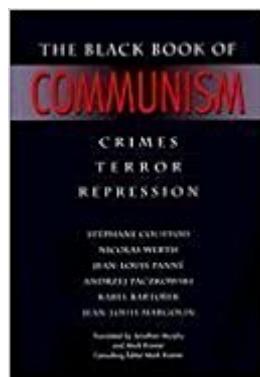


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# The Black Book Of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression



## Synopsis

Already famous throughout Europe, this international bestseller plumbs recently opened archives in the former Soviet bloc to reveal the actual, practical accomplishments of Communism around the world: terror, torture, famine, mass deportations, and massacres. Astonishing in the sheer detail it amasses, the book is the first comprehensive attempt to catalogue and analyze the crimes of Communism over seventy years. "Revolutions, like trees, must be judged by their fruit," Ignazio Silone wrote, and this is the standard the authors apply to the Communist experience—in the China of "the Great Helmsman," Kim Il Sung's Korea, Vietnam under "Uncle Ho" and Cuba under Castro, Ethiopia under Mengistu, Angola under Neto, and Afghanistan under Najibullah. The authors, all distinguished scholars based in Europe, document Communist crimes against humanity, but also crimes against national and universal culture, from Stalin's destruction of hundreds of churches in Moscow to Ceausescu's leveling of the historic heart of Bucharest to the widespread devastation visited on Chinese culture by Mao's Red Guards. As the death toll mounts—as many as 25 million in the former Soviet Union, 65 million in China, 1.7 million in Cambodia, and on and on—the authors systematically show how and why, wherever the millenarian ideology of Communism was established, it quickly led to crime, terror, and repression. An extraordinary accounting, this book amply documents the unparalleled position and significance of Communism in the hierarchy of violence that is the history of the twentieth century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When it was first published in France in 1997, *Le livre noir du Communisme* touched off a storm of controversy that continues to rage today. Even some of his contributors shied away from chief editor Stéphane Courtois's conclusion that Communism, in all its many forms, was morally no better than Nazism; the two totalitarian systems, Courtois argued, were far better at killing than at governing, as the world learned to its sorrow. Communism did kill, Courtois and his fellow historians demonstrate, with ruthless efficiency: 25 million in Russia during the Bolshevik and Stalinist eras, perhaps 65 million in China under the eyes of Mao Zedong, 2 million in Cambodia, millions more in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America--an astonishingly high toll of victims. This freely expressed penchant for homicide, Courtois maintains, was no accident, but an integral trait of a philosophy, and a practical politics, that promised to erase class distinctions by erasing classes and the living humans that populated them. Courtois and his contributors document Communism's crimes in numbing detail, moving from country to country, revolution to revolution. The figures they offer will likely provoke argument, if not among cliometricians then among the ideologically inclined. So, too, will Courtois's suggestion that those who hold Lenin, Trotsky, and Ho Chi Minh in anything other than contempt are dupes, witting or not, of a murderous school of thought--one that, while in retreat around the world, still has many adherents. A thought-provoking work of history and social criticism, *The Black Book of Communism* fully merits the broadest possible readership and discussion. --Gregory McNamee

In France, this damning reckoning of communism's worldwide legacy was a bestseller that sparked passionate arguments among intellectuals of the Left. Essentially a body count of communism's victims in the 20th century, the book draws heavily from recently opened Soviet archives. The verdict: communism was responsible for between 85 million and 100 million deaths in the century. In France, both sales and controversy were fueled, as Martin Malia notes in the foreword, by editor Courtois's specific comparison of communism's "class genocide" with Nazism's "race genocide." Courtois, the director of research at the prestigious Centre Research National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and editor of the journal *Communisme*, along with the other distinguished French and European contributors, delivers a fact-based, mostly Russia-centered wallop that will be hard to refute: town burnings, mass deportations, property seizures, family separations, mass murders, planned famines all chillingly documented from conception to implementation. The book is divided into five sections. The first and largest takes readers from the "Paradoxes of the October Revolution" through "Apogee and Crisis in the Gulag System" to "The Exit from Stalinism." Seeing the U.S.S.R. as "the cradle of all modern Communism," the book's other four sections document the

horrors of the Iron Curtain countries, Soviet-backed agitation in Asia and the Americas, and the Third World's often violent embrace of the system. A conclusionA" Why?" Aby Courtois, points to a bureaucratic, "purely abstract vision of death, massacre and human catastrophe" rooted in Lenin's compulsion to effect ideals by any means necessary. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

excellent!

Great book - arrived on time. Happy with it.

A real eye opener. Things were much worse than I imagined and the book provides a accurate description in an unbiased manner. The parallels to what is taking place today are scary. Highly recommended. You will not be sorry you read it, especially the section on Russia..

Finally, in a single volume the awful truth is told about the horrors of the communist, Bolshevik, socialist holocaust of the 20th century. If anyone still thinks that communism and socialism are the wave of the future, they must be braindead. This work should be made the required textbook for all students of history.

This book effectively documents Communism's mass extermination of 100 million people. Nothing really ground-breaking--the Communist genocide was known as early as the 1930s (Stalin had killed 7 million Ukrainians before World War 2 even started). However, since many on the Left want the world want to forget the Communist Holocaust (in Europe and Asia and Africa and Latin America...), it's good that this book is here to remind them.

Excellent reference book on Communism. Taken from the files of the archives in Moscow after the fall of the USSR in 1989, scholars and researchers mined the documents and materials of the Soviet secret services, and other subordinate agencies, to put together a sad and horrific account of a Communist socialist's society's repressive and often deadly abuse of it's millions of people, recorded by the architects and bureaucrats of the society itself. If you ever thought about what it would be like to be a socialist or communist, I would strongly encourage you to read this book.

The first time I read...or scanned...this book, I had to borrow it from the Library of Congress...It's

back in print. This is an honest book telling you of the hell, murderous activities, and abject failure that is Communism...and by logical deduction, socialism, progressivism. and similar forms of government. If you want the truth, this is it...It's not light reading.

For far too long, many in academia and the arts have done all they could to ignore or play down Communist atrocities, for various reasons. After this book came out, they had absolutely no more excuses.

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