Communism

INTRODUCTION

Communism, a theory and system of social and political organization that was a major force in world politics for much of the 20th century. As a political movement, communism sought to overthrow capitalism through a workers' revolution and establish a system in which property is owned by the community as a whole rather than by individuals. In theory, communism would create a classless society of abundance and freedom, in which all people enjoy equal social and economic status. In practice, communist regimes have taken the form of coercive, authoritarian governments that cared little for the plight of the working class and sought above all else to preserve their own hold on power.

The idea of a society based on common ownership of property and wealth stretches far back in Western thought. In its modern form, communism grew out of the socialist movement of 19th-century Europe (*see* Socialism). At that time, Europe was undergoing rapid industrialization and social change. As the Industrial Revolution advanced, socialist critics blamed capitalism for creating a new class of poor, urban factory workers who labored under harsh conditions, and for widening the gulf between rich and poor. Foremost among these critics were the German philosopher Karl Marx and his associate Friedrich Engels. Like other socialists, they sought an end to capitalism and the exploitation of workers. But whereas some reformers favored peaceful, longer-term social transformation, Marx and Engels believed that violent revolution was all but inevitable; in fact, they thought it was predicted by the scientific laws of history. They called their theory "scientific socialism," or communism. In the last half of the 19th century the terms *socialism* and *communism* were often used interchangeably. However, Marx and Engels came to see socialism as merely an intermediate stage of society in which most industry and property were owned in common but some class differences remained. They reserved the term *communism* for a final stage of society in which class differences had disappeared, people lived in harmony, and government was no longer needed.

The meaning of the word *communism* shifted after 1917, when Vladimir Lenin and his Bolshevik Party seized power in Russia. The Bolsheviks changed their name to the Communist Party and installed a repressive, single-party regime devoted to the implementation of socialist policies. The Communists formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or Soviet Union) from the former Russian Empire and tried to spark a worldwide revolution to overthrow capitalism. Lenin's successor, Joseph Stalin, turned the Soviet Union into a dictatorship based on total state control of the economy and the suppression of any form of opposition. As a result of Lenin's and Stalin's policies, many people came to associate the term *communism* with undemocratic or totalitarian governments that claimed allegiance to Marxist-Leninist ideals. The term *Marxism-Leninism* refers to Marx's theories as amended and put into practice by Lenin.

After World War II (1939-1945), regimes calling themselves communist took power in China, Eastern Europe, and other regions. The spread of communism marked the beginning of the Cold War, in which the Soviet Union and the United States, and their respective allies, competed for political and military supremacy. By the early 1980s, almost one-third of the world's population lived under communist regimes. These regimes shared certain basic features: an embrace of Marxism-Leninism, a rejection of private property and capitalism, state domination of economic activity, and absolute control of the government by one party, the communist party. The party's influence in society was pervasive and often repressive. It controlled and censored the mass media, restricted religious worship, and silenced political dissent.

Communist societies encountered dramatic change in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as political and economic upheavals in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere led to the disintegration of numerous communist regimes and severely weakened the power and influence of communist parties throughout the world. The collapse of the USSR effectively ended the Cold War. Today, single-party communist states are rare, existing only in China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam. Elsewhere, communist parties accept the principles of democracy and operate as part of multiparty systems.

This article provides a broad survey of communism. It explores the philosophical roots of communism and explains how communism was practiced in the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, and other regions. It also examines the influence of nonruling communist parties. Finally, the article describes the common features of communist states and assesses the future of communism.

EARLY FORMS OF COMMUNISM

I

Communist ideas can be traced back to ancient times. In his 4th-century BC work *The Republic*, Greek philosopher Plato maintained that minimizing social inequality would promote civil peace and good government. In Plato's ideal republic, an elite class of intellectuals, known as guardians or philosopher-kings, would govern the state and moderate the greed of the producing classes, such as craftsmen and farmers. To cement their allegiance to the state instead of their own desires, the guardians would own no private property and would live communally, residing in barracks together and raising their children as a group instead of in small families.

In the medieval Christian church, the members of some monastic communities and religious orders shared their land and goods. Such groups believed that concern with private property takes away from service to God and neighbor. In the 16th century English writer Thomas More, in his treatise *Utopia* (1516), portrayed a society based on common ownership of property, whose rulers administered it through the application of pure reason. More evidently intended the work as a satire of perfectionist projects for human betterment, but the book was a stinging critique of the misgoverned European states of his time. In 17th-century England a Puritan religious group known as the Diggers advocated the abolition of private ownership of land.

Criticism of the idea of private property continued into the Enlightenment of the 18th century, through such thinkers as Immanuel Kant in Germany and Jean Jacques Rousseau in France. Philosophers of the Enlightenment maintained that it is the natural condition of human beings to share equally in political authority and the rewards of labor. The French Revolution (1789-1799), which overthrew the monarchy, developed from this philosophical basis. The upheaval of the Revolution brought forth a flurry of communistic ideas. François Noël Babeuf, a revolutionary firebrand, espoused the goals of common ownership of land and total economic and political equality among citizens.

Babeuf was executed in 1797 for conspiring against the government of France, but his philosophy, known as Babouvism, had a considerable influence on other communistic reformers in early 19th-century France and Italy. French socialist Louis Blanc advocated "social workshops," or associations of workers funded by the state and controlled by the workers. These, he said, would promote the development of balanced human personalities, instead of the greedy competitiveness encouraged by capitalism. Blanc is perhaps best known for originating the social principle, later adopted by Karl Marx, of how labor and income should be distributed: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." Another French revolutionary of the 19th century, Louis Auguste Blanqui, made an important contribution to communist thought: the idea that a working-class revolution could not succeed without a small group of disciplined conspirators to lead the way. Both Blanc and Blanqui were influential in the Revolution of 1848, which overthrew the reestablished French monarchy. Communistic reformers participated in a number of unsuccessful revolutions against other monarchies (*see* Revolutions of 1848).

A number of communist or socialist theorists of the early 19th century rejected political revolution in favor of longer-term social transformation. Charles Fourier, a French philosopher, condemned the disorder, waste, and alienation he believed were endemic to modern capitalism. He proposed the reorganization of society into *phalansteries* (also called *phalanxes*), self-governing communistic communities of about 1,600 people each. Another French theorist, Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon, blended socialist and Christian thought. He believed that the most trained and competent members of the industrial community—such as scientists, engineers, and industrialists—should assume the leadership of society. He asserted that once this new elite realized that their own good was dependent on the good of the community, they would work to improve the lot of the working classes. A revival of Christian morality would guide the new society.

In Britain, Robert Owen, a philanthropic Welsh manufacturer, strove against the social problems brought about by the Industrial Revolution and sought to improve the welfare of workers. As manager of a cotton mill, he enhanced the environment of his workers by improving their housing, modernizing mill equipment for greater safety and sanitation, and establishing low-priced stores for the workers and schools for their children. Owen believed that workers, rather than governments, should create the institutions of a future communistic society. Motivated by mutual interest rather than profit, workers would band together in cooperative societies for the purchase and sale of commodities (*see* Cooperatives). In 1825 Owen took over a colony in Indiana, naming it New Harmony, and transformed it into a community modeled on his own socialist views; however, the community failed after three years. Similarly idealistic communities were initiated by Fourier or his followers (at several locations in France and the United States), by French socialist Étienne Cabet (at Nauvoo, Illinois), and by adherents of Saint-Simon (at the Ménilmontant estate near Paris).

II THE IDEAS OF MARX AND ENGELS

I

It was the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that laid the conceptual foundation for the communist revolutions and regimes of the 20th century. Marx and Engels were German-born intellectuals who worked in various cities in Europe as teachers, journalists, and political activists. In 1847 Marx and Engels joined a small group of working-class leaders in the formation of the Communist League, and shortly thereafter the two men were asked to draw up its platform. In their *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels dismissed all of the reformers who had come before them as naive "utopian socialists," claiming that their plans for communal property could not be achieved in capitalistic societies. Marx and Engels urged the workers of the world to unite to achieve "scientific socialism," or communism. Branching out from the theories of German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, they trumpeted communism as an unsentimental theory derived from immutable laws of history, and boasted that communism was already a "specter" haunting all of Europe and was "acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power."

In later works, the two writers further developed their sweeping theory of society and history. Marx and Engels asserted that the key to understanding human culture and history was the struggle between the classes. They used the term *class* to refer to a group of people within society who share the same social and economic status. According to Marx and Engels, class struggles have occurred in every form of society, no matter what its economic structure, or *mode of production:* slavery, feudalism, or capitalism. In each of these kinds of societies, a minority of people own or control the *means of production,* such as land, raw materials, tools and machines, labor, and money. This minority constitutes the ruling class. The vast majority of people own and control very little. They mainly own their own capacity to work. The ruling class uses its economic power to exploit workers by appropriating their surplus labor. In other words, workers are compelled to labor not merely to meet their own needs but also those of the exploiting ruling class. As a result, workers become alienated from the fruits of their labor.

Marx and Engels portrayed the grand sweep of Western history as a process of progressively evolving forms of society. The struggle between classes was the motor of social change, fueling revolutions and leading history from one epoch to the next. Just as primitive agrarian society had yielded centuries before to feudal society, and in Europe feudalism given way to industrial capitalism, so too would capitalism be overthrown. Analyzing 19th-century capitalistic society, Marx and Engels perceived a class struggle raging between the *bourgeoisie*, or capitalists who controlled the means of production, and the *proletariat,* or industrial workers. In their view, the bourgeoisie appropriated wealth from the proletariat by paying low wages and keeping the profits from sales and technological innovation for themselves. Marx and Engels were confident the conflict between the bourgeoisie and increasingly impoverished proletariat was coming to a head in the foremost societies of the West. The inevitable outcome would be a revolution in which the proletariat, taking advantage of strikes, elections, and, if necessary, violence, would displace the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. A political revolution was essential, in Marx's view, because the state is the central instrument of capitalist society.

Marx and Engels were almost silent about what would happen after the proletarian revolution. They made provision for a brief transitional period during which workers would form a socialist society with the means of production owned in common. In this period, the working-class majority of the population would need to enact a temporary *dictatorship of the proletariat* in order to seize the property of the bourgeois minority and stifle attempts to sabotage the popular government. Unlike previous ruling classes, the working class would not seek to install a new system of domination and exploitation; its goal would be a system of cooperation in which the immense majority, the proletariat, ruled for the benefit of all. Eventually, society would evolve into full communism, characterized by affluence, the abolition of classes, and an end to the dehumanizing division of labor found in earlier forms of society. In this idyllic condition, Marx and Engels wrote, abundance and social harmony would make it possible "for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic." Labor performed out of economic necessity would give way to truly voluntary activity.

Marxism increased in popularity in the late 19th century, particularly in countries whose urban population was impoverished and whose intellectuals were given no voice in government. Marx and Engels flung themselves into national and international political movements dedicated to promoting socialism and their end goal of communism. They were active in the International Workingmen's Association (frequently called the First International), an alliance of trade-union groups founded in 1864. Internal feuding led to the association's dissolution in 1876. A less disjointed union of socialist parties, the Socialist International (also known as the Second International), was formed in 1889 in Paris, France. The Second International represented national-

level socialist parties and movements from all over Europe, the United States, Canada, and Japan. In 1912 its constituent political parties claimed to have 9 million members. *See* International.

By the early 20th century, Marxists held a range of opinions on the main issues before them. Some were more militant than the mainstream, admonishing leftist parties to sharpen class conflict and therefore hasten the death of capitalism and the arrival of the workers' revolution. Other Marxists rejected the revolutionary perspective, holding that public control of the economy could be achieved by peaceful means, such as by electing Marxists to government positions. Still others called into question Marx's whole analysis of capitalism and sought to implement aspects of socialism within the capitalist system. These so-called Marxist revisionists noted stabilizing tendencies within capitalism and believed the debut of a welfare state would encourage social equality and give security to ordinary citizens. Eduard Bernstein, a German socialist, became the leading voice of Marxist revisionism. He rejected revolutionary action, instead suggesting that the socialist movement should forge political alliances and push for evolutionary reforms within the capitalist system.

