

Crisis Character Biographies

With the Committee starting in 1976, delegates will represent these political figures within the Chinese Communist Party. While there were many important players in China during this period, we have chosen to have these individuals in this committee as the breadth of their careers give delegates an easier time to find information on them and makes it easier for us to bring them to life through crisis updates.

For delegates struggling to find information on their assigned character, our recommendation is to read more into the history of Maoist China, focusing, in particular, on the Cultural Revolution, the Sino-Soviet Split, and the Great Leap Forward. We want this committee to be difficult, but fun—if you develop an understanding of the time period you will do just fine in the committee!

Cai Chang-- Cai Chang is a Central Committee member of the Chinese Communist Party and one of a handful of women prominent in the Party. Cai began her engagement with Marxism and Communism while she worked in France in the 1920s; there she also studied women's liberation. Cai joined the Communist Youth League of China in 1922 and the Party several years later. Cai had an interest in women's equality and women's rights and formed the All-China Women's Federation in 1949. The organization was dissolved during the Cultural Revolution as Maoist authorities felt that focusing on women's rights was divisive and a product of western and bourgeois values. Instead they felt that the party should be focusing on the liberation of all proletarians. Cai is a strong believer in women's rights and a strong supporter of China's more socialist and revolutionary ideals. She is a moderate who can work with reformers or the more revolutionary cabinet members depending on their support for women's issues.

Chen Boda-- Chen Boda, born in 1904, has gone from a distinguished scholar and academic to a crucial political figure within the Chinese Communist Party. In the years leading to 1976, his influence and power have waxed and waned. A significant step in his career was his role as head of the Cultural Revolution Group and champion of Maoist ideology, advocating for a resurgence of Mao's ideas as a reaction against the perceived capitalist infiltration. Politically, he has aligned himself with Mao's radical leftism, often being seen as Mao's ideological confidant until his downfall in 1970. His allies, over the years, have shifted, with a distinct break from the Gang of Four. Once a close ally of Mao, his influence in government and society has substantially diminished since his downfall. Yet, his past contributions and his deep understanding of Maoist ideals maintain the high respect that moderates of the CCP hold for him.

Chen Yonggui--Chen Yonggui was born in eastern Shanxi in 1915 to a poor peasant family. After the passing of his father, Yonggui was forced to start working and was not able to receive a formal education. Because of his brief participation in a Japanese puppet organization, he was suspected as being a collaborationist with Japan but he was released shortly after their defeat. Yonggui eagerly joined the land reform movement and joined the CCP in 1948. As the secretary of Dazhai, he led a peasant movement to reform land from harsh terrain to agricultural land. In 1973 he was elected to the CCP politburo in Beijing, and in 1975 he was appointed as the Vice premier of the state council. Chen's experience in land reform made him a staunch opponent of capitalist reforms and he continues to espouse his belief in Maoism's more revolutionary tenets.

Chen Yun-- Chen Yun serves on the Standing Committee in the National People's Congress. The National People's Congress is the country's legislative body and the Standing Committee is its most empowered body--most of the country's legislation starts from the Standing Committee. Chen was never formally purged during the Cultural Revolution, but was denounced in Red Guard literature. During this period, he largely exited the political stage. Earlier in his career, Chen had been an important economic manager within the Party and was a large proponent of introducing market-oriented reforms. During the Great Leap Forward, for example, he had discretely opposed Mao's policies, preferring to develop a market to direct the nation's economic outputs. Chen is an ally of other reformers, principally Deng Xiaoping.

Deng Xiaoping-- Deng Xiaoping stands as a pivotal, though contentious figure, within the People's Republic of China. Deng's journey through the complex corridors of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) runs parallel with the rise, evolution, and occasional strife of the party itself. As a founding member, Deng helped shape the CCP's initial ideologies and strategies, and his pragmatic approach to economic development and openness to foreign investment marked a distinct departure from Mao's ideological rigor. His principle of "seeking truth from facts" illustrates a markedly practical political perspective within the vast landscape of the party. In the aftermath of Mao's reign, Deng occupies a precarious position; aside from serving as Vice Premier, his political standing within the CCP is shrouded in complexity due to being purged twice by Mao. Deng's resiliency is sustained by the allegiance he commands from crucial allies in the military and throughout the Party, in particular from those who favor his reformist tendencies. Lacking any official head-of-state title, his power is latent rather than explicit, vested heavily in his ability to influence the Party's ideological direction. His capacity to subtly guide Chinese society towards greater economic liberalization hinges on the machinations of his political acumen and the favor of those within the higher echelons of the CCP.

