While **communism** is a system based around a theory of economic equality and advocates for a classless society, **fascism** is a nationalistic, top-down system with rigid class roles that is ruled by an all-powerful dictator. Both communism and fascism originated in Europe and gained popularity in the early to mid 20th century.

**Comparison chart**

| Communism versus Fascism comparison chart | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Communism** | **Fascism** |
| **Philosophy** | From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Free-access to the articles of consumption is made possible by advances in technology that allow for super-abundance. | The state must gain glory through constant conquest and war. The past was glorious, and that the State can be renewed. The individual has no value outside of his or her role in promoting the glory of the State. Philosophies varied by country. |
| **Ideas** | All people are the same and therefore classes make no sense. The government should own all means of production and land and also everything else. People should work for the government and the collective output should be redistributed equally. | Union between businesses and the State, with the state telling the business what to do, with nominally private ownership. Corporatism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany. Central planning of National economy. Redistribution of wealth (Nazi). |
| **Key Elements** | Centralized government, planned economy, dictatorship of the "proletariat", common ownership of the tools of production, no private property. equality between genders and all people, international focus. Usually anti-democratic with a 1-party system. | Actual idealism, centralized government, social Darwinism, planned economy, anti-democratic, meritocratic, extreme nationalism, militarism, racism (Nazism). Traditional and/or exaggerated gender roles. One party system. |
| **Key Proponents** | Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Peter Kropotkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Vladimir Lenin, Emma Goldman, Leon Trotsky, Joseph Stalin, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, Josip Broz Tito, Enver Hoxha, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro. | Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Francisco Franco, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Ante Pavelić, Ikki Kita, Wang Jingwei, Plínio Salgado, Konstantin Rodzaevsky, Oswald Mosely |
| **Definition** | International theory or system of social organization based on the holding of all property in common, with actual ownership ascribed to the community or state. Rejection of free markets and extreme distrust of Capitalism in any form. | An extremely nationalistic, authoritarian state usually led by one person at the head of one party. No democratic election of representatives. No free market. No individualism or individual glory. The State controls of the press and all other media. |
| **Political System** | A communist society is stateless, classless and is governed directly by the people. This however has never been practised. | One charismatic leader has absolute authority. Often the symbol of the state. Advisers to Government are generally picked by merit rather than election. Cronyism common. |
| **Private Property** | Abolished. The concept of property is negated and replaced with the concept of commons and ownership with "usership". | Nominally permitted. Contingent upon service, obedience, or usefulness to the State. |
| **Economic Coordination** | Economic planning coordinates all decisions regarding investment, production and resource allocation. Planning is done in terms of physical units instead of money. | Businesses are nominally privately owned; the State dictates outputs and investments. Planning is based on projected labor output rather than money. |
| **Ownership Structure** | The means of production are commonly-owned, meaning no entity or individual owns productive property. Importance is ascribed to "usership" over "ownership". | The means of production are nominally privately owned but directed by the State. Private ownership of business is contingent upon submission to the direction and interests of the State. |
| **Social Structure** | All class distinctions are eliminated. A society in which everyone is both the owners of the means of production and their own employees. | Strict class structure believed necessary to prevent chaos (Italian Fascist). All class distinctions are eliminated (German Nazi). Nazism believes in a “superior” race. Italian Fascism was not racist in doctrine originally. |
| **Economic System** | The means of production are held in common, negating the concept of ownership in capital goods. Production is organized to provide for human needs directly without any use for money. Communism is predicated upon a condition of material abundance. | Autarky (national self-sufficiency). Keynseian(mostly). Large public works, deficit spending. Anti trade union and syndicalism. Strongly against international financial markets and usury. |
| **Political Movements** | Marxist Communism, Leninism and Marxism–Leninism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Maoism, Dengism, Prachanda Path, Hoxhaism, Titoism, Eurocommunism, Luxemburgism, Council communism, Left-Communism. | National Socialism, Falangism, Nazism, Strasserism, neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, national-Bolshevism. |