The followers of Marx came to power in nations that lacked the preconditions he and Engels considered essential, namely capitalism and a mature industrial economy. The first of these countries was Russia, a huge, poor, relatively backward nation that was just beginning to acquire an industrial base.

IV COMMUNISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

Communism as a concrete social and political system made its first appearance in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the state erected by the victors of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 (*see* Russian Revolutions of 1917). Soviet communism took some of the core notions of Marxism to an extreme, realizing them through a tyrannical political structure. Within a decade, the Soviet dictatorship, having eradicated all dissent, unleashed an industrialization drive premised on near-total state control of physical and human resources. Authoritarianism reached its zenith during the long reign of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. The limited reforms undertaken after his death in 1953 did not alter the essential character of communism in the Soviet Union. Destabilized by the far-reaching reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s, the Soviet system disintegrated in 1991.

A Origins

Marx and Engels expected the proletarian revolution to erupt in a highly developed Western country like Germany, France, Britain, or the United States. In Marxist terms, Russia was just entering the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Its economy was primarily agrarian; serfdom in the villages had been eliminated only in 1861. Its political system was autocratic and imperial, with power concentrated in the tsar's court, and its many minority groups were treated as inferior in status to ethnic Russians, the largest ethnic group. Russia was, therefore, an unlikely site for either a revolution or for construction of a communist system following a revolution. Nonetheless, from the 1860s onward, it was home to a sizable revolutionary movement. Marx and Engels themselves conceded that, given the speedy growth of its capitalist economy, Russia had revolutionary potential, and an uprising there might "sound the signal for a workers' revolution in the West."

The first organization of Russian Marxists, the League for the Emancipation of Labor, was established in 1883 by a group headed by Russian political theorist Georgy Plekhanov. Most members lived in political exile outside of the Russian Empire. They rebutted claims that Russia could bypass capitalism and pursue a direct path to socialism, asserting that the country needed to go through the step-by-step development seen in industrialized Western countries. Adherents of the league founded the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) at a meeting in Minsk in 1898. The party became a member of the Second International.

B Under Lenin

The principal figure in the genesis of Russian communism was the radical socialist Vladimir Lenin. Like Marx, Lenin believed in the necessity of political revolution to achieve communism. In his pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), Lenin lambasted Marxist revisionists, saying their fixation on bread-and-butter issues doomed the movement to a reformist "trade-union consciousness." He urged Russia's Marxists to build a party of professional revolutionaries, a steely *vanguard* (leading group) that would shape the consciousness of the masses and fight unflinchingly for the revolution. At the Second Congress of the RSDLP, held in Brussels, Belgium, and in London, England, in 1903,

Lenin cleaved the party in two. His militant faction, the Bolsheviks (from the Russian word for “majority”), had the most votes in the congress, but was soon embroiled in a drawn-out battle for superiority with the more moderate Mensheviks (from the Russian word for “minority”), whose leaders included Plekhanov, Yuly Martov, and Pavel Akselrod. Some other party members, such as the gifted orator and pamphleteer Leon Trotsky, stayed out of the conflict. The Bolsheviks convened their own congress at Prague (in the present-day Czech Republic) in 1912, marking the final rupture with the Mensheviks.

The defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) was followed by the widespread disorder of the Russian Revolution of 1905, which nearly toppled the government. To curb the unrest, Tsar Nicholas II grudgingly agreed to create a national parliament. This concession led many opponents of the regime to conclude that the government would evolve peacefully from an autocracy into a constitutional monarchy. But World War I (1914-1918) intervened, massively draining the resources of Russian society and government. Facing food shortages, rapid inflation, and a breakdown of order in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg), his capital city, the tsar abdicated power in February 1917. For the next eight months a weak and fractious Provisional Government shared power with a hierarchy of *soviets,* local and regional councils that were democratically elected by workers and peasants. The transfer of power from the monarchy to the Provisional Government became known as the February Revolution.

In October 1917 Lenin’s Bolshevik vanguard, cloaking itself in the legitimacy of the soviets, staged a nearly bloodless armed coup against the Provisional Government. This seizure of power became known as the October Revolution or the Bolshevik Revolution. The new “Soviet” government, chaired by Lenin, backed out of World War I, negotiating the punitive Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in early 1918, which meant huge territorial losses for Russia. In March 1918 the Bolsheviks renamed themselves the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) and transferred the seat of operations of the party and their fledgling government to Moscow. [In 1925 this name was changed to the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik). The name Communist Party of the Soviet Union was adopted in 1952.] In July 1918 the Congress of Soviets, led by the Bolsheviks, established the new state of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR).

In addition to withdrawing Russia from World War I and demobilizing the tsarist army—a policy change popular with soldiers and the masses—the infant regime quickly made a number of far-reaching decisions consistent with its socialist ideals. It validated the peasants’ seizure of landlords’ estates, which had begun in the months after the February Revolution. It proclaimed worker control of factories, the legal equality of women and men, the separation of church and state, and payment of members of the government at levels no higher than those of common skilled laborers. It encouraged ferment and experimentation in science, literature, and the arts, and committed itself to free provision of health care, education, pensions, and housing.

These political and social changes, though, were overshadowed by the desperate struggle for survival in which the Communist regime soon found itself, and which in the process transformed it. Lenin believed, like Marx and Engels before him, that a communist government could survive in Russia only if it sparked socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist societies of Western and central Europe. In the afterglow of 1917, this seemed attainable, as left-wing insurrections flared in Finland, Germany, Hungary, and several other countries. Lenin did what he could to help. In 1919 the Soviet government sponsored the formation of the Communist International, or Comintern, which promoted world revolution (International: *The Third International*). The Comintern instructed its members to split away from reformist socialist parties in their host countries and set up revolutionary parties modeled on the Communist Party and faithful to Moscow. But working-class uprisings outside of Russia were short-lived and ultimately failed. No country, with the exception of landlocked Mongolia, emulated Russia’s example, confirming its isolation among hostile capitalist societies.

The Communists also faced threats from within. They at first governed in coalition with other left-wing parties, but expelled representatives of those parties from the government in July 1918. From then until the spring of 1921, Russia was engulfed by a savage civil war. Trotsky, who had joined the Bolsheviks in 1917, commanded a fighting force known as the Red Army to defend the new Communist state against counterrevolutionary forces known as White Russians, or simply, Whites. The Cheka, the Communist regime’s secret police, launched the Red Terror, arresting and executing tens of thousands of suspected political opponents. During the war, the Communist government rapidly implemented a series of socialist economic policies known collectively as War Communism. The government nationalized banks, insurance companies, railroads, and large factories, forbade most private commerce, and seized grain from the rural population, undermining peasant support for the regime. Under the rigors of War Communism, inflation soared, production plummeted, and millions of urban dwellers trekked to the countryside to feed themselves by working the land. Fearful of the spread of communism, Britain, the United States, Italy, and Germany came to the aid of the counterrevolutionary forces, supplying troops and imposing an economic blockade on Russia. This caused the further disintegration of Russian industry and

hardship to the working class. Famine, disease, and deprivation became rampant, and much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed. In total, an estimated 7 million to 8 million people died during the Russian Civil War, more than 5 million of whom were civilians.

The Communist Party emerged victorious from the civil war, but it was no longer the mass workers' organization of 1917. The war promoted the centralization of Communist power and a preference for force over persuasion. The party had become increasingly coercive and authoritarian, and was now a bureaucratic apparatus beginning to be dominated by a ruling elite of senior officials. In addition, the economic situation in Russia was catastrophic. As hostilities came to an end in 1921, Lenin touted his New Economic Policy (NEP) as a compromise recipe for postwar recovery. It kept the so-called "commanding heights" of the economy—finance, transportation, heavy industry, and foreign trade—in state hands but allowed entrepreneurs and private firms to engage in domestic trade, small-scale manufacturing, and farming. There was no corresponding slackening of restrictions in the political sphere. Non-Communist parties were not allowed to resume activity. The NEP was largely successful in restoring Russian production, and within a few years the worst of the economic chaos was over.

In May 1922 Lenin was forced into virtual inactivity by a stroke. Joseph Stalin, who had labored loyally in a series of government posts, emerged as the most influential Soviet leader after the stricken Lenin. His power, though not unchallenged, had been strengthened in April 1922, when he was appointed to the newly created post of general secretary of the Communist Party. In December 1922 Communist Party leaders decided to unite the RSFSR with several neighboring areas of the old Russian Empire that the party directly or indirectly controlled. They established a new federation, known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which initially consisted of the Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Transcaucasian republics; eventually it grew to encompass 15 republics.

Under Stalin

The death of Lenin in January 1924 triggered an impassioned struggle over political power and policy within the Central Committee and the Politburo, the top leadership body of the Communist Party. Stalin, Lenin's deputy for organizational matters, was victorious in the power struggle, demoting rivals like Trotsky, Grigory Zinovyev (the head of the Comintern), and Nikolay Bukharin to secondary positions. Whereas Lenin had ruled mostly from his post as head of government, Stalin, as the party's general secretary, relied for political and administrative support mostly on the swelling bureaucracy of the party itself, becoming chairman of the Soviet government only during World War II (1939-1945). He deftly utilized the party apparatus to place his supporters in key party positions, ostracize his foes, and meddle in a multitude of decisions.

Stalin adopted the catch phrase "socialism in one country" as the basis for his regime. Contradicting earlier Marxist doctrine, Stalin maintained that the complete victory of socialism within the Soviet Union was not contingent upon the success of other proletarian revolutions in the West. To achieve state socialism and, eventually, classless communism, no sacrifice was too great. At the end of the 1920s Stalin revoked the New Economic Policy and inaugurated the first of a series of Five-Year Plans, committing the regime to a program of breakneck industrial development and forced collectivization of agriculture. The result was a radical transformation of Soviet society. The government built hundreds of factories to produce machine tools, automobiles, agricultural machinery, motors, aircraft, generators, chemicals, iron and steel, coal, oil, and armaments. Construction—in which forced labor played an ever-increasing role—was begun on a vast network of new railroads and canals. The police chased small traders out of urban marketplaces. In the countryside, the policy of collectivization terminated private ownership of land and farm machinery and forced the Soviet Union's vast peasantry into large collective farms under state and party control. State planners, subordinated to party leadership, henceforth assigned binding production quotas, targets for raw materials and labor utilization, and other directives to all economic units.

Lenin's personal modesty and inhibitions about the unbridled use of force had tempered the dictatorial ways of the Communist regime until 1924. Stalin soon revealed himself to be immodest, ruthless, and a despot of grotesque proportions. Beginning with his fiftieth birthday in 1929, he was celebrated by an ever more extravagant personality cult. Nearly all his adversaries of the 1920s met a violent end during the Great Purge of the late 1930s. A handful were convicted in public show trials and shot; many more were seized by the Soviet political police, the NKVD (the Russian acronym for People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs), and put to death without trial or dispatched to labor camps in Siberia or other remote areas. Trotsky was assassinated in 1940 while in exile in Mexico. Stalin's campaign of terror was not confined to the Soviet elite; it penetrated all corners of society. Untold numbers of innocent peasants, workers, party members, government officials, army officers—essentially anyone alleged to have reservations about his policies—met immediate death by shooting or suffered slow death in labor camps. By some estimates, 10 million or more people were arrested for political offenses during the Stalin period. Roughly 1 million were executed.

Several million at a time populated the Gulag—the far-flung network of concentration camps, forced labor camps, and exile sites. Millions of informers passed on tips about their fellow citizens to the police. The Stalinist regime also exerted totalitarian controls over artists, writers, musicians, scientists, and other intellectuals, squelching all dissent and subjecting them to recurrent campaigns to enforce conformity. Thousands of intellectuals perished in the terror wave of the 1930s, and smaller numbers died in persecutions after World War II.

