

CHINA ESSAY

To what extent were Mao Zedong's economic policies successful in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s?

Mao Zedong's economic policies were not successful in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s. In this essay we will focus our attention on Mao Zedong's rise to power, 100 Flowers Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the cultural revolution and its impact.

Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s. His rise into power started in 1949 after he won the civil war against the National Party. The Nationalists were forced to flee to the island of Taiwan. Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China in 1949, with himself as the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and the President of the republic.

Furthermore, Mao Zedong introduced the 100 Flowers Campaign in 1957. It was a strategy which asked for constructive criticism and discussions about China's problems. He wanted the people to criticise the local Communist leaders. Mao heard rumours that the local leaders were not treating the people fairly. However, this strategy back fired at Mao as most people criticised him for not being democratic and others wanted opposition parties to be allowed to exist. Mao responded by arresting his critics and others were killed.

Furthermore, Mao Zedong introduced the second Five Year Plan better known as The Great Leap Forward. He believed that he should earn the Chinese trust at all cost. He instructed the officials to use more manual labour instead of heavy reliance on machinery. The peasants were encouraged to establish factories in the country side. They had to make steel in backyard furnaces. The targets were set for every village factory. These targets were extremely high and people were scared to argue with Mao Zedong.

Furthermore, Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s because The Great Leap Forward was also a dismal failure. The peasant industry did not work properly

because nobody had the expertise to run them. The steel produced in the backyard furnaces was of very poor quality that it could not be used. Most people lied about meeting the targets because they were afraid of facing the consequences. The peasants neglected the farming duties and concentrated in producing steel. The Chinese economy totally collapsed. This clearly indicated that Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s.

Furthermore, Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s because The Great Leap Forward was also a dismal failure. In the agricultural sector massive schemes of irrigation were planned to be built by many labourers. High taxation was imposed on farm products which led to the decline in production. The Peasants used poor ploughing methods by planting seeds next to each other which led to poor production. This clearly indicated that Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s.

Furthermore, the situation was aggravated by a famine from 1959 to 1961. It was estimated that about 16 million people died of starvation. The policy failed within three years and was referred as "Three Bitter Years" or "The Great Leap Backwards" by many critics. Mao admitted his mistakes and resigned as the Chinese President. This clearly indicated that Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s.

Furthermore, Mao Zedong started a cultural revolution in 1966 in attempting to regain power. He set up the Red Guards who studied his ideals that were contained in the Little Red Book. Mao's posters were displayed in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. The Red Guards were told to attack anyone in authority, for example teachers, parents, scientists and doctors. Deng and Shaoqui were removed from office. Mao set up the purges of opponents of Communism and moderates. The anti- Communist art and books were destroyed. This clearly indicated that Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s.

Furthermore, The Red Guards destroyed anything to do with traditional China. They started a campaign known as the attack of the **Four Olds**, that is changing of old ideas, traditional culture, customs and habits. The Little Red Book contained Mao's philosophy about Communism and all citizens were expected to memorise Communist principles. Mao instructed the Red Guards to eliminate all professionals in China. This led to closure of schools, colleges and universities. In 1968 industry and agricultural production came to a standstill. It is estimated that about million people died as a result of the cultural revolution. Mao Zedong ordered the Red Guards to stop their attacks and restored law and order after the rival gangs of the Red Guards were attacking each other. The killings continued and ended after Mao's death. This clearly indicated that Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s.

In a nutshell, Mao Zedong's economic policies failed dismally in transforming China from a backward state to a super power in the 1960s. He took power in 1949 and tried very hard to control China. His Great Leap Forward was a dismal failure because it led to the death of 16 million Chinese. His cultural revolution resulted in anarchy and the closure of schools.

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