

# Nanjing's Failed "January Revolution" of 1967: The Inner Politics of a Provincial Power Seizure\*

Dong Guoqiang<sup>†</sup> and Andrew G. Walder<sup>††</sup>

**ABSTRACT** Scholarship on factional warfare during the first two years of the Cultural Revolution has long portrayed a struggle between "conservative" factions that sought to preserve the status quo and "radical" factions that sought to transform it. Recent accounts, however, claim that the axis of political conflict was fundamentally transformed after the fall of civilian governments in early 1967, violating the central tenet of this interpretation. A close examination of Nanjing's abortive power seizure of January 1967 addresses this issue in some depth. The power seizure in fact was a crucial turning point: it removed the defenders of local authorities from the political stage and generated a split between two wings of the rebel movement that overthrew them. The political divisions among former rebel allies intensified and hardened in the course of tortuous negotiations in Beijing that were buffeted by confusing political shifts in the capital. This created a contest that was not between "conservatives" and "radicals" over the restoration of the status quo, but about the respective places of the rival radical factions in restored structures of authority.

---

A longstanding scholarly consensus about the mass factionalism of the first two years of the Cultural Revolution has portrayed a conflict between "conservatives" and "radicals" to shape the outcome of the movement. At the top of the political system, Mao and the radical bureaucrats associated with the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG), with support from Lin Biao and key units of the People's Liberation Army, aligned themselves with local rebel factions that drew heavily from social groups that were marginalized or subordinated in the status quo. Arrayed against these radical forces, according to this

\* This article was written while the first author held a Humanities and International Studies Fellowship at the Stanford Center for the Humanities during the 2008–09 academic year. The authors are grateful to Fred Teiwes for his comments on an earlier draft and to the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center of Stanford University for research funding.

† Nanjing University. Email: dongguoqiang\_1962@126.com

†† Stanford University. Email: walder@stanford.edu

interpretation, were more conservative bureaucrats and regional military officers who aligned themselves with mass factions that drew heavily from among more favoured social groups.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation was firmly established well before the availability of post-Mao documentary sources, memoirs and interviews with key actors, but it has survived to become enshrined in standard English-language histories of the period.<sup>2</sup> In the post-Mao era it has been wholeheartedly embraced by émigré Chinese authors, many of whom were politically active in the period, lending the interpretation further credibility.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, however, this broad consensus has been challenged; not its characterization of political divisions in the Beijing leadership, but its portrayal of political alignments at the provincial level and below. Xu Youyu 徐友漁 has energetically criticized this interpretation for exaggerating limited evidence about social conflicts and for confusing the conservative–rebel split of late 1966 with rivalries among radical factions after the power seizures of January 1967. Xu argues that only in six of 29 provincial jurisdictions was there a split between factions that could be characterized as conservative versus radical throughout this two-year period.<sup>4</sup> Andrew Walder’s study of conflicts among Beijing red guards portrays a prolonged struggle between “heaven” and “earth” factions that revealed no political differences that could be characterized as either radical or conservative.<sup>5</sup> In his recent book-length study of the period from 1966 to 1968, Bu Weihua 卜伟华 ignores these interpretive issues, but his survey of provincial power struggles in 1967 supports Xu Youyu’s conclusions.<sup>6</sup>

We address this issue in greater depth by examining in detail the political conflicts surrounding the January power seizure in Nanjing, which reshaped

- 1 The classic statement of this position, echoed in many subsequent publications, is Hong Yong Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), esp. pp. 5–6, 204–43 and 302–22.
- 2 See, for example, Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Ten Years of Turbulence: the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993); Harry Harding, “The Chinese state in crisis,” in Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 15, *The People’s Republic, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 152–66; and Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic* (3rd ed.) (New York: The Free Press, 1996).
- 3 See, for example, Hua Linshan, *Les Années Rouges* (trans. Henri Leuwen and Isabelle Thireau) (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987); Hua Linshan, “Wen’ge qijian qunzhongxing paixi chengyin” (“Causes of mass factionalism in the Cultural Revolution”), in Liu Qingfeng (ed.), *Wenhua da geming: shishi yu yanjiu* (*The Cultural Revolution: Evidence and Analysis*) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 191–208; Liu Guokai, *Lun “wen’ge”qianxi Zhongguo shehui de jieji jigou yu shehui chongtu* (*Class Structure and Social Conflict in China on the Eve of the “Cultural Revolution”*) (Hong Kong: Liu Shanqing, 1996); Liu Guokai, *Guangzhou hongqi pai de xingwang* (*The Rise and Fall of the Guangzhou Red Flag Faction*) (Hong Kong: Boda chubanshe, 2006).
- 4 Xu Youyu, *Xingxing sese de zaofan: Hongweibing jingshen suzhi de xingcheng ji yanbian* (*Rebellion of All Hues: the Formation and Evolution of Red Guard Mentalities*) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 1999), pp. 18–21, 81–109.
- 5 Andrew G. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: the Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Previous accounts labelled the “heaven” faction “conservative” and the “earth” faction “radical”: Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, pp. 216–29.
- 6 See Bu Weihua, *Zalan jiu shijie: wenhua da geming de dongluan yu haojie* (*Destroy the Old World: the Catastrophic Turmoil of the Cultural Revolution*) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 383–428.