Stalin's foreign policy centered on securing the borders of the Soviet state and, when an opportunity presented itself, expanding the state's influence. He converted the Comintern into a pliant tool of Soviet policy. Like the domestic bureaucracy, it was mercilessly purged in the 1930s of anyone not fully obedient to Stalin's will. One of the Comintern's most difficult assignments was to propagandize the twists and turns of the Soviet party line. For most of the 1920s, the Comintern pressured foreign communists to go it alone politically. Then, in the mid-1930s, it encouraged "popular front" alliances with social democrats and liberals against right-wing and fascistic parties. In 1939, upon conclusion of an alliance with Nazi Germany (*see* German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact), this edict was reversed—only to be reinstated in 1941 when the Nazis' invasion brought the Soviet Union into World War II as an ally of the Western powers. In 1943 Stalin ordered the Comintern disbanded, concerned that it would inhibit wartime collaboration with the Allies. In 1947 he instituted the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau), consisting only of the ruling communist parties of Eastern Europe and the French and Italian parties (International: *The Communist Information Bureau*). Of limited payoff to Soviet policy, it was terminated in 1956.

An important tendency within Soviet communism from the mid-1930s onward was glorification of certain aspects of Russia's national heritage. The terrible losses suffered during World War II—estimated to be up to 30 million people—impressed upon Stalin the imperative of multiplying the regime's sources of authority. For the Russian majority of the population, Russian nationalism was the most obvious such source. Stalin reinstated the reputations of past military heroes and of state-building tsars such as Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. He toned down the crusade against the Russian Orthodox Church, which had endured government persecution since 1917, and enlisted it in the war effort. And, after the ouster of the Nazi forces, his government spent immense sums on the reconstruction of palaces, churches, and other landmarks despoiled during the occupation.

D After Stalin: Khrushchev and Brezhnev

Stalin's death in March 1953 set off another high-level contest over political supremacy. The winner was Nikita Khrushchev, who had become a secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1949. Earlier in his career, Khrushchev had headed the party's branches in Moscow and Ukraine. A master of political infighting, Khrushchev ascended to the position of first secretary of the party in late 1953. He defeated more senior leaders such as Vyacheslav Molotov and Georgy Malenkov and consolidated his authority by 1957. In 1958 he also became Soviet prime minister.

Though long a lieutenant of Stalin, Khrushchev found it morally necessary and politically expedient to expose his predecessor's paranoia and renounce the cruelest of Stalin's acts. His revelations were initially made in a secret speech at the 1956 congress of the party, the nature of which was gradually revealed to the general population. This speech led to a campaign of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union. With Khrushchev's backing, the Gulag camp system was largely dismantled, millions of political prisoners returned to their homes, many victims of the Stalinist terror were posthumously "rehabilitated," and penalties for ordinary crimes were lightened. A thaw in restrictions on the press and cultural community facilitated some airing of Stalin's crimes and discussion of Soviet economic and social problems. Khrushchev embarked upon halting reforms of agriculture, industrial administration, science and education, and the armed forces. Pronouncing the USSR an "all-people's state" and no longer a dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership also widened popular participation in Soviet institutions.

Khrushchev's reforms stopped short of the heart of the Soviet system. Although criticism of Stalin's excesses was tolerated, discussion of more fundamental issues—such as the merits of Marxism-Leninism and single-party rule—was off-limits. Even in assessing Stalin's rule, the party line fluctuated, while praise of Lenin, the founder of the regime, increased markedly. Far from spurning the cardinal values of Soviet communism, Khrushchev was viscerally committed to them and optimistic about progress toward their fulfillment. The 1961 party congress promised that the Soviet people would arrive at full-blown communism within a generation and would achieve American living standards by 1980. Industrial growth, the USSR's military might, and its feats in space exploration, beginning with Sputnik I in 1957, reinforced this optimism. Khrushchev and the party carried out domestic reforms with caution, concerned that any ill-considered reforms could spill over uncontrolled into Eastern Europe and jeopardize their dominion there. De-Stalinization, in short, did not blossom into a more comprehensive de-communization of the USSR.

Khrushchev’s rule was curtailed by widespread animosity in the political establishment toward his erratic style of decision-making. Especially resented were his inconsistent personnel shake-ups, zigzagging policies, and reshuffling of the bureaucracy. In October 1964 Khrushchev became the only Soviet leader to be unseated by his fellow party chieftains. A conspiracy spearheaded by Leonid Brezhnev, a veteran of the provincial and central party apparatus, persuaded the Communist Party’s high command to topple him and denounce his “harebrained schemes” and hasty decisions “divorced from reality.” Khrushchev was sent into retirement and died in 1971. In his stead, Brezhnev became general secretary of the party and Aleksey KosyginAlekseyAleksey, a skilled economic administrator, was chosen head of the Soviet government.

Brezhnev’s 18 years in the Kremlin were the most tranquil period of Soviet history. Taking a conservative approach to governance, he abstained from drastic changes in personnel, procedures, and policy. Public criticism of Stalin was greatly trimmed and the cultural thaw of the Khrushchev years came to a halt. When a Soviet dissident movement materialized in the late 1960s, it was crushed and most of its leaders either were imprisoned by the KGB (as the political police were now titled) or left the country. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Russian novelist and chronicler of the Gulag, was forced to emigrate in 1974; the KGB sent the physicist Andrey Sakharov, the best-known Soviet dissident, to internal exile in the city of Gorky in 1980. Although Brezhnev was willing to tolerate some pragmatic revisions of the party line and to try to boost popular welfare, he opposed any serious loosening of political controls over society. The Cold War rivalry with the United States made the Soviet military-industrial complex the main beneficiary of budgetary allocations.

The Soviet economy labored in the 1970s as its reserves of raw materials, fuels, and labor began to deplete and its technological development began to decelerate. One consequence was that the country found it harder and harder to shoulder the burden of the arms race with the United States. Economic growth virtually halted by the beginning of the 1980s, while environmental and social problems accumulated and tensions among the USSR’s nationality groups worsened. More and more, the public mood was one of cynicism and withdrawal. The graying leadership of the Communist Party turned a deaf ear to these difficulties. Moreover, the party tried to fabricate a personality cult around Brezhnev at the very time that his health and competence were visibly failing. The infirmity of the party chief and his entourage was matched by increasingly apparent stagnation in institutions, policies, and ideas.

Gorbachev’s Reforms and the Soviet Collapse

Brezhnev died in November 1982. Two elderly members of the Politburo, Yuri Andropov, a former head of the KGB, and Konstantin Chernenko, a crony of Brezhnev’s, filled his shoes for the next several years, before they, too, expired in office. In March 1985, upon the death of Chernenko, the Communist Party’s Central Committee elected Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the party. Trained as a lawyer, the 54-year-old Gorbachev had made his career in party administration, moving from his home region in southwestern Russia to the central apparatus in Moscow in 1978. His relative youth, physical vigor, and frankness gave him the edge over other candidates in 1985. After a slow start, Gorbachev proved to be the most resolute reformer ever seen in the Soviet system and, contrary to intent, the architect of its destruction.

Gorbachev launched his program of *perestroika* (restructuring) of Soviet society and economy to enhance and modernize the system, not to bring it down. His initial approach was to tighten discipline within party ranks and in workplaces and to stage a campaign against alcohol consumption. Within a year, Gorbachev assumed more radical positions and recruited advisers who favored a far-reaching overhaul of Soviet practices and institutions. In the economic realm, Gorbachev resurrected some pieces of Lenin’s New Economic Policy of the 1920s, authorizing the formation of cooperatives and family businesses and permitting collective farms to sell some of their produce on the market at the going price. The government also relaxed restrictions on foreign trade and investment and reduced central control over the managers of state-owned firms.

In addition to pursuing economic reforms, Gorbachev soon launched ambitious political and social reforms. The most dramatic change was adopting *glasnost* (candor or openness) about public affairs. In quick succession, the Soviet authorities released Sakharov and other dissidents from prisons and exile, relaxed censorship in the mass media, kindled debate over the sins of the Soviet past, and lifted a ban on independent associations and organizations. Gorbachev accompanied these measures with a shift in foreign policy, pledging to curb Soviet military spending and negotiate an end to the Cold War with Western nations. His most fateful decision was the electoral reform ratified in 1988, providing for competitive, multicandidate elections for the central government and for local and republican governments. For the first time since the early 1920s, candidates not proposed by the Communist Party were allowed to run. Gorbachev in 1989 became chairman of the Congress of People’s Deputies, an elected body that had replaced the Supreme

Soviet that spring. In 1990 the congress amended the Soviet constitution to allow non-Communist political parties to organize and put candidates forward in elections.

Gorbachev's brand of reform communism opened a floodgate of spontaneous changes in all corners of Soviet society. He was quickly upstaged by public figures who demanded an immediate embrace of Western-style democracy and a transfer of power from the central government to the 15 constituent republics of the USSR. In 1990 newly elected republican governments passed resolutions affirming their sovereignty and rights in relation to the central government. Nationalist sentiments also sprang up in the republic-level branches of the Communist Party. In response to the erosion of his power, Gorbachev had the Congress of People's Deputies elect him the first-ever president of the Soviet Union. Most of the republics matched this move by electing presidents of their own. Meanwhile, Gorbachev's economic policies did not improve living conditions and in some respects made them worse. Frustration over economic shortages fed anticommunist feeling, especially in the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Gorbachev steadfastly refused to use military force to quell the discontent.

The crisis hit fever pitch when a group of hardliners from the Communist Party, the Soviet military, and the KGB attempted in August 1991 to institute a state of emergency and turn Gorbachev into a figurehead leader. However, the coup collapsed within two days, largely because of opposition by the popularly elected president of the Russian republic, Boris Yeltsin, who rallied crowds of demonstrators on the streets of Moscow. The leaders of the plot soon surrendered, but Gorbachev's authority had been irreparably damaged, and he resigned as general secretary of the Communist Party. Within days all Communist Party activity was suspended. Most of the Soviet republics hurriedly announced their independence from the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party was banned in Russia and many other republics. On December 8, 1991, the presidents of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus announced the dissolution of the USSR and its replacement by a loose-knit, voluntary alliance called the Commonwealth of Independent States. On December 25, Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

For information on the recent history of communism in the countries of the former Soviet Union, see the *Communist Influence in Noncommunist Countries* section of this article.

V COMMUNISM IN CHINA

A Origins and Growth

China, the world's most populous nation, came under communist rule in 1949. In the preceding decades, China had been racked by political turmoil. The collapse of the imperial Manchu dynasty in 1911 instigated the rise of regional warlords and of reformist and revolutionary movements. In 1919, after the United States failed to support China, its World War I ally, at negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles, a group of students gathered in Beijing to protest. These demonstrations, known as the May Fourth Movement, set off a wave of nationalism and criticism of Western imperialism. At the same time, the successful October Revolution of 1917 in Russia began to exert a growing influence among Chinese intellectuals, sweeping many idealistic youths into the mainstream of revolutionary Marxism. In 1921, largely on the initiative of two Beijing University professors, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in Shanghai. One of Li's young disciples was Mao Zedong, the son of a prosperous peasant.

In 1923, at the urging of the Russian leaders of the Comintern, the CCP allied itself with the Kuomintang (KMT, or Nationalist Party), which then controlled a small area of southern China. The rest of the country, at the time, was split up among various warlords. With the assistance of the Soviet Union, the Kuomintang organized a military force to gain control of the rest of China. Led by the young general Chiang Kai-shek and aided by Communist mobilization of peasants and workers, the Kuomintang marched northward through China and by March 1927 had won control of most of central China, including Shanghai and Nanjing (*see* Northern Expedition). On entering Shanghai, Chiang ordered a violent purge of Communists, fearing that they were becoming too powerful. His troops, aided by the city's criminal gangs, massacred thousands of pro-Communist workers and students. Similar repression soon followed in Wuhan, Nanjing, and Canton. The Kuomintang established itself as the national government of China in 1928.

The Communists, including Mao, retreated to a remote mountainous area in Jiangxi province, in southeastern China. Before the relocation, Mao had called for the party to base itself on rural peasants, not urban workers as in traditional Marxism. Mao saw the poor peasant masses as likely agents of revolution, but the CCP had rejected this strategy. Now, forced from the cities, the Communists had no choice but to adopt Mao's peasant revolt strategy. Under Mao's leadership, the party soon proclaimed its territory independent as the Jiangxi Soviet Republic, and it recruited peasant supporters to establish a Communist military force known as the Red Army.

