**THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD, 1958-62.**

This was a major initiative in the second decade of communist government in China. It was also known as the second Five Year Plan and it was based on the newly introduced commune. Some historians use the term collectivisation. Put simply China’s agriculture went from the lower and higher stage co-operatives of the First Five year Plan through a process of ‘collectivisation’ to a country that was split (in almost all areas) into huge communes. The Great Leap Forward was also characterized by an attempt to continue the rapid industrialization of China, but this time also focusing on both heavy and light industry. This was to be achieved through ‘backyard steel furnaces’ and the movement of more people from working on the land to working in factories. Mao’s fundamental belief was that China needed a permanent revolution and that anything could be achieved through the energy of the masses.

Use Brooman pages 34-37 and the below sites

[www.historylearningsite.co.uk/great\_leap\_forward.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/great_leap_forward.htm)

[www.johndclare.net/China5.htm](http://www.johndclare.net/China5.htm)

1. **Communes.**

What was a commune?

How was it organized?

How was a commune an instrument of

* 1. political
  2. social
  3. economic control?

1. **‘The energy of the masses’.**

How did Mao and the CCP mobilize the masses during the Great Leap Forward?

Why did Mao put so much emphasis on the masses?

What evidence is there that the masses were mobilized successfully?

1. **Backyard Steel Furnaces.**

What were these?

What was their purpose?

What evidence is there that they were a success?

What evidence is there that they were not?

Which argument is the more persuasive?

1. **‘Chaos on a grand scale’.**

How did the ‘backyard steel furnace campaign’ effect agricultural production?

What other policies of the Great Leap Forward damaged agricultural production and future supply of food?

What else damaged agriculture during these years?

What was the result of this for the people?

1. **Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.**

Why did the Great Leap Forward lead to Mao giving up power to Liu and Deng?

What policies did Liu and Deng pursue?

How do you think Mao might have reacted to these developments?

Which of the following was a key feature of the Great Leap Forward and which were reasons for failure? Write feature or failure in the right hand column.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The harvests were left to rot. |  |
| There was no investment in modern technology. |  |
| It was part of the Second Five Year Plan. |  |
| The steel was often unusable. |  |
| Backyard furnaces were set up all over China. |  |
| There was a major famine. |  |
| It was intended to turn China into an industrial superpower. |  |
| Inflation rose dramatically because there was a fall in food production. |  |
| Mao distrusted experts and preferred to rely on the peasantry. |  |
| Production of steel would rise dramatically. |  |
| Peasants did not have the expertise to produce still. |  |
| It would use manpower rather than technology. |  |
| National income fell because peasants were producing steel. |  |
| Peasants who had left for the cities were sent back. |  |
| It was based upon the Communes. |  |