factional politics into the form it took over the next year. The combatants, in fact, had been allies in the fight to topple the Jiangsu authorities, but they split over a hastily conducted power seizure urged upon them by figures in Beijing. Their rivalry became ensnared in factional politics in the capital, which exacerbated and hardened initially minor differences. Instead of a principled conflict over the restoration of the status quo, we find an ambiguous and shifting set of political manoeuvres that defy characterization as either conservative or radical. More importantly, the account shows how a provincial struggle that initially pitted attackers of local authorities against their defenders could rapidly change into something very different.

### The Provincial "Power Seizures" of 1967

Shanghai's January Revolution of 1967 was a nationally celebrated model that inspired mass power seizures throughout China. Despite radical rhetoric about the masses, Mao insisted on strong representation of civilian officials and military officers on a "Revolutionary Committee," and repression of independent-minded radical organizations soon followed. Shanghai's January Revolution was essentially an internal coup against the incumbent Shanghai Party leadership led by Zhang Chunqiao 张春桥, member of both the Shanghai Party Committee and Beijing's CCRG. His primary accomplishment was to restore order, subdue a labour movement and implement "proletarian dictatorship."<sup>7</sup>

The central authorities orchestrated Shanghai's power seizure and were relatively successful in achieving their aims. The city did not subsequently experience the factional warfare that plagued other Chinese regions. The key ingredients of the Shanghai formula proved elusive: Mao's unambiguous backing of a new local leader, a Beijing consensus that it was imperative to restore order, and rebel forces that were unified under leaders obedient to Beijing. In the 30 days after the media praise for the 6 January Shanghai event, power seizures were declared in 23 other provincial capitals, yet during the first eleven weeks of 1967 the Beijing authorities certified power seizures in only four provinces.<sup>8</sup> In each case Mao and the CCRG identified a reliably radical provincial cadre with the stature and experience to restore order.<sup>9</sup> The last of the four to be certified quickly was

7 See Andrew G. Walder, *Chang Ch'un-ch'iao and Shanghai's January Revolution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1978), and Harding, "The Chinese state in crisis," pp. 152–66.

8 In the remaining five provinces there was never a power seizure according to the Shanghai script: Beijing, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Fujian and Hunan. See Bu Weihua, *Destroy the Old World*, pp. 383–428.

9 Pan Fusheng, the First Party Secretary of Heilongjiang, survived to "seize power" from his own organization, largely by imitating Mao at the early Red Guard rallies in Harbin and publicly supporting rebel groups. Other officials denounced their superiors at an opportune moment: Vice-Governor Liu Geping of Shanxi; Qingdao vice-mayor Wang Xiaoyu in Shandong, who was a close associate of Kang Sheng's son; and Li Zaihan, vice-head of the Political Department of the Guizhou Military District. See Bu Weihua, *Destroy the Old World*, pp. 304–08, 383–92; and Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 171–73.

Shanxi on 18 March, and no others were approved until August. In the meantime, regional power struggles raged throughout the country.<sup>10</sup>

No power seizure could succeed without clear backing from Beijing and the military support that followed. This required close co-ordination between local actors and national-level politicians. At the Centre, the main actors were Zhou Enlai 周恩来 and the CCRG. These figures advised Mao, usually counselling very different courses of action, and Mao made the final decision.<sup>11</sup> Zhou's priority was to rebuild authority and restore transportation and industry, both of which deteriorated badly in late 1966. Zhou resisted unsuccessfully the extension of the movement to workers in the autumn of 1966. After the disorders escalated, he sought instead to urge the rebel movements to "seize power," after which authority could be restored. The CCRG's highest priority, on the other hand, was to ensure that new power holders were loyal to them and their programme, and they were in no hurry to restore order. There was a deep tension between these agendas, with the CCRG suspicious of Zhou's willingness to sacrifice political principle for the sake of expediency. This led to stalemate and indecision, and prevarication by Mao. In the case of Nanjing, this elite conflict and indecision confused the issues over which power seizures were ostensibly fought, and exacerbated divisions among radical factions.