Deng Yingchao-- Deng Yingchao was born in 1904 in Guangxi. She joined the May Fourth Movement and joined the Awakening Society at the age of 15. She joined the CCP in 1925, and after the Kuomintang massacre of communists in Shanghai, she and her husband Zou Enlai were forced underground. Eventually she joined the Jiangxi soviet and was one of only a few women taking part in the long march. After the victory of the Communists in 1949, she was nicknamed the "elder sister of China." In 1956, she joined the CCP Central Committee on which she would serve intermittently; she again joined the Central Committee after her husband's death in early-1976. Zhou Enlai was Mao's declared successor until his death and he and Deng Yingchao fought internal struggles with Jing Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Wang Hongwen--the so-called Gang of Four.

Gu Mu-- Gu Mu, once an industrious worker, is now seen as an influential political figure in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Throughout his career, Gu has been actively involved in industrial, infrastructure, and economic planning, advocating policies that promote economic growth and development. Despite adhering to Mao's socialist principles, he has shown tendencies towards policies that lean on practical economic pragmatism within the CCP. His allies are largely found among the economic planners and moderate politicians within the party. With Mao's passing in 1976, Gu currently holds a significant role as the deputy head of the State Planning Commission, granting him substantial influence within the government and societal realms. His pragmatic economic

insights could potentially shape China's economic policies, manifesting a significant impact on the nation's future.

Hu Yaobang-- Hu Yaobang is a liberal and a reformist who rapidly worked his way through the Communist Party hierarchy after becoming the leader of the Communist Youth League in 1952. Hu currently serves in the party's Political Bureau and controls propaganda efforts. Hu has been purged twice during the Cultural Revolution, most recently purged in 1976 but has been rehabilitated for a second time. Hu was always viewed as insufficiently Maoist by Mao and the more revolutionary Communists within the Party. Hu has had many appointments outside of Beijing and retains strong ties to Shaanxi. Hu works most closely with other reforms and liberals within the cabinet, such as Deng Xiaoping (with whom Hu was purged and rehabilitated with both times) and Wan Li.

Hua Guofeng-- Hua Guofeng has made a steady climb from rural roots to a significant position within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Hua originally gained favor with key party figures through his avowed loyalty to Mao Zedong's line during the Cultural Revolution, culminating in his appointment as Vice Premier of the State Council in 1973. Oriented towards Mao's ideologies within the CCP, his dedication to carrying out Mao's directives garnered him allies within the party, including Mao himself. In the wake of Mao's death, Hua finds himself with immense responsibility: he has assumed the role of Party Chairman, as Mao's anointed successor. However, with great power comes great scrutiny – as moderates and radicals alike have sharp criticisms of his ideology and of him holding a prominent position in the party.

Huang Hua-- A longtime player within the CCP and its foreign policy elite, Huang was instrumental in negotiating the visit by President Nixon to China in the early-1970s. Until recently, Huang was China's first accredited representative at the United Nation. His skill as a negotiator with contacts in many communist and non-communist countries around the globe has earned him admiration around the world. In 1976, Huang was appointed as China's foreign minister in recognition of his contributions and contacts. Huang has had a tumultuous career within the CCP, having joined the party in 1936 and established a relationship with Ye Jianying. During the Cultural Revolution, Huang was forced to work in countryside given the number of his foreign contacts. Huang is interested in China having a greater role on the international stage and has moderate views on whether and how China should be reformed domestically. He strives for official diplomatic relations with the United States and Japan. He is close with both Liu Xinquan and Huang Zhen.

Huang Zhen--A participant in the Long March during the Chinese Civil War, Huang had a long career in a variety of domestic roles closely related with the Army until starting his diplomatic career in the 1950 when he was appointed China's Ambassador to Hungary. Huang continued to serve in a mix of diplomatic postings, ultimately working as the Ambassador to France from 1964 to 1973. In 1973 he became the Chair of the Liaison Office of the China in the United States—effectively China's Ambassador to the United States as the two nations do not yet have official diplomatic ties. Huang will be an important interlocutor between China and the CCP and the United States, seeking to continue to grow the relationship between the two nations. Huang is close with fellow diplomats Liu Xinquan and Huang Hua as well as those in the Army.

