

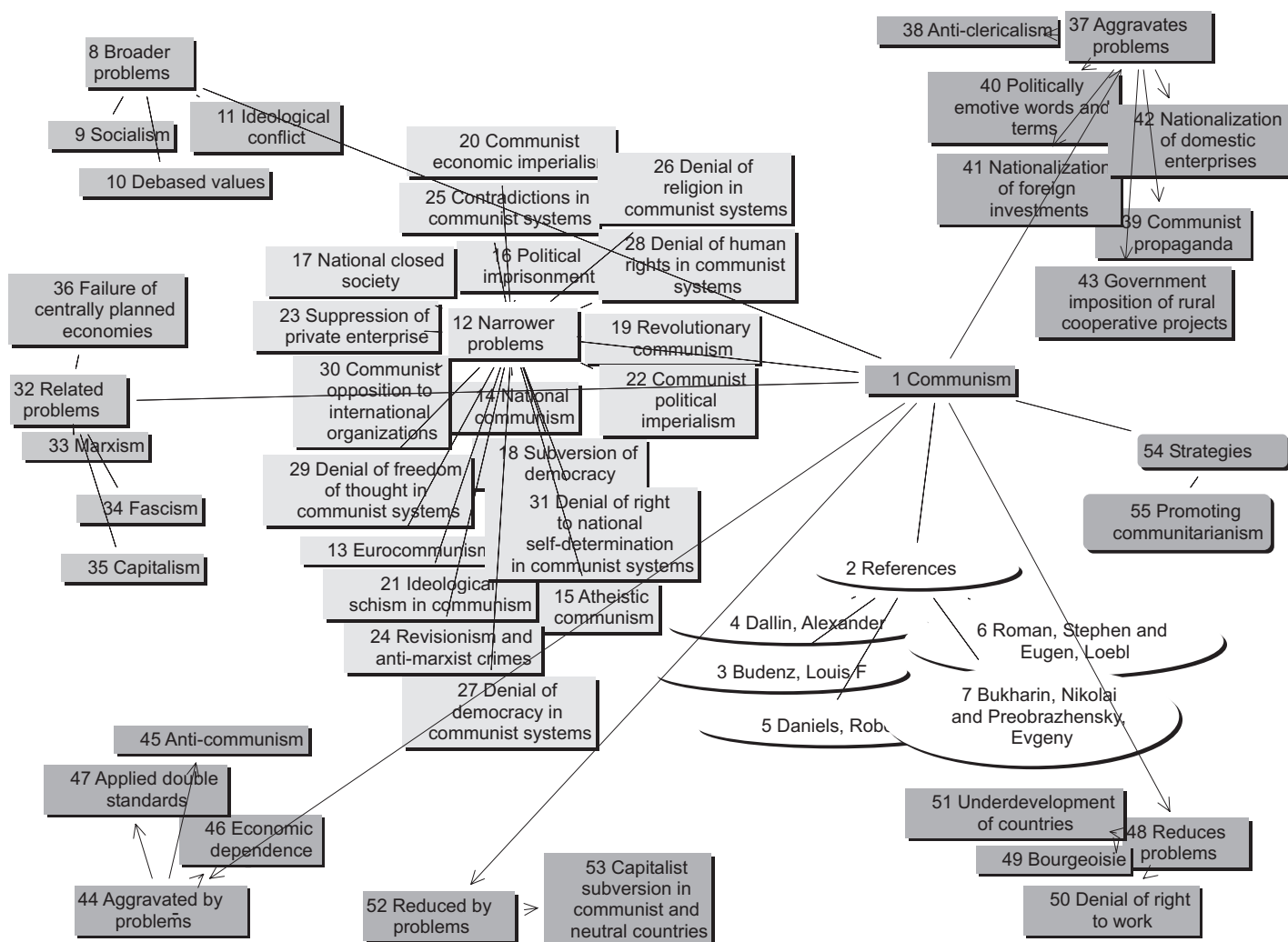
**Figure 10.2.2.2.**  
**Communism**

**Database:** World Problems and Issues

**Link type:** broader, narrower, related, aggravated by, aggravates, reduces, reduced by, references, strategies

**Network nodes:** 55

**UIA database:** <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=C0369> used in *Decision Explorer* (<http://www.banxia.com/>)



Throughout history a variety of communist movements and societies have existed sporadically. Modern communism is exemplified by Marxism or Marxism-Leninism but the ideology of communism is still evolving and new forms and compromises with communist utopian theory are emerging in western Europe and Asia. An economic, social and political system theoretically based on common property and an equal distribution of income and wealth, communism may be seen as temporary or part of an evolutionary process, or as inherently repressive and a menace which can only be avoided if the system is prevented democratically or otherwise from obtaining power. Many opponents of the system see no alternative to the latter interpretation. It has been estimated that, at a minimum, the social cost of communism appears to have involved 50 million fatalities. Summary executions in the process of taking power involved at least 1 million people in the USSR, several million in China, about 100,000 in eastern Europe and at least 150,000 in Viet Nam. If execution of political opponents after the acquisition of power is included, the combined total has been about 5 million. The extermination of people belonging to certain social categories deemed to be hostile, increases this by some 3 to 5 million. The liquidation of the independent peasantry adds a further 10 million. Fatalities associated with mass deportation and forced resettlement put the number of victims in the USSR at between 7 and 10 million, and in China at about 27 million. The execution or death of purged communists in labour camps resulted in the liquidation of over 1 million between 1936 and 1938. In eastern Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s tens of thousands of communists were killed or imprisoned. In China, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, it is estimated that several million must have suffered a similar fate.