Nanjing shows why it was so difficult to replicate the Shanghai model – and why radical groups could easily split into rival factions after they overthrew local authorities. A large rebel movement declared a power seizure on 26 January 1967. This prompted intensive negotiations in Beijing to designate local leaders. The Nanjing rebels could not agree about power sharing, and Zhou and the CCRG were at loggerheads over which local cadre would lead the effort. The deadlock intensified factional struggles in Jiangsu, forcing Beijing to put the province under military control on 5 March 1967, suppressing rather than resolving the factional conflict.

Our analysis of Nanjing is made possible by access to sources that are either not widely available or have only recently become so. These include a near-complete run of Nanjing's main rebel newspapers,<sup>12</sup> and a detailed chronology of the Cultural Revolution compiled by the Nanjing Municipal Archives Bureau in the early 1980s and never published.<sup>13</sup> We supplement these sources

10 In Beijing, the rebel faction split immediately after their defeat of their "conservative" opponents at the end of 1966, and failed to unite in a power seizure. Instead, Mao turned to the Ministry of Public Security and the Beijing Garrison to install a revolutionary committee in April from the top down. See Walder, *Fractured Rebellion*, ch. 8, and Bu Weihua, *Destroy the Old World*, pp. 392–99.

11 See Mao's many directives about regional power settlements in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao, di shi'er ce* (*Mao Zedong's Post-1949 Manuscripts, Vol. 12*) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998).

12 Many of which are included in Song Yongyi (ed.), *A New Collection of Red Guard Publications, Part III: a Comprehensive Compilation of Red Guard Tabloids from the Provinces*, 52 vols. (Oakton, VA: Center for Chinese Research Materials, 2005). This collection does not include all the issues of Red Guard periodicals that we cite below, some of which were obtained by the first author from local collections in Nanjing.

with transcripts of meetings between rebel leaders and officials in Beijing, memoirs and chronologies published in recent years, and a series of retrospective interviews conducted by the first author with most of the key rebel leaders involved in these events.

## The Collapse of Party Authority in Nanjing

The term "power seizure" connotes the forcible removal of authority figures, but by the end of 1966 the Nanjing government had already collapsed almost completely.<sup>14</sup> The slide into paralysis began in November, when key members of the provincial Party standing committee were forced to accompany rebels to Beijing to present petitions.<sup>15</sup> From the last week of December, rebels besieged the provincial Party headquarters, demanding that leading cadres come out for struggle sessions and sign confessions and agreements. These actions incited a conservative workers' organization known as the Scarlet Guards to confront the rebels in the streets and organize a protest delegation to Beijing.<sup>16</sup> After Mao approved mass power seizures at Shanghai's two newspapers on 4 and 6 January, Nanjing's conservative factions gave up the fight.<sup>17</sup> Their last gasp was the "3 January Incident," during which conservative and rebel factions fought in the city centre, blocking rail and ferry traffic across the Yangzi River.<sup>18</sup> First Party Secretary Jiang Weiqing 江渭清 sent a telegram to Beijing on 22 January reporting that the provincial Party committee had ceased to function.<sup>19</sup> From that day on, Jiang, Chen Guang 陈光, Xu Jiatusun 许家屯 and Peng Chong 彭冲 (all members of the provincial

13 Nanjing shi dang'an guan, *Nanjing "wenhua da geming" dashiji, chugao* (*A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution" in Nanjing, draft*) (Nanjing: Mimeographed, 1985).

14 Dong Guoqiang, "Jiangsu 'yi.erliu duoquan' qianhou de quanli juezhu" ("Power rivalries before and after Jiangsu's '26 January power seizure'"), *Ershiyi shiji*, No. 63, online edition, June 2007, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/>.

15 *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* pp. 22, 24 and 27, and interviews with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007, and Zeng Bangyuan, 28 November 2007.

16 Jiang Weiqing, *Qishinian zhengcheng – Jiang Weiqing huiyilu* (*70 Year Journey – the Memoirs of Jiang Weiqing*) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1996), pp. 540–42.