The CCP survived a series of annihilation campaigns by the Kuomintang, but in October 1934 the KMT army encircled the Jiangxi strongholds and the Communists had to flee. Mao now led 80,000 Communists on a harrowing 9,600-km (6,000-mi) trek to the Shaanxi province in north central China. This trek became known as the Long March. Pursued by KMT troops and plagued by disease, only 8,000 people survived the yearlong journey. In 1936 the CCP established a new base in the Shaanxi province, in the town of Yan'an.

Over the next decade the CCP stressed resistance to the Japanese, who invaded northern China in 1937 (Sino-Japanese Wars: *Second Sino-Japanese War*). The Communists helped the KMT fight Japan but remained politically independent. The resistance greatly strengthened the party and its Red Army. When Japan surrendered in 1945, the civil war between the KMT and CCP resumed. Communist units, capitalizing on the Soviet occupation of Manchuria, rapidly gained the upper hand. The Red Army, with better discipline, higher morale, and widespread peasant support, completely defeated the KMT forces in just four years. In October 1949 Mao, as chairman of the CCP, declared the founding of the People's Republic of China, a "people's democracy" commanded in Beijing and at all levels by the party. Chiang Kai-shek's forces fled to the offshore island of Taiwan.

B Under Mao

Mao reigned as the supreme authority in Communist China from 1949 until his death in 1976. Once in office, Mao signed a friendship treaty with the USSR and remained loyal to the Soviet Union until after Stalin's death, accepting Soviet doctrine and numerous Soviet advisers. However, Mao soon parted company with these advisers. Upset at Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, which he branded revisionism and a capitulation to capitalism, Mao became convinced that China needed to build its unique version of communism. In the early 1960s China struck out in an independent and often anti-Soviet direction in foreign policy.

Maoism, or "Mao Zedong thought," as it came to be titled, combined components of orthodox Marxism-Leninism, Confucianism, the practical experience of Communist revolution in rural China, and the combative and iconoclastic personality of Mao. In its suppression of dissent, disregard of individual liberties, and eagerness to bring about swift industrialization and modernization of the country, Mao's regime closely resembled unreformed Soviet communism. Industrial development was at first directly patterned on Stalin's economic policies. All large-scale industry and trade were taken over by the government. A five-year plan for the years 1953-1958, assisted by Soviet economic aid, led to rapid industrial growth and was followed by other five-year plans. The collectivization of Chinese agriculture similarly imitated the Soviet precedent.

A turning point in Mao's approach to governing, not fully understood at the time, came in 1956 and 1957, when Mao invited China's intellectuals to participate in a campaign to "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom." By encouraging them to freely air their grievances and opinions, Mao hoped to enlist their more active support in the next stage of China's development. Mao saluted the value of struggle between opposing ideas and social forces, emphasizing that even in a socialist society numerous "contradictions" exist and that "What is correct always develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong." When the intellectuals responded to his invitation with increasingly bitter and hostile criticisms of the party, of socialism, and of Mao himself, Mao clamped down on what he termed the "bourgeois rightists" and silenced his critics. Thousands who had spoken out were imprisoned, fired from their job, or exiled.

Although the intellectual thaw had been short-lived, the party leadership, prodded by an ever more restless Mao, dabbled in novel and often risky policies for advancing toward utopian communism. In 1958 it unveiled a radical program known as the Great Leap Forward to dramatically increase agricultural and industrial production. Mao claimed this plan would boost Chinese economic output to British levels within 15 years. The Great Leap called for decentralization of administration of the economy to local firms and CCP units. At the same time, Mao ordered the consolidation of the country's newly formed farm collectives into thousands of huge communes where peasants would work together to increase China's agricultural production and self-sufficiency. The party called upon all Chinese to engage in physical labor digging irrigation ditches, planting grain, and setting up local factories and backyard furnaces for the production of steel. Although the government initially reported great increases in production, within a year the Great Leap was leading to general exhaustion and economic collapse. The program was aborted in 1960, but steep declines in agricultural production had already begun. Gross exaggeration of grain production figures by communes led the government to seize large amounts of grain as taxes. Combined with extremely poor weather, this led to a massive famine that killed millions of people.

In the mid-1960s Mao sensed that the Chinese Communist Party was becoming increasingly elitist and bureaucratic. In addition, he began to suspect that other CCP leaders were deliberately trying to sabotage socialism by advocating more moderate approaches to economic development, which

he deemed revisionist. Roused to action, in 1966 Mao launched his most aggressive and most tragic act of leadership: the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution began as an attempt to reprimand moderate artists and intellectuals in Beijing, but spiraled into a frantic attack on dissent and, soon, on established structures of authority all over China. All schools were closed, and huge bands of students, calling themselves Red Guards, began an ill-defined battle to crush overt and covert enemies of communism. Scientists and other intellectuals were singled out for special victimization; hundreds of thousands were beaten, robbed, publicly humiliated, and condemned to menial labor on farms far from their home. Large numbers of party officials and senior party leaders were dismissed from office, accused of plotting to restore capitalism. Party general secretary Deng Xiaoping was imprisoned in a remote village, and head of state Liu Shaoqi was jailed under conditions that quickly killed him. In addition to wrecking China's cultural and intellectual life, the Cultural Revolution gravely disrupted the economy, especially industry and transportation. By 1967 the turmoil was so great that the army was called in to restore order. By mid-1969 the military and the party apparatus had restored some calm and the Red Guards had been decommissioned.

Mao now consented to a more sober approach to governing the country. Defense minister Lin Biao, purged from the party in 1971, and accused posthumously in 1972 of plotting to assassinate Mao, served as a convenient scapegoat for the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution. The cult of personality around Mao, who had been revered as the "Great Helmsman," cooled somewhat. China's seasoned premier, Zhou Enlai, who had been under a cloud of suspicion during the Cultural Revolution, had his role restored. He restored to office many disgraced pragmatists, including Deng Xiaoping, who returned to the Politburo in 1973. Moderation also prevailed in foreign policy. In 1971 the People's Republic of China was given the China seat in the United Nations, replacing the Taiwanese government. In 1972 U.S. president Richard Nixon visited China and signed the Shanghai Communiqué, normalizing relations and pledging China to resolve its conflict with Taiwan without war. In a last burst of Maoist leftism, Deng and several colleagues were publicly criticized in 1975 as "counterrevolutionaries." Before the campaign could gain steam, Mao died in September 1976, at the age of 82.

After Mao

Mao had anointed a party functionary, Hua Guofeng, to succeed him as chairman of the CCP. A month after Mao's death Hua, in a swift coup, arrested the Gang of Four, a quartet of leftist leaders headed by Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, who were accused of implementing the most extreme policies of the Cultural Revolution. Mao's followers were effectively eliminated from national leadership. Without Mao's patronage, however, Hua lost influence.

The real winner in post-Mao politics, as was clear by 1978, was the unassuming but wily Deng Xiaoping. Formally, Deng held but one top-level position: chairman of the party's military commission. Informally, however, he was the kingpin of the leadership and had the final say on all pressing issues. With the ouster of the Gang of Four and their sympathizers, he wasted no time in advancing significant reforms. At the outset, he seemed to hold the door open to political change. In the so-called Democracy Wall movement of 1978 and 1979, hundreds of activists were allowed to paste up posters in downtown Beijing in protest against government policies. But this permission was rescinded, several activists were imprisoned in 1979, and the movement soon disappeared. Making it clear that he had no intention of dislodging the CCP, Deng rebuilt its organization and finances and fortified its hold on the army, security services, and courts. He sought to revive the prestige of the CCP, which had been badly damaged by the Cultural Revolution, by overseeing a reassessment of Mao and his reputation. The CCP gave Mao credit for reunifying China, but blamed him for arbitrary decisions and the "leftist errors" of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution.

Reluctant as he was to effect political reform, Deng turned out to be an astonishingly ambitious and effective reformer in the economic domain. Winning over party elders and bringing more youthful advocates of change into high positions, he committed the party to "building socialism with Chinese characteristics" and revamped Chinese policy on several fronts. After some delicate first steps, the government in the early 1980s revived private trade and services in urban areas. In the countryside, the agricultural communes were reduced to empty shells and most of their administrative duties, such as setting production quotas, were transferred to village governments. Farmers were allowed to lease plots of land and sell their surplus produce on the free market. Rural industrial enterprises, operated in tandem by local governments and private entrepreneurs, became the fastest growing sector of the economy. In 1984 state-run factories in the cities also began to undergo restructuring, with managers given the right to shed surplus workers and to reinvest profits instead of giving them to the state. Whereas Mao had pursued a policy of national self-sufficiency, Deng endorsed an "open door" policy to start integrating the country into the international economy. Foreign trade boomed, China petitioned for entry into international financial

institutions, and it carved out “special economic zones” along its southern coast to offer incentives to foreign investors. China’s exposure to the world economy deepened further in 1997 with the return to Chinese sovereignty of Hong Kong, a vital international trading center.

Deng’s daring market reforms were spectacularly successful in stimulating economic growth. Deng defended these reforms as consistent with the regime’s long-term ideological goals. He cited them as a logical part of a “primary stage of socialism” that would prepare China for its final task of constructing mature communism. That rationale, however, became threadbare as awareness grew that Communist China, whatever the words of the leadership, was in deeds acquiring the rudiments of a capitalist economy in which private control and profits would be paramount and the state would retrench to a largely regulatory role. Deng retired from active formulation of economic policy in the several years before his death in 1997, but reforms continued and even accelerated under his successor, President Jiang Zemin. Jiang favored the partial privatization of failing or inefficient state-owned enterprises, a move Deng had avoided.

Neither Deng nor his heirs relented on the decision to go slow with political reform. From 1986 to 1989 more flexible senior officials such as Hu Yaobang, CCP general secretary from 1981 to 1987, and Zhao Ziyang, who replaced Hu as general secretary in 1987, attempted to do more to open up the political system, with mild encouragement from Deng. Student unrest with the slow pace of change blew up in 1989 into mass protests and in the occupation of Tiananmen Square, in central Beijing, by demonstrators. Following a searching debate in the Politburo, martial law was decreed in Beijing and in June the army marched into the square, dispersing or arresting participants in the demonstration. Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed in the ensuing battles, and many more were jailed (*see* Tiananmen Square Protest). Memories of the democracy movement of 1989 linger, but the post-Deng leadership is determined to prevent any revival of it and to stave off searching reforms of political structures. For the time being, the Chinese Communist Party rules.

V I COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

A Origins

Apart from China, the main world region in which communist movements made huge inroads after World War II was Eastern Europe. The states of the area were relatively young; all had been carved out of the former Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian, and Ottoman empires by post-World War I treaties. Many had begun their independent existence as fragile democracies, but by the mid-1930s all except for Czechoslovakia had succumbed to authoritarian tendencies.

During World War II, the Eastern European countries either fell under the subjugation of Nazi Germany or allied themselves with the Nazi regime. Near the end of the war, Soviet troops invaded and occupied all but Yugoslavia and Albania, freeing them from German control. Wartime negotiations among the Allied Powers consigned Eastern Europe to the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviets took advantage of this agreement, and of Western war-weariness and reluctance to confront Soviet power, by installing communist governments in the Soviet-occupied countries of Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In 1946 British prime minister Winston Churchill, criticizing the Soviet expansion, proclaimed that “an iron curtain has descended across the continent,” separating Eastern and Western Europe. The term *iron curtain* came to describe a policy of isolation that prevented travel and communication between the two regions.

Special circumstances prevailed in Yugoslavia and Albania, where communist regimes came to power of their own accord. As in China, the Yugoslav and Albanian communists acquired much of their popular support from their prominence in the struggle against foreign occupation, in this case by Nazi Germany. Another special case was the zone of Soviet occupation in eastern Germany. Soviet aims here focused initially on German demilitarization and on obtaining postwar reparations. Only after the three U.S., British, and French zones banded together into a democratic German Federal Republic (West Germany) did Stalin, in October 1949, sanction a separate East German state, officially titled the German Democratic Republic, to be governed by German communists (*see* East Germany).