Jiang Qing-- Jiang Qing, also recognized as Madame Mao, was born on March 19, 1914. She ascended to a pivotal political status through her marriage to Mao Zedong and played a substantial part in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Up to 1976, Jiang Qing had championed her husband's policies, particularly in steering revolutionary model operas to articulate Maoist ideology. Her influence within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) grew tremendously, leaning towards radical leftist policies, and she formed the powerful Gang of Four together with Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen. With Mao Zedong's death, Jiang Qing's position is uncertain as her and her allies grapple for control of the government, implying potential transformation for the CCP. While the exact parameters of her power are subject to interpretation and time will determine her legacy, Jiang Qing's immense influence on China's cultural and political dynamics is undeniable.

Ji Dengkui-- Immediately following Mao Zedong's death in 1976, Ji Dengkui emerges as a prominent figure within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), standing upon a steadfast foundation of utter loyalty to Mao's ideological dictates. Serving as a member of the CCP since 1932, Ji has navigated a multifaceted path through the Party's hierarchy, driven constantly by his unwavering devotion to Mao and the revolution. His zeal in supporting the Great Leap Forward and his zealous participation in the launch of the Cultural Revolution provide insight into his deep-seated commitment to Mao's cause. Occupying the influential position of a member of the Central Committee of the CCP and a member of the State Council as of 1976, Ji commands respect from, and holds sway over many within the Party, particularly among those who align with his hardline style of Maoist orthodoxy. His relationships with the Gang of Four - a political faction deemed as Mao's staunch allies - bolsters his clout within the CCP, although it also avails him to potential controversy. Ji's authority within the Chinese society stems from his close affiliation with the Party's leadership and Maoist orthodoxy, but, as in all things, this power is contingent upon the evolving dynamics and shifting sands within Chinese politics after Mao's death.

Li Peng-- As of Mao's demise in 1976, Li Peng has emerged as a firm contender within the political landscape of the Chinese Communist Party. Born in Shanghai and adopted by Zhou Enlai after his parents' untimely death, Li Peng has worked his way through the party hierarchy, primarily focusing on economic and infrastructural development. His position within the CCP, characterized by a conservative adherence to Maoist-Marxist principles, places him as the Vice Minister of the Power Industry, a pivotal steering force behind China's industrial growth strategy. Li Peng's ideological consistency and loyalty to the party have fostered key alliances, most notably with Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping. These alliances, coupled with his key ministerial position, vest Li Peng with substantial influence over policy implementation and resource allocation in Chinese society and government.

Li Xiannian-- Li Xiannian is a political survivor who has been involved in Communist Party activities since the 1920s. He currently serves in the National People's Congress, representing Hubei province. Li was a close friend and ally of Zhou Enlai and is reform oriented, interested in moving the Party and the country away from the more leftist policies developed under Mao and demonstrated in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Li is a potential ally of Deng Xiaoping, but is a committed enemy of the Gang of Four and their more radical policies.

Liu Bocheng-- Liu Bocheng, dubbed as the "One-eyed Dragon," has ascended from military roots to become a distinguished and influential figure within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Known for his strategic acumen, Liu's contributions to the CCP have been focused on the military field, having served as a key commander during the Long March and later becoming a marshal in the People's Liberation Army. Within the CCP, Liu exhibited pragmatism as he tended to support Mao's ideologies while also advocating for practical military strategies. His alliances have spanned broad territories within the party, including those who shared his Marxist-Leninist interpretations rather than strictly Maoist. Upon the death of Mao in 1976, Liu finds himself among the "Eight Immortals" of the party, holding significant influence in both the government and society. Despite his advanced age, Liu's military intellect and political influence could still weigh in the upcoming political transitions of the post-Mao era.

Liu Xinquan-- Liu is currently the Chinese Ambassador to the Soviet Union. This makes Liu a crucial interlocutor between China and the CCP and the Soviet Union. Liu can use his many contacts throughout the Soviet Union to advance China—and his—cause. Liu is not known for being ideologically-motivated, but is comfortable following whichever group or faction he believes has the best chance of maintaining power—however his posting to the Soviet Union indicates that he was sufficiently loyal to the CCP, Mao, and Maoism for him to be trusted conducting business with the Soviet Union. Increasingly, the CCP and China find themselves at odds politically, militarily, and ideologically with the Soviet Union. Liu will be responsible for reducing those tensions or worsening them through his actions. Liu is close with Huang Zhen and Huang Hua.