17 Mao Zedong, "Dui zhongyang wen'ge xiaozu jiu 'Wenhui bao', 'Jiefang ribao' duoquan shijian de tanhua" ("Mao Zedong's statement to the Central Cultural Revolution Group about the power seizures at Wenhui Daily and Liberation Daily"), 8 January 1967, in Song Yongyi (ed.), *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, CD ROM (Hong Kong: Universities Service Centre for China Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2002), and *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 35.

18 The bridge over the Yangzi River at Nanjing was not yet completed, and rail traffic had to be ferried to the north shore. The fighting in Nanjing disrupted this artery, effectively cutting off shipping from the industrial heartland of Shanghai to the northern half of the country. This surely explains Zhou Enlai's close attention to events in Nanjing. The battles are described in "Nanjing daxue ba.erqi geming chuanlianhui jinji shengming" ("Urgent declaration of Nanjing University 27 August Revolutionary Liaison Office"), *Ba.erqi zhanbao*, 5 January 1967, p. 1, "Nanjing shiduo wan geming zaofan pai juxing 'yi.san xue an' shengtao dahui" ("More than 100,000 Nanjing rebels hold mass meeting to condemn the 'bloody 3 January incident'"), *Ba.erqi zhanbao*, 11 January 1967, p. 1, *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 34, and "Zhonggong Jiangsu shengwei guanyu Nanjing 'yi.san shijian' de pingfang jue ding" ("Decision of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee on the rehabilitation of the Nanjing '3 January incident'"), 30 December 1978, in Zhonggong Jiangsu shengwei dangshi bangongshi, *Boluan fanzheng: Jiangsu juan* (*Bringing Order out of Chaos: Jiangsu*) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1998), pp. 401–03, and Jiang Weiqing, *70 Year Journey*, pp. 541–43.

19 "Jiang Weiqing gei Zhonggong zhongyang de teji dianbao" ("Jiang Weiqing's urgent telegram to the Party Centre"), 22 January 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

secretariat) were taken into custody, repeatedly subjected to mass struggle sessions and paraded through the streets with placards hung around their necks.<sup>20</sup> A large rebel coalition, the Jiangsu Red Rebel General Headquarters, began issuing directives that sounded like government decrees.<sup>21</sup>

On 17 January two rebel leaders took the lead in a preparatory committee for the Jiangsu Revolutionary Rebel Alliance, which included representatives from all major rebel groups. Wen Fenglai 文凤来, a Nanjing University (Nanda 南大) political instructor and a founder of that university's Red Rebel Brigade, was the driving force behind the Jiangsu Red Rebel General Headquarters.<sup>22</sup> Zhang Jianshan 张建安, a senior in Nanda's Mathematics Department, was an important leader of both the Red Rebel Brigade and the 27 August Revolutionary Union.<sup>23</sup> The rebels controlled the mass media, but they still did not move against the provincial authorities. Like their counterparts in Beijing, the Nanjing rebels had grown up in reaction to its core members having been punished by work teams in the first months of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>24</sup> Once they achieved rehabilitation and apologies from local officials, their core demands had been met. They had not anticipated seizing power; they wanted Beijing's approval and protection after the worst local officials were purged.

### Zhou Enlai's Paradoxical Intervention

The Nanjing rebels did not seize power until Zhou Enlai urged them to do so. This seems paradoxical, given Zhou's consistent effort to blunt the radical initiatives of the CCRG, but his actions were very much in character. Political authority in Nanjing had already collapsed; industry, transportation and public services were in disarray. The only way to restore order after Mao's celebration of the Shanghai power seizure was to induce rebels to unite with "revolutionary cadres" and local military officers to seize power and form a revolutionary committee. Zhou intervened to speed the process and shape the outcome.

In mid-January Zhou contacted Ge Zhonglong 葛忠龙, founder of Nanda's 27 August faction. Several weeks before, Zhou had met Ge when the latter travelled

20 Jiang Weiqing, *70 Year Journey*, pp. 544–45; "Zijue yu renmin de Jiang Weiqing jue meiyou hao xia-chang" ("Jiang Weiqing, alienated from the people, will surely come to no good end"), *Nongnu ji*, 8 March 1967, p. 4, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 36, p. 15535. Xu Jiatus would return as head of the New China News Agency in Hong Kong during the 1980s, but would defect to the United States in protest over the military suppression of popular protests on 4 June 1989.

