

# Communism



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Twentieth Century Communism Capitalism and communism have dominated competing economic and social systems in the twentieth century. Because of communism's strict ideology on social control, it has often led to oppressive dictatorships around the globe. The days of Stalin and Chairman Mao may be gone, but the utopian view of an equal society still persists in some countries. North Korea, a communist nation, has been isolated and relies heavily on military spending to support a central dictatorship. Yet, other countries have fared somewhat better. Two ideal examples of a communist nation can be found in our own hemisphere, with Cuba just 50 miles from our shore. Mixed results can also be found in one of our large trading partners, Chile.

Until the beginning of the 20th century Cuba had been a Spanish Colony. Cuba was formally granted independence in 1903 and throughout the century Cuba fell under a series of radical and often corrupt regimes. In the 1950s Batista ruled Cuba with a strong dictatorship under the influence of Mafia corruption. Opposition to the Batista regime resulted in the overthrow of the government by Castro backed forces. Castro increasingly turned to communism as an ideology. Today, the per capita income is \$3,000 per year, largely restricted by reduced trade opportunities ("Background Note: Cuba")

Castro's popularity was severely tested by the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, which led to a cutoff in aid, the loss of a guaranteed export market for Cuban sugar and the loss of a source of cheap imported oil. Conditions in Cuba are indicated when Mantilla reports, "[...] a home with a washer and dryer would be a very rare home indeed". In Cuba, however, these events were not sufficient to persuade Cuban Communists that they should

voluntarily give up power.

General Pinochet Ugarte was head of the military council that ruled Chile from 1973 to 1990, which took control in a violent coup that overthrew the Socialist President Salvador Allende. He has been responsible for human rights violations, which have sparked international outrage. According to human rights watch groups, more than 600 military officers have been arrested for violations (Augusto Pinochet Ugarte) . He has been accused massive corruption and been involved with accusations of looting the national treasury. Recently, Pinochet has been indicted by the Spanish government, arrested by the British government, and prosecuted by the Chilean government itself. There are indications that Pinochet's crimes were committed with the complicity of the US government. According to Kornbluh, recent revelations have led, " New York Representative Maurice Hinchey calling on the CIA to provide Congress with a full report on its covert action in Chile at the time of the coup, and its relations to General Pinochet's regime".

Communism has not fared well for either Cuba or Chile. As with the Soviet experience it is viewed as a failed experiment and has resulted in isolation for Cuba. Communistic ideology makes a possibility for totalitarian regimes, which almost always leads to massive human rights abuses. Cuba has been an example of a communist country that has tried to maintain its ideals through the years, though the large number of refugees have been an indication of the lack of freedom afforded to the people. Economic conditions in Cuba and the human rights violations in Chile are certainly the result of centrally controlled dictatorships that communism fosters.

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