Who’s who in China?


Zhou Enlai – First Premier of the PRC, advocated peaceful co-existence with the west, survived Mao’s leadership purges during the Cultural Revolution and became very popular as he attempted to mitigate the Red Guard’s damage to China, died January 1976.

Liu Shaoqi – President of the PRC 1954-1959, third in command behind Mao and Zhou, antagonized Mao in the early 1960s before the Cultural Revolution, and fell victim to his purges, disappeared from public life in 1968, died 1969.

Chiang Kai-shek – Leader of the nationalists from 1925, however poor tactics and decision meant the nationalists lost the civil war, he fled to Taiwan in 1949 where he ruled until his death in 1975.

Lin Biao – Marshall of the CCP during the civil war, he was fundamental to their victory. He served as Vice Premier for the PRC from 1954, he died in a plane crash in 1971, and it was suspected that he was fleeing from being purged by Mao.

Deng Xiaoping – a communist veteran after the Long March, he became Secretary General, fundamental to the Great Leap forwards in the 1960s. Purged twice during the Cultural Revolution because his economic policies opposed Mao’s political ideologies. He regained prominence after outmanoeuvring Hua Guafeng and became Party Chairman in 1979.

Peng Dehuai – a highly prominent military leader, he served as the Defense Minister 1954-59. Highly critical of Mao’s leadership, he was purged and made a limited return to government in 1965, but latter Mao’s wife publically persecuted him and he died in prison in 1974.

Jiang Qing – prominent actress before marrying Mao in 1938, she played a vital role in the Cultural Revolution. She formed the radical political alliance – the Gang of Four, however after Mao’s death she was arrested, she committed suicide in 1991.

Chen Boda – a close associate to Mao, he was Head of the Cultural Revolution Group and of Communist Propaganda. Condemned at the 1973 party conference, imprisoned and died in 1989.

Hua Guafeng – climbed up the party ranks until in 1976 with Zhou’s death he became premier of the PRC and Vice Chairman of the Party. After Mao’s death he became Chairman of the Party and Chairman of the Military Commission.

Sun Yatsen – Original leader of the GMD until his death in 1925.

Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen, Yao Wenyuan – other 3 members of the Gang of Four