What is Communism?

The ideology of communism is rooted in the writings and thoughts of Karl Marx. Marx was a German man in the 1800’s who lived during The Industrial Revolution. He looked around and saw the suffering that many working class people were going through. This includes things like bad and dangerous working conditions, children working, people dying or being seriously injured on the job and then immediately fired, very low wages for hard work, and many other similar causes of misery.
Marx claimed that the working class people were being exploited, or taken advantage of, by the people who owned businesses and factories. He looked at the fact that there were extremely rich people making all of the money while the workers were struggling to survive, and he then came up with his ideas on communism.

*Accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole.*

— Karl Marx

The root word of communism is community, and that is just what Karl Marx argued for. Marx believed that since the working class people were doing all the work, they should be the ones that owned all of the businesses and factories.
Imagine that you work at Mcdonalds. According to Marx’s ideas on communism, the workers are doing all the work and yet they get almost none of the money. Marx argued that the workers should take control of the Mcdonalds and share it as a community, without the need for an owner or boss. Often this meant through violence, like killing the original owner of the business in order to take it over.

The ideas within communism stated that it would create a Utopia, or heaven on earth. All the workers would work as hard as they can and only take what they need from the community. There would be no more poor people, and no more rich people taking advantage of poor people. This is an example of what is called ‘political idealism.’ In theory communism would create the best world possible for everyone.

The Harsh Reality of Communism

In practice, communism has turned out to be a disaster. Attempts to create communist societies have led to the deaths of literally tens of millions of people within the last 100 years. Rather than a paradise of brotherhood and sisterhood, communist governments have been extremely violent and oppressive.

In order for the government to decide what is going to be made, how much, how quickly, and who gets it, they take TOTAL control over society. This means that individuals have little to no say in where they work, go to school, go to church, eat, wear, or ANYTHING. There is no private property allowed within the ideology of communism. If we lived in a communist society, you would not get to own your precious phone, or shoes, or ANYTHING!
Communism represents a lesson that most of learn in our everyday lives. Oftentimes ideas of perfection are simply not realistic. Things sound great in your head or in theory, but when you try to implement them in to your own life, it goes nothing like was planned!

Again, in theory communism was supposed to bring about heaven on earth. In reality, it brought an untold amount of suffering and death upon millions and millions of people.

For example, after the Russian Communist Revolution of 1917, Russia became the ‘Soviet Union.’ They immediately had a dictatorial group of men making all the decisions and taking all of the power. Private property was abolished, and men and women who owned property and businesses were brutally murdered.
Former Soviet Union Map
Country Maps

SIX MILLION PERISH IN SOVIET FAMINE
Peasants’ Crops Seized, They and Their Animals Starve

Images of suffering during the Soviet famine.
The Soviet Union also tried to get rid of Religion all together. Belief in God was seen as an enemy to the communistic way of life. Churches were seized or destroyed, and the practice of any kind of Christianity was forbidden. A policy of government mandated atheism, or non-belief in God, was enforced.

Communist governments like the Soviet Union attempted to control people’s thoughts as well. From a young age school centered around teaching kids how to be ‘good communists.’ This would include things like borderline worship of Communist leaders and the notion that communism was the only moral way of life. Joseph Stalin is pictured below holding a young child. This Soviet Union created image was supposed to make people think of Stalin as kind and caring. Stalin had millions of his own people starved, tortured, and murdered.

*Soviet Union Propaganda - The Point of Propaganda is to Try and Get People to Think a Certain Way*