Mao Yuanxin-- Mao Yuanxin, born in 1941, is a significant, if somewhat controversial, figure within the Chinese political landscape. As the nephew and personal secretary of Mao Zedong, Yuanxin has served as a key link between Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Throughout his politico-military career leading to 1976, he has carried forth his uncle's directives during the Cultural Revolution and into the volatile period of the 1970s. A staunch follower of Mao's radical leftist ideology, Yuanxin firmly aligns himself with the CCP's dominant political philosophy. His allies span across different factions of the CCP, from the Gang of Four to other Mao loyalists. Presently, in the aftermath of Mao's death, Yuanxin finds himself in an uncertain and precarious position. His role as Mao's liaison secured him significant influence within the Party and the society.

Ni Zhifu-- A seasoned revolutionary, Ni joined the CCP in his youth in 1925 and participated in the infamous Long March - a tactical retreat undertaken by the Red Army to evade the pursuit of the Nationalist forces. His dedication to the party was recognized early, seeing him ascend through the ranks swiftly. During the Cultural Revolution, he was appointed the Secretary of the Shandong Provincial Committee - a post he continues to retain at present. Politically, Ni aligns with Mao's revolutionary ethos and shows little inclination towards radical reform, being particularly cautious about major shifts of ideology within the party. Ni is broadly respected within the CCP's establishment and has built a robust network of allies, among them notable figures in the Shandong province. The influence he holds within the CCP and his standing as a prominent provincial leader afford him substantial political leverage. Albeit, Ni's power within the Chinese society as a whole, largely remains as a function of the dynamics within the CCP and his ability to navigate the bewildering post-Mao political labyrinth.

Nie Rongzhen-- An indomitable force throughout the Chinese Revolution, Nie made remarkable contributions as a fearless military strategist, his triumphs include the Battle of Pingxingguan and his role in establishing China's nuclear program. At the juncture of 1976, Nie is recognized as the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission and the CCP Central Committee member. His political leanings are a balance of staunch Maoism and military pragmatism, fusing ideology with the necessities on the ground. Closely aligned with Mao, Zhou Enlai, and Liu Shaoqi, Nie has proven his loyalty through multiple factions and political turmoil. His military exploits and influential positions within the party give him not only a powerful voice in military strategy development, but also a commanding role in defining China's national defense trajectory.

Saifuddin Azizi-- Azizi, ascending from a humble background within the Uighur community of Xinjiang, found a vibrant political path within the Chinese Communist Party, ultimately aligning himself towards Mao's revolutionary politics. Over the course of his political odyssey, Azizi contributed notably to the establishment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and was appointed its first chairman, largely symbolizing Uighur interests within the CCP's fundamental structure. Embracing Marxism-Leninism as the guiding framework, Azizi's political leanings are non-aligned, favoring a balance between nationalism and socialism, often invoking, when needed, a degree of pragmatism within the party's operation. As of Mao's death, Azizi occupies a crucial role, continuing his tenure as a member of the Central Committee of the CCP, thereby enjoying a substantial influence within the party's core decision-making body. Associated with Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Deng Xiaoping, he commands substantial influence within bureaucratic circles, positioning himself at this critical juncture as a negotiator and advocate for the rights and representation of ethnic minorities domicile in China. His position not only enables him to voice Uighur concerns but also equips him with the power to influence legislation and direct the socio-economic development of minority regions within the larger framework of Chinese society.

Wan Li-- Wan Li is currently serving as Minister of the Railways, a post that was only recently re-established. In this role, Li oversees the country's vital railway system helping maintain, build, and repair the network. After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, Wan rose through the Communist party and served as Urban Construction Minister and Vice Mayor of Beijing. However, during the Cultural Revolution, Li was arrested and underwent re-education in forced labor camps. Li was rehabilitated in the mid-1970s before Mao's death. Li is considered a reformist within the Communist Party, seeking to move the party away from its more revolutionary modus operandi and pursue an opening-up with the world and the introduction of capitalist oriented economic reforms. Li is close with the other reformists in the cabinet, such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang.

Wang Hongwen-- Wang Hongwen, born August 13, 1935, emerged as a crucial political character in the Republic of China through his rise from a factory worker to a leader within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Prior to 1976, Wang stood out during the Cultural Revolution's Red Guard movement, which led to his rapid ascendance within the party ranks to become the Vice Chairman of CCP. His ideological alignment leaned towards the radical left and he worked closely with Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan, forming part of the notorious Gang of Four faction. Upon

Mao Zedong's death, Wang still holds a significant position within the CCP, still serving as Vice Chairman.