21 First author's interview with Geng Changxian, 1 February 2007. Geng was a second-year student in the French Department at Nanjing University (Nanda) in 1966. He was a founder of Nanda's Red Rebel Brigade, and as a leader of that organization was one of the founders of the Jiangsu Red Rebel General Headquarters.

22 A political instructor in his 30s, he was an army veteran and Party member.

23 He was vice-secretary of the Youth League General Branch of his department, and chairman of his department's student association. Zhang Jianshan and Ge Zhonglong were among the founding members of the Red Rebel Brigade. The Brigade was highly selective in admitting members, and decided to have Zhang establish an auxiliary rebel group, 27 August, in order to absorb the many people who sought to join the movement. The new organization grew much larger than the original Red Rebel Brigade, and rivalled the original group for influence.

24 The similar motives of the Beijing rebels are described in Walder, *Fractured Rebellion*, ch. 6.

to Beijing to lodge protests against the Nanjing leadership.<sup>25</sup> On 16 January one of Zhou's secretaries called Ge and told him that the Nanjing rebels should submit a power seizure proposal without delay. Ge immediately conveyed this message to other rebel leaders and to Gao Xiaoping 高啸平, an early supporter of the rebels on the Provincial Party Committee,<sup>26</sup> and General Liang Jiqing 梁辑卿, Colonel Du Fangping 杜方平 and Colonel Wu Dasheng 吴大胜 of the Nanjing Military Region, former members of the Nanda work team who had sympathized with student rebels in the summer of 1966.<sup>27</sup> Also notified was Xing Wenju 邢文举, a correspondent from *Liberation Army Daily* who served as the CCRG's representative and submitted regular reports about the movement in Nanjing.<sup>28</sup> Xing Wenju offered to draft the power seizure proposal.<sup>29</sup> On 21 January Zhou's secretary called Ge Zhonglong again to urge the local rebels to move faster.<sup>30</sup>

Zhou also contacted another leader of the 27 August faction, Zeng Bangyuan 曾邦元, in mid-January, and asked him what he thought about the news from Shanghai.<sup>31</sup> Zeng replied: "We support the Centre's decision and the revolutionary action of the Shanghai rebels." Zhou then asked whether Zeng planned to seize power in Jiangsu, and after he responded negatively, Zhou asked: "Then how is it that you support the Centre's decision?" Zeng replied that the rebels did not feel capable of managing the province. After a pause, Zhou explained that the rebels would not actually run the government, but would supervise incumbent officials. Zeng then responded: "If that's what power seizure means, we can do it." Zhou told him to consult the Nanjing Military Region and submit a proposal soon. Zhou also phoned General Liang Jiqing of the Nanjing Military Region on 23 January, congratulated him for "helping to lift the lid off of class struggle in Jiangsu" and asked him to consider a power seizure.<sup>32</sup>

25 The account in this paragraph is based on interviews with Ge Zhonglong, 14 and 15 April 2007. Ge was a senior in the Nanda Mathematics Department. In December 1966 he accompanied a delegation of Nanda rebels to Beijing to lodge complaints, and met Zhou on three successive days beginning 6 January. See *Zhou Enlai nianpu (xiajuan) (Zhou Enlai Chronology [Vol. 3])* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), p. 109.

26 Gao Xiaoping had been demoted by provincial leaders in the late 1950s, stalling his career. His wife was a student at Nanda and joined the 27 August rebel group.

27 Liang was Vice-Political Commissar of the Jiangsu Military District; Du was director of the National Defence Industry Department of the Nanjing Military Region; Wu was vice-director of the Nanjing Military Region's Logistics Department.

28 See the discussion of the role of reporters as CCRG liaison personnel in Walder, *Fractured Rebellion*, ch. 6.

29 "Yi er liu duoquan qianhou" ("Before and after the 26 January power seizure"), *Geming zaofan bao*, 17 February 1967, p. 2, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 16, p. 6833.

30 Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007.

31 The account in this paragraph is based on an interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 28 November 2007. Zeng was a 1964 graduate of Nanda's Mathematics Department who was kept on as a political counsellor after graduation. He was a Party member and the Department's Youth League General Branch Secretary.

32 "Fangwen Liang Jiqing tongzhi jilu" ("An interview with Comrade Liang Jiqing"), *Geming zaofan bao*, 18 February 1967, p. 4, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 16, p. 6913.

