



*What would Marx have to
say about the policies of
Mao Zedong and Stalin?*

: Great economic thinkers

Introduction

Karl Marx, central figure of socialism and communism

- Marx and his ideal: a proletarian revolution leading to a classless, oppression-free society, with the gradual disappearance of the state.
- Problem: What would Marx say about the regimes of Mao and Stalin?
→ Famines (Great Leap Forward), purges (Great Terror), absolute authoritarian power.
- Mao and Stalin regimes: centralization, bureaucracy and repression.
- Central question: were these regimes truly Marxist or a radical distortion of Marxism?



J. Marx's vision: proletarian revolution and the disappearance of the state

Marx's goal: Proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie to establish a classless society.

Dictatorship of the proletariat: Transitional phase in which workers control the state to dismantle bourgeois domination.

Disappearance of the state: The ultimate goal is self-management of society, with the gradual disappearance of the state.

Marx on the state: The state is a tool of class domination. An overly centralized socialist state risks becoming a new form of oppression.

Lenin: Need for a strong state to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat, an influential idea for Mao and Stalin.

Modern government is no more than a committee that manages the common affairs of the entire bourgeois class.



II. Mao Zedong's policies: rural, authoritarian Marxism

Adaptation of Marxism: Mao replaces the industrial proletariat with the peasantry as the driving force of revolution in predominantly rural China.

Permanent revolution: Ongoing struggle against bureaucratization, with mass campaigns to eliminate "bourgeois elements".

The Great Leap Forward (1958-1963): attempt at rapid industrialization and forced collectivization, causing famine and 55 million deaths. Against the Marxist idea of gradual transformation.

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976): Campaign to eliminate "revisionists" and reinforce revolutionary fervor, marked by a cult of personality and increased repression. The state became more authoritarian and centralized, contrary to the Marxist ideal of collective, democratic management.





III. Stalin's policies: centralization and state terror

Forced collectivization: land confiscation, persecution of peasants (kulaks), famine in Ukraine (Holodomor), contrary to the Marxist vision of gradual collectivization.

Rapid industrialization: five-year plans and centralized control of the economy, distancing the USSR from the Marxist model of workers' management.

Repression and cult of personality: the Great Terror, mass repression and the creation of a bureaucratic autocracy, contrary to Marxist ideals of equality and collective management.

K. Marx and Mao and Stalin: criticisms and contradictions



The repressive state: Marx saw the state as disappearing; Mao and Stalin turned it into an omnipresent, authoritarian power.

Suppression of workers' democracy: Marx advocated collective socialism, but Mao and Stalin monopolized power within a bureaucratic elite.

Violence and repression: Marx never advocated state terror. Purges and the Cultural Revolution run counter to his principles of emancipation.

Uncontrolled economy: Mao and Stalin's policies led to economic disasters, contrary to the Marxist vision of worker-controlled development.

Conclusion

Deformation of Marxism: Marx would have seen the policies of Mao and Stalin as a brutal deformation of his thought.

Oppression and authoritarianism: Instead of emancipating the masses, Mao and Stalin established an authoritarian order in which the state remained powerful and concentrated in the hands of a bureaucratic elite.

Dictatorial nightmare: what was supposed to be a revolution for the people turned into oppression. Mao and Stalin were not continuators of Marxism, but its gravediggers.

all great historical events and characters repeat themselves, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.