B Communist Rule

The transition to communism in Eastern Europe took several years to complete. At first, local communist parties governed as part of multiparty coalition governments. But in 1947 and 1948 Soviet tolerance of political diversity waned, and these Eastern European countries essentially

became Soviet satellites under Stalinist command. Non-Communist parties were eliminated, most industries and farms came under state control, and foreign policy was dictated by the USSR.

The governments of the so-called Soviet bloc had some latitude in the 1950s and 1960s to adapt the Soviet model to their circumstances. Each chose a somewhat different variation on the master theme. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany stayed closest to Moscow, departing only slightly from Soviet practice. The Romanian regime retained Stalinism domestically but cultivated anti-Russian nationalism in foreign policy. Hungarian leaders made unthreatening economic reforms, while at the same time maintaining the party's political control. Poland's government was the only one in the Soviet bloc not to compel the collectivization of agriculture.

The one country that balked at satellite status was Yugoslavia, led by the strong-willed Josip Broz Tito. Tito copied most of the USSR's domestic institutions and policies, yet held out for independence in foreign relations and for pursuing his own geopolitical aims in the Balkans. Stalin attempted to crack down on Yugoslavia by establishing the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) in 1947. Stalin hoped that the Cominform, by acting as a coordinating agency for communist parties, would pressure Tito to conform to the Soviet agenda. When this failed, Stalin branded him a heretic. The USSR, though, was unwilling to use military force to depose Tito, and he remained in power.

Demonstrating its independent course, Yugoslavia experimented with transferring control of factories to workers' councils in factories, and it abandoned an effort to collectivize farms. It also decentralized the government to give more autonomy to Yugoslavia's six constituent republics. Yugoslavia's neighbor, Albania, broke with the USSR in 1961, siding with China in its feud with Moscow. Enver Hoxha, the founding leader of socialist Albania, practiced an austere version of communism, eliminating any sign of political dissent and eventually banning all religious bodies.

The Cominform was dissolved in 1956, but more sophisticated instruments for coordinating policy in the Soviet bloc took its place. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or COMECON), founded in 1949, included the USSR, its satellites, and eventually communist Mongolia, Cuba, and Vietnam. The Warsaw Pact military alliance, an Eastern European counterpart to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was formed in 1955. Yugoslavia kept aloof from these arrangements, and, along with Albania, was one of only two Eastern European countries to prohibit the stationing of Soviet troops on its soil.

C Political Unrest

Aside from Yugoslavia and Albania, with their homegrown systems, the Marxist-Leninist regimes of Eastern Europe were, from the start, deficient in legitimacy and popular support. The death of Stalin in 1953 set off a series of crises in the Soviet satellites. The first wave of de-Stalinization in the USSR sparked a workers' rebellion in East Germany in June 1953. The Soviets put it down with force. In 1956, in the aftermath of Khrushchev's "secret speech" denouncing Stalin, political turbulence rocked Poland and Hungary. In Poland, workers staged demonstrations for government reforms, but the communist regime survived after Moscow allowed the release and return to power of Władysław Gomułka, who had been purged from the party by Stalin in 1948 and imprisoned. In Hungary, a struggle ensued between hardliners and reformers in the Hungarian Communist Party, which soon erupted into a large anti-Soviet revolt in October and November 1956 (*see* Hungarian Revolt of 1956). Soviet forces intervened, and thousands of insurgents were killed. The USSR installed a new government under János Kádár, who several years before had served time in prison as a supposed follower of Tito.

The most exciting changes in the Soviet bloc were attempted in Czechoslovakia in 1968, during its so-called Prague Spring. Rallying behind a new party first secretary, Alexander Dubček, Czechoslovakia's Communist Party committed itself to a bundle of liberalizing reforms: enshrining individual rights in the constitution, opening up debate in the party and the press, investigating the Stalinist past, and introducing market incentives into the planned economy. However, the Prague Spring proved unacceptable to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and the USSR's keenest allies in Eastern Europe. On August 20, 1968, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact forces, with only Romania exempting itself, invaded Czechoslovakia in overwhelming force. Dubček was removed in favor of Gustav Husák in April 1969. Step by step, Husák reversed most of the reforms and succeeded in reestablishing a tightly controlled communist state loyal to Moscow. One of the few reforms to survive was the makeover of Czechoslovakia into a federation of distinct Czech and Slovak republics.

D Decline and Collapse

Between the Prague Spring and accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, East European communist rulers were weighed down by their internal difficulties and by the

burden of loyalty to Moscow. As economic growth ground to a halt, the local populations grew more and more disaffected and foreign debt rose. The one country where domestic change was bold enough to throw Soviet control into question was Poland. Anticommunism there was buoyed by anti-Russian feeling, a tradition of working-class militancy, and the election of a Polish pope, John Paul II, in 1978. In 1980 a spontaneous workers' revolt by the upstart Solidarity trade union, led by Lech Wałęsa, forced the government to make painful concessions to popular sentiment. In December 1981, though, the Polish Communists, led by General Wojciech Jaruzelski, bowed to Moscow's wishes and decreed martial law, banned Solidarity, and undid most of the preceding year's concessions.

The death knell of East European communism was the initiation of *perestroika,* Gorbachev's program of domestic reform in the USSR. Gorbachev's willingness to revamp communism in its birthplace undercut status-quo governments in the area. He also made it abundantly clear that he would not authorize the use of Soviet tanks to maintain unpopular communist regimes in office. In the spring of 1989 the Communist parties in Poland and Hungary made a dignified exit by negotiating a transitional formula for sharing power and the organization of competitive elections. In Czechoslovakia and East Germany mass protest unseated party leaders Husák and Erich Honecker and, in the latter case, brought down the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany in November 1989, leading to their unification the next year. President Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria resigned under pressure from reformers, touching off the transition to a multiparty state. In Romania, President Nicolae Ceauşescu refused to step down and was overthrown after a wave of public demonstrations in December 1989; several days later a firing squad executed him and his wife. The two remaining communist umbrella organizations, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Pact, were dissolved in 1991. Repatriation of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe began in 1990 and was over by 1994.

Outside the Soviet orbit, events in Yugoslavia and Albania followed their own logic. The Yugoslav federation descended into civil war between and within its republics in 1991. Nationalist-minded communists hung onto power in Serbia, the largest successor state, for another decade, but relinquished it elsewhere. In Albania, Hoxha's successor, Ramiz Alia, accepted independent political parties at the end of 1990 and vacated office after multiparty elections in March 1992.

For more information on the recent history of communism in Eastern Europe, see the *Communist Influence in Noncommunist Countries* section of this article.

VII COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS IN OTHER REGIONS

Outside of the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe, Marxist-Leninists scored victories in a string of other countries. Successful communist movements were mostly tied to the Soviet camp, which supplied them with arms, economic aid, and advisers. The Chinese also exercised influence in some of these countries, but when relations chilled between China and the USSR in the early 1960s, Moscow generally insisted on conformity with the Soviet position.

A Asia

A1 Mongolia

Mongolia, an appendage of the Chinese empire until 1911, was the first country outside Soviet frontiers to accept a communist regime. Local, Russian, and Chinese factions fought for mastery there from 1911 until 1921, when the Mongolian People's Party (later the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, or MPRP), a pro-Soviet group headed by Damdiny Sühbaatar, won out. A Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, in 1924, and the MPRP became the sole legal party. Under the long-lived leadership of Horlogiyn Choybalsan and then of Yumzhagiyen Tsedenbal, Mongolia was a pliant ally of the Soviet Union. It sent troops to help Soviet forces fight Japanese divisions crossing over from China in the late 1930s, and it again sent troops during the Soviet occupation of Manchuria in 1945. It also sided with Moscow during the Sino-Soviet conflict, the rift in relations between China and the USSR that developed in the early 1960s. Developments in Mongolia after 1985 paralleled those in Eastern Europe. Reforms began slowly, but by the early 1990s the country had instituted a multiparty system and embarked on market reforms. In 1993 President Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat, who had split from the MPRP and aligned himself with the opposition, was reelected president in the country's first direct presidential

elections. The MPRP regained control of parliament in 2000, and today it remains the largest political party in Mongolia.

A 2 Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos

There was a longstanding communist tradition in French-governed Indochina, and the Indochinese Communist Party was founded in 1930 in Hong Kong. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the party and of the Viet Minh nationalist movement, proclaimed the independence of the Vietnamese lands from the French in 1945. After a lengthy guerrilla war and the defeat of French forces at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, France granted the Vietnamese request (*see* First Indochina War). France and the Viet Minh agreed to the temporary partition of Vietnam into two zones: North Vietnam, to be ruled by Ho and the communist Lao Dong (Workers' Party), and South Vietnam, which would be controlled by noncommunists. National elections were to be held in 1956 to bring about a reunified Vietnam. But the South Vietnamese leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, refused to hold elections after it appeared likely that Ho would win.

In 1960 the National Liberation Front (NLF) was formed with the goal of overthrowing the South Vietnamese government. Although controlled by the Lao Dong, the NLF was largely composed of native southerners disaffected by Diem's repressive rule. Subsequently, a military struggle raged for control of Vietnam, with the government in South Vietnam backed after 1964 by American troops and air forces. The United States justified its support of the South Vietnamese government in the Vietnam War (1959-1975) by the "domino theory": the belief that if all of Vietnam fell under communist rule, communism would quickly spread to other countries in Asia and beyond. In 1973, its resolve sapped by antiwar protests at home, the United States negotiated the withdrawal of its forces. In 1975 Vietnam was reunified under communist rule, and in 1976 it officially became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For years, communism in Vietnam by and large followed the Soviet model, and the government accepted large subsidies from Moscow.

In 1979, following several years of tension and border skirmishes with the Khmer Rouge communist regime in Cambodia, Vietnam invaded its neighbor and established a pro-Vietnamese government. This incident in turn touched off a short war between Vietnam and China, the protector of the Khmer Rouge. The subsequent loss of Chinese trade led to even closer ties between Vietnam and the Soviet Union. Beginning in 1986 the Vietnamese Communist Party put forward a package of economic reforms quite similar to those mounted in China by Deng Xiaoping. Party leaders ended collective farms, encouraged private industrial activity, and passed legislation aimed at attracting foreign investment. As in China, these reforms spurred economic growth but did not include political changes that would end single-party rule. Today, the Vietnamese Communist Party remains the only legal political party in Vietnam.

Cambodia and Laos gained their independence from France in 1953. Both were to be destabilized by the Vietnam War. In Cambodia, General Lon Nol deposed Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1970 and sent troops to fight North Vietnamese guerrilla groups that had established bases in Cambodia. Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge movement (controlled by the Communist Party of Kâmpŭchéa, or CPK), which had waged a guerrilla war against the government since 1967, gained control of large zones of Cambodian territory. The United States postponed a Khmer Rouge victory with an intensive bombing campaign, begun in 1969, aimed at cutting off the Cambodian supply lines of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese forces (*see* Secret Bombing of Cambodia). In 1975 the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia and immediately began a radical transfiguration of the country, which it renamed Democratic Kâmpŭchéa. Headed by Pol Pot, the regime terrorized the population for the next four years while claiming to build what it called an authentic Cambodian socialism. It forced millions of city dwellers to move to rural areas to work as farmers and to build canals, dikes, and dams. All land was nationalized, as were other means of production, and barter took the place of money. Khmer Rouge leaders severely restricted freedom of speech, movement, and association and suppressed religious practices. The regime's brutal policies, along with outright terrorism and political murder of real and imagined opponents, resulted in the deaths of nearly 1.7 million Cambodians. Millions of others were tortured, deprived of food, or sent into forced labor.

Vietnam's 1979 invasion brought to power a less brutal communist government, which established the pro-Vietnamese Kâmpŭchéan People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) as the sole legal party. In 1990 the party abandoned socialism and introduced a range of free-market reforms, including the ending of collectivized agriculture. The following year the party changed its name to the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Multiparty elections were held in 1993 for the first time in decades, Sihanouk was restored to the throne, and the country was renamed the Kingdom of Cambodia. By 1999 the last Khmer Rouge troops and leaders had surrendered or been captured.