Zhou's instigation of a power seizure coincided with the 22 January issue of *People's Daily*, which urged "all proletarian rebels" to seize power.<sup>33</sup> That day Zhou and Chen Boda 陈伯达 met in Beijing with rebel leaders from throughout the country. Zhou insisted that regional power seizures be based on broad unity, that rebels within government departments should take over their own units with outside help, and that former officials should remain at their posts and continue to perform routine duties, with supervision from revolutionary forces.<sup>34</sup> Spurred by Zhou and *People's Daily*, the Nanjing rebels moved. On 22, 23 and 24 January, their leaders met to plan a power seizure. Xing Wenju, the reporter who represented the CCRG, attended all the meetings and drafted a proposal for a "Power Seizure Committee." General Liang Jiqing and Colonels Du Fangping and Wu Dasheng attended and expressed support. The Committee was established with Wen Fenglai as head.

This meeting sowed the seeds of rebel discord. Representatives from several key groups objected to a "lack of democracy" and to the balance of power on the Committee and withdrew from the negotiations. As a result, the leaders of Nanda's radical 27 August faction, most notably Zeng Bangyuan, were excluded from its leading group.<sup>35</sup> The power seizure went forward, but the rebel forces were now split into two factions: those who participated in the power seizure and those who did not.

Shortly after midnight on 25 January the Committee dispatched more than 10,000 rebels to different provincial and municipal Party organs to take power.<sup>36</sup> The Nanjing Military Region was informed beforehand and imposed a curfew to ensure that the rebels met with no opposition.<sup>37</sup> The local Party and government had long been paralysed, and offered no resistance. The power seizure was something of an anticlimax, in many ways a form of political theatre.

The Power Seizure Committee informed Zhou and the CCRG of their plans and received their approval beforehand.<sup>38</sup> However the splits among the rebels

33 "Wuchan jieji geming pai da lianhe, duo zou ziben zhuyi daolu dangquan pai de quan!" ("Proletarian revolutionaries unite, seize power from those in power taking the capitalist road!"), "Yiqie quanli gui geming zaofanpai" ("All power to revolutionary rebels"), and "Zaofan jiu shi yao duoquan!" ("To rebel is to seize power!"), *Renmin ribao*, 22 January 1967, p. 1.

34 "Zhou Enlai tongzhi daibiao Mao zhuxi, dang zhongyang, guowuyuan, zhongyang junwei, zhongyang wen'ge dui wuchan jieji geming zaofan pai da lianhe, da duoquan wenti zuo zhongyao zhishi" ("Comrade Zhou Enlai relays important instructions to proletarian revolutionary rebels about the great alliance and great power seizure on behalf of Chairman Mao, the Party Centre, the State Council, the Central Military Commission and the Central Cultural Revolution Group"), 22 January 1967, in *Zhongyang fuze tongzhi jianghua chaolu (di san ji)* (*Transcripts of Central Leaders' Speeches [No. 3]*) (Beijing: no publisher, January 1967), pp. 194–95.

35 "Before and after the 26 January power seizure," and *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 38.

36 "Duo quan ji" ("Account of the power seizure"), *Hongweibing bao*, 15 February 1967, p. 1, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 28, p. 12251.

37 "Before and after the 26 January power seizure," and *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 40.

38 Interviews with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007, and Geng Changxian, 1 February 2007. In his memoir, Xing Wenju denies that the rebels informed him beforehand but he implies that the Nanjing Military Region and Party Centre in Beijing did approve the plans beforehand. See Xing Wenju koushu, Yang Mingqing zhengli, "Wei 'zhongyang wen'ge' zuo jizhe de rizi (shang)" ("My days as a reporter for the 'Central Cultural Revolution Group' [part 1]"), in *Lao zhaopian*, No. 59 (2008), pp. 6–7.



violated Zhou's first condition for a power seizure – broad rebel unity. The rebels associated with the power seizure convened a conference to celebrate their victory. During the meeting the participants were informed that Zhou had telephoned to ask them to delay publicizing their power seizure. After some debate, they decided to publish the news anyway.<sup>39</sup> Zhang Jianshan, on behalf of the Power Seizure Committee, phoned Zhou's office to plea for his support.<sup>40</sup>

The rebels who opposed the power seizure, encouraged by the delay, invaded *Xinhua Daily* to prevent publication of the announcement. In the early hours of 28 January Zhou's secretary phoned, saying that due to a lack of rebel unity, representatives would be summoned to negotiations in Beijing.<sup>41</sup> The group nevertheless announced their power seizure in the 28 January edition of *Xinhua Daily*, and held a mass rally to celebrate on 30 January.<sup>42</sup> The Nanjing Military Region sent 4,000 soldiers to the rally, where a vice-commander spoke in support of the power seizure, and staged a joint parade through the city with rebels and soldiers.<sup>43</sup>

