, historic buildings were torn down to expand Tiananmen Square and turn the vicinity into a Potemkin-like showcase.

The parallel between Mao's China and the whitewashing on American college campuses is striking. Those who see themselves as "progressive" attack and silence anyone with the temerity to factually point out where progressives have done great harm.

And don't forget their portrayal of Churchill as being worse than Mao.

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Vaccines: Mythology, Ideology and Reality, by John Leake and Peter A. McCullough, M.D., M.P.H., 217 pp, hard cover, \$30.68, ISBN-13: 978-1648211904, Children's Health Defense Books, 2025.

Including a timeline, notes, and index, this book packages the history of vaccines and vaccination concisely with a similar precision and neatness to the way DNA

packages the instructions for each unique human being.

John Leake and Dr. McCullough have done a masterful job of delineating the history of vaccination, from 1721 until the present, and have examined that history with wisdom and insightful knowledge of the way our minds and emotions work when faced with frightening problems. I highly recommend this book.

The authors recognize that physicians deal with the most complicated thing on earth, human beings, and the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of medical problems. In medicine, the available evidence is often inconclusive. Nobody had any idea that invisible tiny beings could kill people until the 19th century. The authors quote Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.'s observation that "Science is the topography of ignorance. From a few elevated points we triangulate vast spaces, inclosing infinite unknown details." Nearly everything we know about science and medicine we have learned in the past 65 years.

This book illustrates that mass vaccination has not been constrained by a rigorous scientific method, and has been a matter of "guesses, gambles and wild experimentation" with "passionate advocates...animated by religious fervor, wishful thinking, ideology, a desire for professional and social prestige, and money—lots of it."

The authors quote U.S. Vital Statistics data that except for polio, mortality for each disease on the immunization schedule had plummeted before its vaccine was introduced, due to better nutrition and sanitation, clean water, and milk pasteurization.

This book is a page-turner, pointing out complexities glossed over in public vaccine propaganda. Attack rates, subclinical infections, selection bias, and the need for sanitation were not recognized in the years from 1721 until the mid-1800s. There was lack of critical scrutiny, overconfidence in theories with thin evidence, ignoring uncertainties in favor of premature decisions, and liability issues, leading to explaining away vaccine failures. There was ignorance of contamination of the vaccine materials used in the 1800s, and contamination that occurred in the 2020s was ignored.

The authors' thorough research into history revealed influence peddling, vaccine failures, effects of vaccine mandates, and

the 1999 account by historian Derrick Baxby showing that smallpox was not eradicated by mass vaccination.

Baxby's account describes the gradual fading of the ideas of miasma and oxygen attenuation of pathogens, confusion about the actual identities of disease, human experimentation, various deceptions, and the cult of personality. It recounts the realization that mosquitoes are one of the two most deadly creatures on earth. Delightfully, it quotes the *Washington Post* in 1900 calling Dr. Walter Reed's report on the work of several physicians "silliest beyond compare...the arguments and theories engendered by the mosquito hypothesis."

Many important figures in vaccine history up to the present are covered, including Benjamin Franklin, kings and queens, Edward Jenner, Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, Anthony Fauci, Ralph Baric, Peter Daszak, Bill Gates, and Stéphane Bancel.

The authors discuss regulatory capture of federal agencies by the pharmaceutical industry. This helps to explain why influenza vaccines that do not work are pressed upon millions. No mucosal respiratory virus vaccine has ever worked.

Leake and Dr. McCullough cover the autism-vaccine connection fight in detail, the recent bioterrorism link with the U.S. government, the very strange patent application for methods of producing recombinant coronavirus, Bill Gates's strange involvement, the PREP Act, and much more.

In conclusion, they offer two recommendations: Remove the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines from the market, and investigate the cause of autism.

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The Disrupted Physician: A Case Study in Administrative Abuse of Authority, by Anne Louise Phelan, M.D., 255 pages, paperback, \$11.99, ASIN B0DJ88FN5D, independently published.

Anne Louise Phelan, M.D., delivers a precise, chilling examination of how medical boards and physician health programs (PHPs) can weaponize authority against those they are meant to protect. *The Disrupted Physician* recounts the ordeal of the author's husband, Dr. Michael Langan—a respected physician whose career was dismantled after entering what should have been a supportive monitoring

process. Instead, he was trapped in a system that fabricated impairment, enforced unnecessary and ridiculously expensive treatment, and erased his professional identity.

The book's power lies in its realism. Phelan's careful documentation exposes how unchecked administrative systems can punish integrity and silence dissent. Her analysis resonates deeply with many families like mine. My husband, too, was accused of being "impaired" after questioning fraudulent medical practices during the COVID pandemic. His stand for honesty was recast as misconduct. A sham investigation followed, ending with a baseless reprimand that forced our family to relocate and start over.

Phelan's narrative confirms what so many physicians know but few dare to voice: truth-tellers are the first casualties in a corrupt "pattern and practice" system. Medical licensing boards work closely with PHPs without any state oversight or structured regulations. Physicians coerced into evaluations in facilities that deliberately distort testing results in order to produce "intentional misdiagnosis" followed by hundreds of thousands of dollars for treatment, usually paid in cash by the physicians. Accepting false imprisonment vs. loss of medical license is an incredibly difficult choice to make, and it is affecting not only physicians but their entire families, who are often coerced into expensive online classes and counseling sessions. Although inpatient treatment for addictions is seven to 30 days for the public, for medical professionals hospitalization for 30–90 days is just the beginning of an extremely lengthy and expensive "rehabilitation process" often followed by job loss, a five-year PHP monitoring contract, multiple weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, physician monitoring reports, and a stained National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) report. Those affected often feel that their life is put on hold and they are under microscopic lenses 24/7.

The Disrupted Physician is essential reading for anyone who believes ethical medicine must include justice—for doctors as well as patients. It shows how PHPs and medical boards lost their true purpose, and how hundreds of physicians every year are emotionally and financially exhausted if they follow all the rules and guidelines only to find themselves in a never-ending rabbit hole. Many end their life as a last resort.

Alyona Cerri