Laos, too, had a communist revolution in 1975, which replaced the Kingdom of Laos with the Lao People's Democratic Republic. It remained dependent on Vietnam until the early 1990s, when Vietnamese aid declined and the Laotians commenced some gradual economic reforms, mostly in agriculture. Today, the communist Lao People's Revolutionary Party is the only legal political party.

A3 North Korea

Korea, a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945, was partitioned after World War II into Soviet- and American-occupied zones. In 1948 a Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea, was established in the Soviet zone, and a Republic of Korea, or South Korea, was established in the American zone. In a bid to unify the country under communist rule, North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950. The United States and small contingents of troops from other nations came to the defense of South Korea, while China joined the North Korean offensive. Millions of soldiers and civilians died in the Korean War, which ended with a truce in 1953.

Kim Il Sung was party leader and head of state in North Korea from 1948 until his death in 1994. Throughout that time, North Korea was an unvarnished Stalinist dictatorship, with harsh internal repression, an extravagant cult of Kim's personality, and a colossal military machine that positioned large numbers of troops along the demilitarized zone that separates North Korea from South Korea. All industry was nationalized and agriculture was collectivized. North Korea maintained cordial relations with both the Soviet Union and China and accepted aid from both. In the 1990s the North Korean economy deteriorated markedly, with food shortages leading to malnutrition, starvation, and epidemic disease. Kim's son Kim Jong Il succeeded him as leader of North Korea in 1994. His main priorities have been to end the food crisis, achieve a rapprochement with South Korea, and negotiate with the United States on trimming North Korean weapons programs in exchange for economic relief. Today, North Korea remains one of the world's most insular societies. The Korean Workers' Party, the ruling communist party, tightly controls almost all aspects of economic, political, social, and intellectual life.

B Latin America

B1 Cuba

In 1959 a guerrilla force commanded by Fidel Castro, a leftist revolutionary, unseated Cuba's dictatorial ruler Fulgencio Batista in the Cuban Revolution. In 1961 Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist and pronounced Cuba a socialist country, the first in the Western Hemisphere. Castro allied Cuba with the Soviet Union and gave the Soviets the right to station intelligence units and dock their naval vessels in Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, triggered by the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, brought Havana and Moscow into an even more enthusiastic partnership. Within several years, Cuba had acquired the trappings of a communist state. Although Castro had not been a member of Cuba's communist party (the Socialist People's Party, or PSP, established in 1925), in 1961 he forced a merger of the PSP and his own political group, the 26th of July Movement. In 1965 the merged party was renamed the Communist Party of Cuba.

Castro's Cuba adopted many features of Soviet communism, including a state-owned economy, but it also experimented with features different from both the Soviet and Chinese models. The government eliminated fees and charges for sporting events, telephone calls, and funerals, and it mobilized thousands of urban dwellers to bring in the annual sugar crop. It made major improvements in public health and education and introduced policies to eliminate racial discrimination against blacks and mulattoes (people of mixed black and white ancestry). The Castro regime's radicalism peaked from 1966 to 1970. In 1968 it shut down all surviving private businesses, and in 1970 it mounted a drive to harvest 10 million tons of sugar by mobilizing the masses. When the effort failed to achieve its target, Castro was forced to moderate his economic policies, which after 1970 were close to Soviet practice. In 1976 Castro introduced an economic management system that enlarged the autonomy of state enterprises and lifted price controls on some agricultural products.

With Moscow's backing, Cuba promoted communist and revolutionary movements across Latin America, training and arming their fighters. The main agent of this policy, Che Guevara, was killed in fighting in Bolivia in 1967. In the 1970s Cuba dispatched troops and specialists to aid the pro-Soviet regimes in Ethiopia and Angola. About two-thirds of Cuba's foreign trade was with the USSR, which exchanged Cuban sugar for petroleum and machinery. Castro's regime was hence badly hurt

by Soviet economic stagnation in the 1980s and especially by the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. As Soviet subsidies and most trade with Russia vanished, Cuba’s economy dwindled by one-third between 1991 and 1993. Castro buffered the national crisis by conducting some cautious economic reforms, such as promotion of foreign investment, tourism, and self-employment in certain occupations. Beyond that, he proudly reaffirmed his belief in Marxism-Leninism and faulted other communists for selling out to the capitalists.

B Nicaragua

2

The only other Latin American country to be governed along communist lines was Nicaragua. An uprising led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front in 1979 deposed the dictatorial regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle and made Nicaragua the second Soviet client state in the hemisphere. Nicaragua was governed first by a Sandinista junta (council), and after 1984 elections by Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega Saavedra and a Sandinista-controlled legislature. The new government established friendly ties with the USSR and Cuba, nationalized the banks and many large firms, and expanded public spending on health care and education. Although the Sandinistas allowed opposition parties to operate, they restricted the media and manipulated the political process; most opposition parties, therefore, boycotted the 1984 election. Throughout the 1980s an opposition guerrilla force known as the *contras* (short for “counterrevolutionaries” in Spanish), supported financially and militarily by the United States, sought to overthrow the Sandinista government. In 1990, facing a deteriorating Nicaraguan economy and pressure from the contras and the United States, the Sandinistas eased restrictions on political opponents and allowed a presidential election. The opposition candidate, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, defeated Ortega, and the Sandinistas became the major opposition political party. By the end of the 1990s more competitive elections had been held and civil liberties were better defended than before the 1979 revolution.

C Middle East

C Afghanistan

1

Afghanistan, one of the world’s most impoverished countries, was ruled into the 1970s by a conservative monarchy. The communist People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan, founded in 1965, carried out a coup in 1978 and set about revolutionizing Afghan society, in the process alienating its middle class and Muslim clerics. The party was bitterly divided between a radical Khalq wing and the more restrained pro-Soviet Parcham faction. The 1978 government, chaired by Noor Muhammad Taraki, was under Khalq control. In late 1979 Hafizullah Amin, an extremist member of Khalq, deposed and killed Taraki in a palace coup. Fearing further tumult, the Soviet Union in December 1979 landed paratroops in Kābul, killing Amin and installing a member of the Parcham faction, Babrak Karmal, as president. The Soviets then sent in an occupation force of more than 100,000 troops, who incurred massive resistance and were unable to stabilize the situation. The fighting with the anticommunist *mujahideen* (Islamic guerrilla fighters), who were aided by Pakistan and the United States, devastated the countryside and forced more than 4 million refugees into surrounding countries. In 1986 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev engineered Karmal’s replacement by Mohammed Najibullah, the head of the Afghan secret police, and in 1988 the USSR began pulling out its troops. The Soviet exodus was complete by February 1989. Najibullah remained in office until April 1992. He was tortured and executed by soldiers of the Taliban Islamic movement when they occupied Kābul in 1996.

C South Yemen

2

The southern section of the present-day Republic of Yemen, on the Arabian Peninsula, was from 1967 to 1990 a Soviet-aligned country. Great Britain had administered the area as a colony (known as the Aden Protectorates and later the Federation of South Arabia), but British troops withdrew in 1967 after challenges from guerrilla groups. The National Liberation Front (NLF), which endorsed a Marxist ideology, took control of the government and proclaimed the People’s Republic of South Yemen, known commonly as South Yemen. The country was renamed the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in 1970. The NLF instituted a socialist regime, drawing economic aid

from the USSR. In the 1970s violence flared between South Yemen and North Yemen, known officially as the Yemen Arab Republic. But the two Yemeni governments cooperated during the 1980s and in 1990 reunited as the Republic of Yemen. In 1993 multiparty elections were held.

D Africa

Although there were experiments here and there with facets of communism in postcolonial Africa, only four African countries made concerted endeavors to build a Soviet-style regime: Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique.

D Republic of the Congo

1

The first was in the Republic of the Congo, a tiny country that gained its independence from France in 1960. In 1964 President Alphonse Massamba-Débat formed the National Movement for the Revolution along Marxist-Leninist lines and made it the country's only legal political party. The government obtained foreign aid from the Soviet Union and China. A coup organized by more militant leftists and the army installed Marien Ngouabi as head of state in 1968. Two years later, Ngouabi established the People's Republic of the Congo, an avowedly socialist state. Ngouabi abolished the national assembly and made a new Marxist-Leninist party, the Congolese Labor Party, the sole legal political party. He also nationalized the railroads and some other sectors of the economy. After Ngouabi's assassination in 1977, his successors kept the country's pro-Soviet orientation and brought in Cuban troops as palace guards, but had more and more difficulty handling Congo's economic difficulties. President Denis Sassou-Nguesso permitted multiparty elections in 1992 and stepped down after losing to an opposition candidate. He ousted the elected president and returned to power in 1997, but by this time he had relinquished his communist convictions.

D Ethiopia

2

In 1974 the emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I, was overthrown in a military coup. The military leadership set up the Provisional Military Administrative Council, known as the Derg, to govern the country. Led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Derg declared Ethiopia a socialist state with a one-party system and set about nationalizing all agricultural land and most industry. It closed all schools for a year in order to send students and teachers into rural areas to explain the government's aims to the peasants and to teach them basic health care and improved farming methods.

For several years after the revolution Ethiopia was racked by war, insurrections, and a major famine. The Derg, while violently putting down opposition from labor unions and Marxist urban guerrillas, was itself divided by internal dissension. Only in 1977 did Mengistu gain full control of the government. Military aid from the USSR and Cuba enabled Ethiopian forces to regain control over the Ogadēn region of southeastern Ethiopia, which Somali separatists had captured. Meanwhile, peasant protest against land reform and severe droughts condemned millions of Ethiopians to hunger and starvation in the 1980s.

In 1984 Mengistu created the Workers' Party of Ethiopia as the country's official Marxist-Leninist party, and in 1987 he renamed the country the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Although a new constitution provided for a civilian government, Mengistu kept power, spending much of his time battling internal and external enemies and coping with the consequences of misconceived economic policies. Mengistu was forced from power in 1991, soon after the USSR ended its support for the government. A coalition of rebel groups formed a transitional government. The province of Eritrea declared independence in 1993 with the new government's blessing, but border disputes led to a savage war, which officially ended in a peace agreement signed in 2000.

D Angola

3

In 1975 Portugal, having undergone a democratic revolution, granted independence to its overseas colonies. The two largest of them, Angola and Mozambique, opted for communist-type governments. In Angola, a Marxist group called the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was predominant in the post-independence government, instituting a one-party regime and a state-centered economy with the assistance of the USSR and Cuba. However, civil war

immediately broke out with another Angolan nationalist group, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which received military backing from South Africa and the United States. Cuba came to the MPLA's rescue, deploying 50,000 troops as well as large numbers of construction workers, doctors, and teachers in Angola. Cuban troops began to withdraw in 1989. In 1991 the MPLA and UNITA signed a peace accord, brokered by both the USSR and the United States, which provided for multiparty elections in 1992. The MPLA and UNITA could not agree on the results of the elections, and consequently MPLA leader José Eduardo dos Santos continued to serve as president. Sporadic fighting continued after the elections.

D 4 Mozambique

Like Angola, Mozambique gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. A Marxist-Leninist group, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) assumed power, led by Samora Moises Machel. Frelimo immediately set out to collectivize agriculture, eradicate nomadic practices, and abridge the power of village elites and of the Catholic Church. It was soon embroiled in a vicious civil war with the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), a rural guerrilla movement financed initially by Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) but later by South Africa. Machel negotiated with South Africa and the Western powers to cut off foreign support for Renamo. By the late 1980s Frelimo had disavowed most of its Marxist economic policies and begun to woo foreign investment. A multiparty constitution and other political reforms were adopted in the early 1990s, and Frelimo and Renamo signed a peace accord in 1992.

VII I COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN NONCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES

Communist parties have existed in many countries of the world, but in most of them communists have failed to win control of the government and have existed as opposition parties. A report by the U.S. Department of State in 1970 identified 88 countries with communist-type parties or movements. By 1989, according to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, the number was up to 106, with ruling communist parties in 23 countries. The influence of communist parties throughout the world diminished with the collapse of numerous communist systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most modern communist parties have stopped advocating violent revolution and single-party rule. In many cases, they operate as part of multiparty liberal democracies, seeking to achieve success and a share of power through free elections.