Wang Zhen-- Wang Zhen was one of the Eight eldest of the Chinese Communist party. He formally joined the revolution during the Long March, and, despite his lack of schooling, was promoted by Mao to the Head of Recertification of Communist writers. He gained fame during his time in the Northwest of China when he was blockaded by the Kuomintang. To prevent his brigade from starving, he used some nearby wasteland to grow food. This farmland went on to feed not only his brigade, but the rest of the Communist base under the blockade. After the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, Wang was promoted to lead part of the Northwest Field army under Peng Dehuai where he would fight against the Kuomintang until their withdrawal to Taiwan. Afterwards, Wang would go on to occupy Xinjiang, and would serve as the Military government of Xinjiang. He gained a brutal reputation from his treatment of the Uyghur people, but by 1955 he had to be redeployed to another position. Later in life he would be promoted to the Vice Premier of the Peoples' Republic of China. Wang Zhen was relatively moderated, but remained a staunch defender of the People Republic's socialist foundations and felt that the Party could not stray too far from these values.

Wei Guoqing-- Wei Guoqing has navigated a significant journey from humble origins after his birth in 1913 to notable heights within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). A high-ranking military official leading up to 1976, he served as the Political Commissar of the People's Liberation Army and played a significant role during the Cultural Revolution. Ideologically, Wei's tendencies within the CCP lean toward upholding Mao's principles, while also exhibiting an ability to adapt to the party's shifting dynamics. His alliances within the party are broad, with connections spanning from fellow military personnel to intellectuals and party officials. With Mao's death in 1976, Wei's position is in flux. His influence within the military grants him a voice in governmental affairs and carries potential societal impact.

Wu Guixian-- Wu Guixian has emerged from being an ordinary factory worker following her 1938 birth to holding a remarkable political position within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Wu originally made strides during the Cultural Revolution by aligning closely with Mao's policies and proving her administrative competence. Her political inclinations within the CCP lean toward advocating Mao's ideologies, underlining her loyalty to his vision. Allies within the party range from influential industrial figures to party traditionalists. Following Mao's death in 1976, Wu transitioned into holding the notable position of Deputy Premier, becoming the first woman to hold such a prestigious office within the State Council. This position affords her substantial influence and power within both the government and society.

Xi Zhongxun-- Xi Zhongxun was born in 1913 to a land-owning family in rural Shaanxi. He joined the Chinese Communist Youth League in 1926, and participated in student demonstrations leading to his arrest. While in prison, he joined the CCP. He led an unsuccessful uprising in Liangdang, shortly after that he joined guerrilla fighters around the Wei River. He was arrested again in 1935, and was going to be executed until Mao Zedong arrived and freed them. Xi's base gave refuge to the CCP at the end of the Long March. This base became the Yan'an Soviet, which headquartered the CCP until 1947. He fought in several fronts during the Chinese civil war, and by 1952 he was the chief of the

propaganda department. In 1962 he was accused of leading an anti-party clique and purged of his position. During the cultural revolution he was arrested, not being released until 1975. His experience while in detention has greatly impacted him and he tends to support economic liberalization and stepping away from the more revolutionary aspects of Maoism.

Xu Xiangqian - Following the death of Chairman Mao in 1976, General Xu Xiangqian remains an essential pillar within the Chinese Communist Party apparatus. Cutting his teeth in the Chinese Red Army during the turbulent years of the Long March, Xu is respected for his military prowess and strategic acumen that led the CCP to victory against the evident nationalist forces. His allegiance to Mao's ideological doctrine undercuts his political tendencies, confronted openly through the substantial control he exercises as a prominent military commander of the People's Liberation Army. As Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister under Premier Zhou Enlai, Xu's position blends political savviness and military potency a rare combination that ensures his profound influence within the upper echelons of the CCP. His convener status within the squad of military veterans, often referred to as "The Grand Old Men of the People's Republic," provides him with a potent operational platform. Widely appreciated by Lin Biao and other military leaders, Xu Xiangqian's unique position within the government ensures a significant level of influence over defense policies and strategizing, while titles like "Marshal" add an increased dimension to his societal stature. As China navigates the post-Mao era, Xu's military wisdom and longstanding influence will undoubtedly continue to shape nation-building and party politics trajectories.