Zhou's about-face – instigating the power seizure and then refusing to ratify it – seems motivated by two factors. The first was the last-minute split in the rebel camp. Perhaps more important was the absence of a senior official known and trusted by figures at the Party Centre who could head the new power structure. The leader of the Nanjing rebels was Wen Fenglai, an ordinary Party member and army veteran, a mere political instructor. No ranking civilian or military officials were prominent on the Power Seizure Committee. To Zhou Enlai, whose motivation was to restore order, this did not bode well. Zhou's subsequent interventions show that senior leadership was his key concern.

### The Ill-Fated Beijing Negotiations

Zhou instructed the Nanjing Military Region to send a delegation to Beijing. He ruled that it must include rebels both for and against the power seizure, representatives of the former provincial leadership, and officers from the Nanjing Military Region.<sup>44</sup> Colonel Du Fangping organized the delegation and represented the military. Li Shiyong 李士英 and Bao Houchang 包厚昌, two members of the provincial Party committee, were chosen as "revolutionary cadres."<sup>45</sup> Wen Fenglai and other rebel leaders drawn from universities, factories and other units were chosen to represent the pro-power seizure factions. The

39 "Wenji duoquan weiyuanhui zui'e zhongzhong" ("The multiple crimes of Wen's power seizure committee"), *Geming zaofan bao, Dongfanghong zhanbao, Ba'erqi zhanbao, Hongweibing* (special joint issue), 23 February 1967.

40 *Ibid.*

41 "Jinghu shengwei shujichu" ("Sound the alarm on the provincial secretariat"), *Dongfanghong zhanbao*, 9 February 1967, p. 4, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 8, p. 4301.

42 "Jiangsu sheng geming zaofanpai lianhe duoquan shengming" ("Joint declaration of power seizure by Jiangsu province revolutionary rebels"), *Xinhua ribao*, 28 January 1967, p. 1; and "Before and after the 26 January power seizure."

43 *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 42. Mao had only recently instructed the Nanjing troops to "support the left" by attending a rebel rally in Hefei. See *Mao Zedong's Post-1949 Manuscripts*, Vol. 12, pp. 197–98.

44 *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* pp. 42–43.

rebels opposed to the power seizure wanted Zeng Bangyuan to represent them, but the other rebels objected strongly, so Yuan Fuwu 袁服武, a Nanda senior who was 27 August's second ranking leader was selected, along with rebels from two other universities. Zhou vetted the list beforehand, and ordered that Chen Guang, Jiangsu's Second Party Secretary, be added to the list.<sup>46</sup>

The delegation arrived in Beijing on 7 February, and those in favour of the power seizure were confident of the Centre's support. But their confidence was soon shaken. The evening the delegation checked into their hotel, an official introduced himself as a cadre from the Central Party Staff Office. He explained that he would escort the cadre Li Shiyong for a private session with "a senior central leader." He refused to answer questions about why Li alone was invited and whom he would meet, and refused the delegation's request to meet collectively with the "senior leader." The delegation refused to let Li attend by himself.<sup>47</sup>

The next day the delegation was summoned to meet Zhou Enlai and Tan Zhenlin 谭震林, and the rebels were shaken by what transpired. Zhou began by pulling out the newest issue of *Red Flag*, pointing out the editorial "On proletarian revolutionary discipline and revolutionary authority"<sup>48</sup> and saying:

Chairman Mao gave me clear instructions. He said after the seizure of power in each province, I should conduct interviews person by person with all the representatives from different professions. So last night I authorized comrade Kang Sheng 康生 to talk with comrade Li Shiyong first. But you rebels blocked it with a request that you come along to observe and take notes. I feel sad that we have given our support to you, but you have not given us your respect. Do you acknowledge the authority of the Centre or not?<sup>49</sup>

The rebels now realized that the Centre demanded absolute authority over power seizures. Zhou immediately forwarded a request to Mao and Lin Biao, recommending that a dozen provincial Party leaders, including Jiangsu First Party Secretary Jiang Weiqing, be brought to Beijing.<sup>50</sup> On 8 February troops from the Nanjing Military Region escorted Jiang from the Nanjing Artillery Institute, where he was held captive, and put him on a plane to Beijing, where he was given medical care, a haircut and bath, and installed in a room in

45 Both Li and Bao were members of the Jiangsu Province Party Secretariat. Li had ties to Kang Sheng due to postings in Shandong and Beijing before his transfer to Jiangsu in the early 1960s.