Since the Cominform was disbanded in 1956, no single agency has coordinated the activities of communist parties throughout the world. A world conference of communist parties was held in Moscow in 1969, but it was marred by disagreements between pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese delegates. Until the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union held clout over most Marxist-Leninist movements through its guidance on communist doctrine and its training and financing of party members.

A Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

The mighty Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) died with its brainchild, the Soviet Union, in 1991. The CPSU's central headquarters was disbanded in August 1991, and many of the 15 Soviet republics banned the Communist Party or suspended its operations. The communist organizations of the republics had already begun to change before the 1991 crisis, and the transformation accelerated as the republics began life as independent states.

In the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—the communist parties restyled themselves as postcommunist, social democratic entities, retaining some socialist ideals but supporting free elections and representative democracy. The Lithuanian party, the largest of the three, has been the most successful and has formed several national governments.

In the majority of the post-Soviet states—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine—the former republic-level communist parties chose to hold onto their communist terminology, heraldry, and aspirations after independence. These parties became known as neocommunist parties. In most places, the neocommunist parties have been opposition parties. One exception has been Tajikistan, where the neocommunists have been closely allied with the governing People's Party of Tajikistan. In Moldova, the neocommunist party won a national election in 2001. Its leader became president, pledging to follow socialistic economic and social policies and to pursue integration with Russia. In Russia, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation is the country's largest party and remains one of its most powerful

political forces. In the Russian presidential elections of 1996 and 2000, for example, Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov finished second to the winners, Boris Yeltsin in 1996 and Vladimir Putin in 2000.

In two of the Central Asian states—Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—the communist party was simply renamed and its last leader from the Soviet period retained office as president. The renamed Democratic Party of Turkmenistan remains that country's only legal political party. In Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov ceased to be the leader of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan in 1996, but he continues to rely on officials inherited from the CPSU apparatus and allows only token opposition.

In Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991, every communist government surrendered its monopoly on political power. Communist parties underwent decisive changes as their regimes gave way to multiparty governments. Bowing to new political realities, most Eastern European communist parties sought to mask their origins by changing their names. *Communist* was replaced by terms such as *socialist, social democracy, democratic socialism,* and *the democratic left.* For example, the Bulgarian Communist Party restructured itself as the Bulgarian Socialist Party.

The effectiveness of the neocommunist and postcommunist parties of Eastern Europe has varied widely. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and several of the Yugoslav successor states, these parties have controlled either parliament or the presidency for extended periods. In Slovakia the party has participated in a governing coalition. In Serbia the former communist party, called the Socialist Party of Serbia and led by Slobodan Miloševi, held power until 2001, when Miloševi was unseated in a Yugoslav presidential election. Only in Albania, the Czech Republic, and Germany did the successor party fail to win a share of government power.

B Western Europe

The communist parties of Western Europe were all established between 1918 and 1923, following the Russian Revolutions. They were responsive to Soviet directives, yet at the same time drew on European socialist roots going back to the 19th century. Most improved on their popularity during the hard times of the 1930s. During and immediately after World War II, the majority of communist parties in the region cooperated with sympathetic political forces in pursuing the war effort and postwar recovery. One exception was Greece, where the communists fought a full-scale guerrilla war against the royalist government from 1946 to 1949. From 1948 to 1956 the Western European communists generally adhered to a confrontational approach. They incited strikes, mobilized peasants for land reform, and organized mass demonstrations against the European Recovery Program (commonly called the Marshall Plan) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The communists' strident tactics and opposition to programs that spurred economic recovery greatly diminished their appeal. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956, the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to confusion and disillusionment among the party faithful. Communist parties in Western Europe went into steep decline in the 1980s, as communism unraveled in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

B Italy

1

The Italian Communist Party was one of the most potent communist parties in Western Europe after World War II. It was established in 1921 by a radical group of the Italian Socialist Party. The party was outlawed by the Fascist regime but reappeared as a major force in Italian politics in 1944.

Captained by Palmiro Togliatti and later by Enrico Berlinguer, the Italian Communist Party governed many regions and cities, and attracted numerous intellectuals, young people, and trade unionists. At the height of its popularity, in 1976, the party captured more than one-third of the votes in the national elections. That same year the party approved a stance of "historic compromise" with groups once considered opponents, among them bourgeois liberals, social democrats, the Catholic Church, and even the NATO alliance. In addition, the Communists deepened their detachment from the Soviet regime and adopted a more moderate line, rejecting those Soviet policies that were considered repressive of human rights. This approach was widely labeled *Eurocommunism.* The adjustment in course, however, did little to forestall a profound crisis. The Italian middle class and peasantry remained skeptical of the feasibility of Eurocommunism and disengagement from Soviet policy, and the party's policies held little attraction for some radical left-wing factions, which turned to terrorism instead. In 1989, the year the Berlin Wall fell, the Italian Communist Party lost half of its members. Two years later, under a new chairman, Achille Occhetto, it renounced the principle of class struggle and changed its name

to the Democratic Party of the Left. The party received 15 to 20 percent of the vote in subsequent Italian elections.

B France

2

The French Communist Party, founded in 1920 by members of the French Socialist Party, was another influential communist party in Western Europe. It had considerable strength in the electorate, the unions, and the universities. Communist mayors governed many cities. In the 1950s and 1960s the party typically won 25 percent of the national vote, and by the late 1970s it was the largest of all French political parties. Although the French Communists flirted with Eurocommunism in the 1970s, their path soon diverged from that of the moderate Italians. Under the leadership of Georges Marchais, the party remained rigidly loyal to Moscow's Cold War policies. As a result, its electoral share faded from more than 20 percent of the parliamentary votes in 1978 to less than 10 percent today.

B Other Western European Parties

3

The strongest Western European parties, other than the Italian and French, have been those of Greece, Finland, Portugal, and Spain. The Greek and Portuguese parties mirrored the intransigence of the French and refused to go the reformist route. The Finnish party generally adopted a neutral line toward the Soviets. The Spanish Communist Party, led by Santiago Carrillo, adopted Eurocommunism in the late 1970s but splintered into pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet factions in the 1980s. Communist parties in Sweden, Norway, Belgium, and Britain have been less influential but have enjoyed, at one time or another, representation in their respective parliaments. The smallest and least significant communist parties have been those of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, all of which generally supported Moscow. Almost everywhere in Western Europe, the declining electoral popularity of communist parties was accompanied by internal party dissension and, in some places, by splits into rival parties. The Belgian and Dutch parties dissolved in 1991.

C United States

The communist movement in the United States began to take shape after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Leftists in the Socialist Party of America, buoyed by the revolution, broke from the group in 1919 to form two rival parties: the Communist Party, composed primarily of recent Russian and Eastern European immigrants; and the Communist Labor Party, led by American journalist John Reed. Both parties claimed the communist mantle. They fused under instructions from the Comintern in 1922. The party was known as the Workers (Communist) Party of America and other names before renaming itself the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) in 1929.

The party's first years were marked by turbulence and internal division. After World War I, fears of foreign sabotage led to the "Red Scare" of 1919 and 1920. Federal and local police forces launched raids on American radicals and arrested thousands of Communists, wrapping the infant party in suspicion. Members clashed over the appropriate degree of subservience to the Comintern and over the desirability of maintaining a secret branch of the party. Jay Lovestone, the party's general secretary, was purged and expelled in 1929 for opposing underground operations and advocating purely open political activity.

The CPUSA attained its greatest influence on American politics and labor between 1930 and 1945, under the leadership of Earl Browder. Benefiting from the hardships and mass unemployment of the Great Depression and from the rise of fascism in Europe, the party found a ready audience in the expanding industrial trade unions and among academics and intellectual luminaries. The American writers John Dos Passos, Malcolm Cowley, Sherwood Anderson, and Theodore Dreiser all signed party-inspired petitions and betrayed some degree of approval of its aims. Communist party membership peaked at about 80,000 in 1939. However, many members left the party after the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of August 1939, repelled by Soviet cooperation with the Nazi regime. Its reputation recovered in World War II after the United States allied with Stalin's Russia. In 1944 Browder formally dissolved the party in favor of a new organization, the Communist Political Association. He claimed the new group could more wholeheartedly back the war effort. In 1945 the CPUSA reorganized and replaced Browder with a more hardline leadership.

The outbreak of the Cold War after World War II dealt the CPUSA a blow from which it never recovered. The deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union put pressure on sympathizers to choose between the party and American patriotism. Renewed fears over national security, tied to concerns about infiltration of the government by communist subversives, led to intensified scrutiny of the CPUSA and other political groups considered radical. In 1947 President Harry Truman approved a law that permitted authorities to investigate federal employees and fire those found to be disloyal to the government. That same year the House Committee on Un-American Activities opened hearings into communists' presence in the motion-picture industry; ten Hollywood screenwriters were imprisoned for a year in 1950 for refusing to testify. Other Hollywood artists and writers suspected of being communists were blacklisted and shunned by the industry. In 1949, 11 top leaders of the CPUSA were convicted under the Alien Registration Act (Smith Act) of 1940, which made it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow of the American government. The Internal Security Act of 1950 required the registration of communist and communist-front organizations (communist organizations that conceal their true nature).

From 1950 to 1954 Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin used congressional investigations to attack communists, who he claimed had infiltrated the Department of State and other government offices. Most of McCarthy's charges were never substantiated, and he was ultimately censured by the Senate for his investigative abuses. However, the successful prosecution of Soviet agents such as Klaus Fuchs and Julius Rosenberg, and later revelations from the Soviet archives, leave no doubt that some American communists cooperated in espionage and put ideological convictions ahead of their duty as citizens.

The CPUSA's membership plummeted from 60,000 in 1948 to 25,000 in 1953 and 10,000 in 1957. It recovered only slightly in subsequent years. Self-styled Marxist-Leninist groups cropped up in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s, but the CPUSA made little impact on events and slipped into ever-greater obscurity. The party might have weathered the adversity of the postwar decades had it been better attuned to core American values, including individualism and capitalism, but its disdain for those beliefs isolated it from grassroots opinion.

D Canada

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) was founded in 1921. Its propaganda before World War II emphasized combating "American and British imperialism" and backing up Soviet policy. It had a large following in the trade unions. There was no Canadian analogue to the McCarthy era in the United States, but in the 1950s the party lost much ground after the tarnishing of Stalin's reputation in the Soviet Union. In addition, the two main branches of the Canadian labor movement merged and affiliated themselves with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a democratic socialist party, which drew support away from the CPC. By the 1970s the CPC was a minor sect, its influence limited to college campuses and a few old-guard unions.

E Other Countries

Communist parties have organized in many other countries and regions. In Asia, the most important of the nonruling communist parties were in India, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines. The Indonesian party, known as the Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI, was banned in 1966, on the heels of an unsuccessful coup attempt by procommunist military officers. The Indian party split in 1964 into two parties; the larger of the two, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has controlled state governments in West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura. The Japanese Communist Party, dating from 1922, is one of the oldest political parties in the country, and had a half-million members at its peak in the 1960s. In the Philippines, the Philippine Communist Party, acting through its New People's Army, has fought a protracted guerrilla insurgency against the national government.

In Latin America, the biggest nonruling communist parties have been those in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. The Uruguayan Communist Party has had a limited place in governing coalitions. In the Arab countries of the Middle East, communist parties have generally been minuscule clandestine groups, legally barred from participation in open politics. Tudeh, the communist faction in Iran, was banned in 1949; the Israeli party has a largely Arab membership. In Africa, the South African Communist Party has been the most influential of the nonruling parties. Outlawed for most of the apartheid period, it formed an alliance with the African National Congress that has continued to the present.

I FEATURES OF COMMUNIST STATES

X

Communist regimes have ruled many countries, so it is not surprising that the practice of communism has varied widely among them. The societies in which communists have exercised control have themselves been diverse, although none has been among the advanced industrial countries where Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels believed the workers' revolution would catch fire. Some communist officials have been revolutionaries, others reformers, and yet others dyed-in-the-wool conservatives. Some leaders, such as Joseph Stalin and Pol Pot, have been mass murderers; others, such as Mikhail Gorbachev, have eschewed force. Their differences notwithstanding, communist states have shared certain features: a Marxist-Leninist ideology, a centrally planned economy, single-party rule, and restrictions on individual freedom.