Yang Shangkun-- Yang Shangkun has had a lengthy career as a functionary in the Chinese Community Party, serving most prominently as an aid to Mao Zedong. Yang was, however, purged during the Cultural Revolution and was imprisoned for his alleged anti-party activities. Yang is in favor of economic reform and liberalization but opposes political reform, putting him at odds with other reformers who view political and economic reforms as intrinsically linked. Yang also retains very close ties to the People's Liberation Army, having served in it in several crucial positions during the Civil War, and having been Secretary General of the Party's Central Military Commission. His ties to the military give him powerful allies that can help him liberalize the economy and prevent more liberal political ideas from spreading.

Yao Wenyuan-- Yao Wenyuan is a prominent figure within Chinese political circles, transitioning from his early work as a journalist, to a key member of the Chinese Communist Party. In the years leading up to 1976, Yao rose to prominence during the Cultural Revolution, primarily using his pen to criticize those who strayed from Maoist ideologies. Yao aligned with Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, and Wang Hongwen, constituting the infamous Gang of Four. Coming into 1976, with the sudden death of the Great Helmsman Mao Zedong, Yao finds himself in a crucial position. He is now part of the Gang of Four's attempt to seize the leadership void left by Mao, triggering an unprecedented stance of uncertainty in the party. Undoubtedly, Yao Wenyuan, the "fourth" member of the Gang, has the power to shape public sentiment via the press, which could potentially serve as a powerful tool in the coming power struggle.

Ye Jianying-- Ye Jianying, born in 1897, navigated a diverse career trajectory from a military strategist to a prominent figure within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Prior to 1976, Ye's

military leadership had been celebrated, from serving as the chief of staff during the Long March to his critical role during the onset of the Cultural Revolution. Within the CCP, Ye had echoed Mao's leftist ambitions while also supporting moderate elements of the party, a pragmatic balance that nurtured a wide spectrum of allies across different factions. As China grieves Mao's passing in 1976, Ye stands as the Defense Minister, positioned strategically within the military and the political sphere, wielding considerable influence. Notwithstanding, his role in this new chapter of China's history is remarkably uncertain. Ye's forthcoming decisions could be instrumental in the reshaping of the political landscape, potentially altering the course of power dynamics both within the Chinese government and broader society.

Zhang Chunqiao-- Zhang Chunqiao has remarkably progressed from a journalist to a key figure within the Chinese Communist Party. Chunqiao has left indelible marks during the Cultural Revolution with policies advocating Mao's visions. He's attributed to the prominence of radical ideals in the party aligning symbiotically with Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen, forming the formidable Gang of Four. As we journey into the aftermath of Mao Zedong's passing, Chunqiao finds himself at an interesting crossroads. Holding the influential role of Deputy Prime Minister, he now faces a changing political landscape. However, his standing within the Gang of Four has the potential to tilt the balance of the political arena in the post-Mao era, forging a new path for China's political future.

Zhao Ziyang-- Zhao Ziyang is a reform-minded Central Committee member who has served as Party Secretary of Sichuan since 1975. During the Cultural Revolution, Zhao was purged and was rehabilitated in the early-1970s. While he was purged, Zhao worked in a factory as his re-education experience. Zhao has been a member of the Party since 1938 and had served as the reformist-minded Party Secretary of Guangzhou before being purged in the Cultural Revolution because of his capitalist minded agricultural reforms. Zhao has been a shapeshifter throughout his career, working at times with more revolutionary and leftist communists, but also growing closer to more reform-minded Party members since his rehabilitation and the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

Zhou Shaozheng—As head of the General Office of the Central Investigation Department, Zhou Shaozheng controls China's leading spy agency. Equivalent to the CIA or the KGB, the Central Investigation Department is responsible for managing China's spies operating in foreign countries. Many Chinese embassy's contain staffers from the Central Investigation Department and they responsible with gaining information crucial to maintaining and advancing China's and the CCP's place in the world. Zhou's loyalties are an enigma, but he is the first head of the Central Investigation Department since most of its leadership was purged for reeducation and factional tendencies during the Cultural Revolution. He is thought to have been largely opposed to reforming China's political system, but is open to some economic reforms. Zhou's position gives him the ability to carryout covert actions and operations in other countries. It also means that he is able to gain access to difficult to find information, making him aware of many of his colleague's actions.