



## Communism: A History (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7)

By Richard Pipes

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**Communism: A History (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7)** By Richard Pipes

From one of our greatest historians, a magnificent reckoning with the modern world's most fateful idea.

With astonishing authority and clarity, Richard Pipes has fused a lifetime's scholarship into a single focused history of Communism, from its hopeful birth as a theory to its miserable death as a practice.

At its heart, the book is a history of the Soviet Union, the most comprehensive reorganization of human society ever attempted by a nation-state. Drawing on much new information, Richard Pipes explains the country's evolution from the 1917 revolution to the Great Terror and World War II, global expansion and the Cold War chess match with the United States, and the regime's decline and ultimate collapse. There is no more dramatic story in modern history, nor one more crucial to master, than that of how the writing and agitation of two mid-nineteenth-century European thinkers named Marx and Engels led to a great and terrible world religion that brought down a mighty empire, consumed the world in conflict, and left in its wake a devastation whose full costs can only now be tabulated.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Amazon.com Review**

As Harvard University professor Richard Pipes shows in *Communism: A Brief History*, the tragedy of Communism is that its history was anything but brief. For most of the 20th century, it held much of the globe in its fatal grip: The utopian ideology is responsible for nearly 100 million deaths, which is 50 percent more than the number of people killed in the two world wars combined. "Communism was not a good idea that went wrong; it was a bad idea," writes Pipes, who is also the author of *The Russian Revolution* and *Property and Freedom*.

This compelling little book is a devastating critique of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism, and everything else that fits under the awful rubric of Communism. It begins by tracing Communism's philosophical origins (it has antecedents in Plato) and then outlines the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Next comes the story of why Communism took root in Russia and not the industrial West, where Marx himself believed it would sprout (answer: the traditions of property rights and the rule of law were too strong). Even in Russia, Communism was not the product of popular demand (in fact, it has never been the product of popular demand anywhere). Instead, it was a top-down revolution imposed on the whole country by a small minority of elites, led by Lenin. The Communists claimed to represent workers, but few workers were actually a part of their movement. Thus, "the Communists had to rule despotically and violently; they could never afford to relax their authority." And they were capable of incredible cruelty: "The so-called purges of the 1930s were a terror campaign that in indiscriminate ferocity and number of victims had no parallel in world history." In 1937 and 1938, for instance, the Soviet rulers of Russia executed an average of 1,000 people per day; the tsarist regime they supplanted, which was often criticized as inhumane, executed less than 4,000 people for political crimes over an 85-year period.

Though Pipes appropriately spends much time discussing the Soviet Union, he also examines Communism's reception in the West and in developing countries. The book is a concise tour de force. As the cold war fades into history, it is critical not to forget the monstrous legacy of Communism, whose horrible record Pipes lays out on these pages. This is a magnificent book, a wonderful primer on a topic whose importance is difficult to overstate. --*John Miller*

### **From Publishers Weekly**

This opinionated introduction to communism would be better subtitled "requiem for a misguided ideology." Pipes (*The Russian Revolution*) focuses much of the book on his own field of specialty the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. The Harvard historian is at his best here, providing a thorough account of the ascendancy of the Russian party in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in accessible and at times eloquent prose: "Soviet totalitarianism thus grew out of Marxist seeds planted on the soil of tsarist patrimonialism." Part of the Modern Library's series on world history, the book details Soviet atrocities, emphasizing how Communist agricultural policies not only suppressed human rights but led to famines that killed millions of Soviet citizens. The sections on communism in other countries are much shorter and not as strong, particularly the discussion of Chile, in which Pipes fails to address the involvement of the United States in the 1973 coup that overthrew Socialist leader Salvador Allende. Throughout this volume, Pipes, a longtime Cold Warrior who served as Reagan's National Security Council adviser on Soviet and East European affairs, is on a mission to prove that communism's egalitarian impulses run contrary to human nature. Whether or not they agree with Pipes's views, students and general readers alike will benefit from this concise, insightful work. (Sept.) Forecast: The book is certain to be widely taught in its field and will be promoted in a brochure

mailing to historians but a three-city author tour and series advertising in the New York Times Book Review, the Chronicle of Higher Education and Lingua Franca should help the book find a more general though learned readership as well.

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From Library Journal

Pipes brings to this short study unsurpassed credentials as a historian of 19th- and 20th-century Russia. His *Russia Under the Old Regime* (LJ 3/15/75. o.p.) offered, at much greater length than here, his views on the Bolshevik Revolution and the ensuing course of Soviet history. For him it is a tale of unremitting failure and tragedy, even more apocalyptic than that told in Martin Malia's *The Soviet Tragedy* (1994). Here he sketches out a background to the idea of communism, then outlines its application in Russia by Lenin, Stalin, and their heirs and its reception in the West and the Third World. Pipes is relentless. Communist leaders are ruthless or psychotic killers (in Pol Pot's case, fair enough), starry-eyed idealists, or corrupt and cynical party hacks. Castro is little better than a pimp for Cuban women. A final section, "Looking Back," emphasizes the human and psychological cost to Russia and the world of this illusion. As a brief, polemical diatribe by one of its fiercest Western critics and historians, this short account of communism should provoke and instruct. For general and academic libraries. Robert Johnston, McMaster Univ., Hamilton, Ont.

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What do you consider book? It is just for students because they are still students or it for all people in the world, what the best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that question above. Every person has various personality and hobby per other. Don't to be forced someone or something that they don't desire do that. You must know how great in addition to important the book *Communism: A History* (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7). All type of book would you see on many resources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

#### **Anthony Sierra:**

This book untitled *Communism: A History* (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7) to be one of several books this best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail outlet or you can order it through online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to your account to past this reserve from your list.

#### **Raymond Bailey:**

*Communism: A History* (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7) can be one of your basic books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that may increase

your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Communism: A History (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7) yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource data that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information may drawn you into fresh stage of crucial pondering.

#### **Laura McCallum:**

In this time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended for your requirements is Communism: A History (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 7) this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented how does the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That is why this book appropriate all of you.

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