A Marxist-Leninist Ideology

A root feature of communist states has been their subscription to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. As fashioned by Lenin, building on the earlier works of Marx and Engels, it is the belief that history advances by means of class struggle, always nudged in a benign direction by the leadership of a communist party. The theory foresaw that in capitalist societies, a small vanguard of professional revolutionaries was necessary to infuse the working masses with revolutionary fervor and overthrow capitalism. This would be followed by a brief period of proletarian dictatorship—in Lenin's view, the communist party ruling on behalf of the working class—which would establish a socialist state and put in place the foundations of a communist society. Eventually class differences would vanish, the state would be abolished, and people would live in affluence and harmony.

The reality of communist regimes, however, was that of a dictatorial government of indefinite duration, and one that was as indifferent to the wishes of the working class as to every other social group. For several generations of communists, the contradiction between theory and reality could be rationalized as the unfortunate result of the poverty of their societies, of the mistakes of individual leaders, or of the malevolence of the capitalist world. Eventually, communist elites began to have doubts about the costs and benefits of a communist regime, especially as compared to liberal Western democracies. Ordinary people also questioned parts of communist ideology and offered passive and, more rarely, active defiance of the entrenched authorities. Surveys of Soviet refugees after World War II showed that younger people, who were born under communist rule, were more accepting of the values of the system than their elders, who had memories of life before communism. When similar surveys were done in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the pattern was exactly the opposite. People in all age groups supported many fundamentals of the communist system, but younger people were cooler toward the Soviet government and more receptive to alternative institutions and policies.

B Centrally Planned Economy

Marx and Engels conceived of communism as a society of abundance, equality, and free choice. They said little about how economic decisions would be made, other than that property would belong to society as a whole. Beginning with Soviet Russia after 1917, the rulers of real-life communist regimes were engrossed in setting up and working through bureaucratic agencies designed to mobilize economic resources for the industrial transformation of their countries. Industrialization became an end in itself, and the fantasy of the communist paradise receded into a cloudy future.

Communist systems relied on a *centrally planned economy,* also called a *command economy.* The centrally planned economy had four cornerstones. The first was government ownership of virtually all the means of production—farms, factories, scientific laboratories, shops, and so forth—and organization of those assets into firms managed by employees of the state. The second was control of those managers by party-appointed economic planners, who fixed output targets and prices and meddled in countless of the firm's decisions, such as product mix and production scheduling. The third was a policy of giving the highest priority to industrial investment and—in the Soviet Union, North Korea, and several other countries—to military spending, at the expense of production of consumer goods and food products. The fourth central feature of communist economies was national self-reliance. Foreign trade occupied an inconsequential place in the economy, and trade that did occur was usually with other planned economies. Foreign investment was discouraged, and the communist countries, until late in their history, kept out of international financial institutions.

Communist economies did achieve some success. Studies of growth trends from the 1950s to the early 1970s showed the centrally planned economies equaling and in some cases exceeding the growth rates of the capitalist economies. They also attained high literacy rates, made basic health care available to the population, eliminated extreme poverty, and avoided unemployment. From the mid-1970s onward, however, the communist countries lost ground, and their leaders began to

contemplate unpalatable economic reforms in the interests of achieving technological prowess and a higher standard of living. In all of the Asian communist countries except North Korea, ambitious reforms did unfold. In the Soviet bloc, there were scattered attempts at reform (in Hungary and Poland, for example), but they were limited by the unwillingness of the USSR, until several years into Gorbachev's administration, to give change the green light.

C Single-Party Rule

In communist states, the communist party held complete and unchallenged political power. All other political parties were banned, except for minor procommunist parties in several Eastern European countries. The name of the governing party differed from country to country. Rather than calling themselves the "communist party," some parties adopted variations like the "socialist unity party" (as in East Germany), the "people's democratic party" (Afghanistan), or the "party of labor" (Albania).

Ultimate authority—subject to external audit from Moscow, in the heyday of Soviet power—was vested in a self-perpetuating leadership of perhaps 15 to 25 high officials in the party. The senior person in the ruling group wielded disproportionate influence over policy and personnel decisions. A single-minded leader—such as Stalin, Mao, Tito, or Castro—could wield supreme power over the entire political scene for decades on end. Organized factions within the top leadership were strictly forbidden. Stretching downward from the apex of the hierarchy was a sprawling and multilayered state bureaucracy. Owing to governmental stewardship of economic activity, public employees did almost all jobs, including those, such as selling newspapers and designing jet aircraft, that in Western societies would be the preserve of private business.

Communist parties often shared a similar organizational structure. The highest decision-making body, usually called the Politburo, consisted of a small group of senior party officials. Typically, the Politburo met weekly under the chairmanship of a top party leader to discuss high-level policy. A larger committee, usually called the Central Committee, included top executives of the government ministries, the military and police, and the party itself. Reporting to these high-ranking bodies was a separate administrative hierarchy composed of full-time officials of the party, grouped into departments in the capital city and at local and intermediate levels. Individual members of the party paid their dues and were subject to party directives in party *cells* (local organizations) nested in factories and other workplaces. Communist parties invariably judged control of personnel to be the crux of their control over society. In the Soviet Union, people appointed to important government positions were required to be vetted by party officials, a procedure known as *nomenklatura.* This system was copied throughout the communist world.

Communist states possessed elaborate pseudo-democratic processes for formalizing and publicizing political decisions. In the national capital, a parliament met once or twice a year to rubber-stamp laws and ratify selection of the members of the government. The legislators were chosen in elections in which the outcome was usually predetermined; with rare exceptions, the nominee of the communist party was the only name on the ballot. Similar rituals were replicated at the regional and local level. Three communist countries had federal systems in which the constitution divided formal powers between a central government and the governments of constituent republics: the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and, after 1968, Czechoslovakia. The federal republics were designated as the homelands of ethnic groups and were named after them. For example, Czechoslovakia consisted of the Czech and Slovak republics.

D Restrictions on Individual Freedom

Another hallmark of communist states was the mandatory involvement of the mass of the population in political life. Most young people enrolled in party-controlled youth organizations, the entire labor force had to sign up in official trade unions, and the professionally ambitious were obliged to join the communist party and to submit to its discipline. Participation in state elections was all but impossible to escape, with turnout approaching 100 percent. Political education was also omnipresent. Political classes were organized in all schools (and textbooks in most subjects contained ideological content), and the program was continued in the universities and the armed services.

Complementing this compulsory participation was an extensive web of negative controls on personal liberties. For communist leaders, it was an article of faith that collective needs, as interpreted by the state, ought to override individual rights. Not without justification, they were wary that relaxation of controls might encourage individuals to seek wider freedoms and thereby to challenge the single-party system. Public assembly and voluntary association were prohibited; only meetings and organizations authorized by the state were tolerated. Communist states also limited, to one extent or another, individuals' ability to worship, work, and travel as they pleased. The most intense restrictions were those clamped on the mass media, intellectuals, and artists, all of whom

had to comply with party directives. Books, magazines, and newspapers were subject to pre-publication censorship in all communist countries before the Gorbachev reforms, and radio and television stations were owned outright by the state.

X THE FUTURE OF COMMUNISM

In the classic writings of Marx and Engels, capitalism was a dark presence and communism a thinly sketched picture of a radiant future. The intellectual forefathers of the communist regimes of the 20th century purported to study and criticize capitalism by means of rigorous science; communism they approached through a form of prophecy. There is no denying the appeal that both sides of their vision were to exert over the years. The revolutions made in its name were watersheds of modern history. But there is no denying, either, the illusory nature of many of the propositions they put into circulation. Time has not been kind to Marxism-Leninism or the communist ideal.

The ideology's fatal oversights partly have to do with capitalism, the economic order communists despise and seek to obliterate. Experience has shown privately owned, market-coordinated economies to be incomparably more robust and dynamic than Marx and his contemporaries dreamt possible. Over much of the globe, free enterprise has achieved steady rates of increase in productivity, output, and the standard of living. The perturbations of the business cycle, which at their most destructive gave rise to the Great Depression of the 1930s, have in recent decades eased. International flows of goods, capital, and information have burgeoned. In the most technologically sophisticated countries, service industries have displaced manufacturing as the hub of the market economy, meaning that unskilled manual workers, the proletariat in its original guise, are less and less of a factor. Through mass access to credit, stock exchanges, and mutual funds, ownership of economic assets has become more widely dispersed. Perhaps most important, political realities—democracy, the welfare state, policies for prudent monetary management—have shielded capitalism from its own worst excesses.

Where communist parties did make it to power, it was, in Marxist terms, in the wrong places—that is, in relatively poor countries where industrial capitalism was just beginning to develop. The dismal performance of the regimes they created constitutes another unfortunate consequence of Marxist-Leninist thought. These regimes, couched in the original theory as short-term improvisations that would tide people over until the promised era of plenty and classless harmony, in practice turned out to be long-term tyrannies that transformed society from above, sheltered themselves from public accountability, and did everything they could to perpetuate their hold on power. Until the 1970s, analysts of communist states, and apologists for them, could point to some evidence of economic accomplishment, albeit at grave political and social cost. From then on, however, economic ills beset all the communist governments, necessitating hard choices about reform.

As change accelerated in the 1980s, political forces long held in check by communist rulers—in particular, nationalism—came to the fore. In stunning sequence, the reforms attempted by the prototypical communist regime, that of the Soviet Union, led to the system's collapse and to the emergence of the Russian Federation and 14 other postcommunist states. Soviet events undermined communist systems in Eastern Europe and, in most parts of the world, accentuated the loss of credibility of the nonruling communist parties and put an end to the instruction, aid, and encouragement they had long received from Moscow. In China and several other countries, communist leaders introduced economic reforms so serious that they altered the party's self-image almost beyond recognition. Only in a few idiosyncratic locations—Cuba and North Korea, strikingly—did orthodox communists manage to stifle the pressures for root-and-branch change. In the first of these countries, the charismatic leader of the communist revolution, Fidel Castro, was still in power; in the second, the man at the helm, Kim Jong Il, was the son of the founder of the North Korean regime.

Communism as a coherent, centrally directed international movement is dead. There is no realistic chance that it will be resurrected. There has not been, and presumably there never will be, a proletarian revolution in any of the leading capitalist societies. Communist factions in virtually all of these places have either been reduced to esoteric left-wing sects or have reinvented themselves as reformist socialists content to live by the democratic rules of the game. Anti-government rebels in scattered Asian, African, and Latin American nations brandish some Marxist-Leninist slogans, but they indulge in this rhetoric indiscriminately and are bound to no common movement.

The prospects for communism are more complex in countries where communists have at one time or another governed. Local circumstances may permit diehards to prop up unreformed communist regimes. In Cuba and North Korea, the two places where this has happened so far, the equation could change instantly with a shift in circumstances, such as the death of Castro or an economic catastrophe in North Korea. In Eastern Europe, the formerly ruling communist parties have, by and large, transmuted into democracy-abiding postcommunist parties. Nothing will shake them from

this mold short of a disavowal of the westernizing path taken by the countries of the region in 1989. In the biggest of the successor states to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, the communist party seems doomed to permanent minority status. Elsewhere in the former USSR, the mix of influential and marginal communist parties is likely to continue for some time.

The future of communism is hardest to predict in China, Vietnam, and Laos, where communist bosses have held out against political reform but welcomed economic reform. Of the three, China faces the most serious choices. Appalled by the chaotic crumbling of the Soviet system, China's leaders are determined not to repeat what they view as Mikhail Gorbachev’s mistakes. Plunging full speed ahead with economic modernization and liberalization, they have at the same time carried on with venerating Mao Zedong, barring opposition parties, and censoring the mass media. This dual strategy should be sustainable for some time, and it will draw sustenance, as the Chinese communists did before 1949, from Chinese patriotism. Ironically, the best hope for the survival of communism in some form well into the 21st century lies with the leaders of a relatively backward country whose priorities are to foster, not the emancipation of the international working class, but capitalism and the dignity of the nation.