| **Religion** | Abolished - all religious and metaphysics is rejected. Engels and Lenin agreed that religion was a drug or “spiritual booze” and must be combated. To them, atheism put into practice meant a “forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. | Fascism is a civic religion: citizens worship the state through nationalism. The state only supports religious organizations that are nationally/historically tied to that state; e.g., the Iron Guard in Romania supported the Romanian Orthodox church. |
| **Free Choice** | Either the collective "vote" or the state's rulers make economic and political decisions for everyone else. In practice, rallies, force, propaganda etc. are used by the rulers to control the populace. | The individual is considered meaningless; they must submit to the decisions of the leadership. Traditional gender roles are upheld and/or exaggerated. |
| **Way of Change** | Government in a Communist-state is the agent of change rather than any market or desire on the part of consumers. Change by government can be swift or slow, depending on change in ideology or even whim. | Government in a fascist state is the agent of change rather than any market or desire on the part of consumers. Change by government can be swift or slow, depending on a change in labor output or even at the whim of the dictator. |
| **Examples** | Ideally, there is no leader; the people govern directly. This has never been actually practiced, and has just used a one-party system. Examples 0f Communist states are the erstwhile Soviet Union, Cuba and North Korea. | [Fascist governments](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Communism_vs_Fascism) are generally headed by one person: a dictator. This is not an aberration of doctrine, in fact it is an important component of it. |
| **Discrimination** | In theory, all members of the state are considered equal to one another. | Belief in one superior race (Nazism). Belief in a superior nation (Fascism & Nazism). Gender (F & N). Mental or physical handicaps. Mental illness. Alcoholics. Homosexuals. Roma. Jews (Nazi). Ideological and political opposition, trade unions (F&N). |
| **Earliest Remnants** | Theorized by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the mid-19th century as an alternative to capitalism and feudalism, communism was not tried out until after the revolution in Russia in the early 1910s. | The Roman Empire, which could be argued was a fascist entity. The earliest fascist theories were based on examples left behind by the Roman Empire. |
| **Means of control** | Theoretically there is no state control. | Fascism employs direct force (secret police, government intimidation, concentration camps, and murder), propaganda (enabled by State-directed, heavily-censored media), rallies, etc. |
| **Variations** | Left Anarchism, Council Communism, European Communism, Juche Communism, Marxism, National Communism, Pre-Marxist Communism, Primitive Communism, Religious Communism, International Communism. | Nazism, Austrofascism, British Fascism, Christofascism, Clerical Fascism, Falangism, Francoism, Italian Fascism, National Socialism, Neo-fascism, Proto-fascism, Tropical fascism. |
| **View of war** | Communists believe that war is good for the economy by spurring production, but should be avoided. | War is good for the morale of the nation and therefore good for the State. Through the conquest of war, the State can attain glory. The Nation State is bolstered through subjugation of inferior nations. War has no negative effect on the economy. |
| **View of the world** | Communism is an international movement; Communists in one country see themselves in solidarity with Communists in other countries. Communists distrust Nationalistic nations and leaders. Communists strongly distrust "big business." | Fascists are ultra-nationalists who identify strongly with other Nationalistic nations and leaders. Fascists distrust internationalism and rarely abide by international agreements. Fascists do not believe in the concept of international law. |
| **History** | Major Communist parties include the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1912-91), the Communist Party of China (1921-ON), the Workers' Party of Korea (1949-ON), and the Communist Party of Cuba (1965-ON). | Term coined by Mussolini in the 1920s when he gained control of Italy. Other major fascist regimes include the Nazi Party in Germany (1933-45), the National Union in Portugal (1934-68), and Francoist Spain (1936-1975). |
| **Modern Examples** | Recent far-left dictatorships include the USSR (1922-1991) and its sphere throughout eastern Europe. Only five nations presently have Communist governments: China, North Korea, Cuba, Laos and Russia. | Recent far-right dictatorships include the Republic of Chile under Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) and the Republic of Argentina under Juan Perón (1946-1955) / (1973-1974). There are presently no openly fascist governments in existence. |
| **Literature** | The Communist Manifesto, “Das Kapital”, The State and Revolution, The Jungle, Reform or Revolution, Capital (Vol I: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production), Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, the Grapes of Wrath. | The Doctrine of Fascism, Fascist Manifesto, "La Conquista del Estado", "Mein Kampf", My Autobiography, The Myth of the Twentieth Century, The Last Will of a Russian Fascist. |