46 Zhou also instructed that Ge Zhonglong be added as a representative of the rebels who opposed the power seizure, apparently unaware that Ge had recently defected to the Power Seizure Committee and was now a member of its leadership. Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007, and *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* pp. 42–43, which supports Ge Zhonglong's account, as does "'Wenji qiangyin daibiaotuan' jiuqing shi shenme huose" ("What kind of rubbish 'Wen's urgent delegation' actually was"), *Dongfanghong zhanbao*, 5 March 1967, p. 3 in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 8, p. 3416.

47 Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007.

48 See *Hongqi*, No. 3 (3 February 1967), and *Renmin ribao*, 4 February 1967, p. 1.

49 "Zhou Enlai, Tan Zhenlin yu Jiangsu sheng geming zaofan lianhe weiyuanhui zuotian jiyao" ("Minutes of the discussions of Zhou Enlai and Tan Zhenlin with the Jiangsu Province Revolutionary Rebel Alliance Committee"), 8 February 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

50 *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 124, and "Tan Zhenlin Chen Yi gei Zhou Enlai de liangfeng xin" ("Tan Zhenlin and Chen Yi's two letters to Zhou Enlai"), 6 February 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

Beijing's Jingxi Hotel, where provincial officials stayed when attending conferences in Beijing.<sup>51</sup>

During the next two weeks, Zhou and Tan Zhenlin held meetings with various members of the Jiangsu delegation to hammer out an agreement.<sup>52</sup> It soon became clear that Zhou and Tan intended to place First Party Secretary Jiang Weiqing in the top post. At a meeting on 9 February, Tan Zhenlin met privately with the provincial cadres and Colonel Du Fangping. Tan minimized the severity of the local officials' political errors, and argued that Jiang Weiqing was one of the few provincial Party secretaries to challenge Liu Shaoqi's policies in recent years. Tan revealed the plan for a new power structure with Jiang Weiqing as its head.<sup>53</sup>

Zhou Enlai made the case for Jiang Weiqing in a private meeting with rebel leaders. He informed them that *Red Flag* would soon publish a new editorial on the correct handling of cadres.<sup>54</sup> Explaining the content of the editorial, Zhou said: "We must correctly treat the cadres who have committed some mistakes in the past ... The participation of veteran cadres in the new power structure is advantageous to our struggle to seize power, since these veteran cadres have rich struggle experience and strong capacity in organizational matters."<sup>55</sup> Zhou told the rebels that "Comrade Jiang Weiqing" was a revolutionary war veteran, loyal to the Party, who would lead the new revolutionary committee.<sup>56</sup>

For obvious reasons, many on the Jiangsu delegation had strong reservations about the proposal, but the provincial cadres immediately agreed. Wen Fenglai and Colonel Du Fangping were confused and uneasy. Wen reportedly argued with Tan Zhenlin at one meeting, asserting that Jiang Weiqing's errors were severe.<sup>57</sup> Colonel Du did not dare to contradict Zhou and Tan directly, but he was unhappy and tried to delay. When Zhou prompted him to declare his attitude, Du said that he would have to consult first with his superiors in the Nanjing Military Region.<sup>58</sup> Zhou shot back: "I represent the Centre in handling

51 Jiang Weiqing, *70 Year Journey*, pp. 546–48, is very clear about the date of release from rebel captivity, contradicting other sources that report a later date: "'Dixia shengwei' fubu ji" ("An account of the restoration of the 'Underground Provincial Party Committee'"), *Gongren zaofan bao*, 21 January 1968, pp. 2–4, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 18, pp. 7529–31.

52 The following sources report meetings held on 10, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 February: "Chumu jingxin de ziben zhuyi fubi" ("A shocking restoration of capitalism"), *Xinhua liaoyuan*, 25 April 1968, "Xinhua ribao jiuqing shi shejia de baozhi?" ("Whose newspaper is *Xinhua ribao* after all?"), *Liu.san zhanbao*, 23 January 1968, pp. 2–6, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 35, pp. 14906–10, and "An account of the restoration of the 'Underground Provincial Party Committee'".

53 "A shocking restoration of capitalism."

54 See "Bixu zhengque duidai ganbu" ("It is necessary to treat cadres correctly"), *Hongqi*, No. 4 (1 March 1967); the editorial was published in advance in *Renmin ribao*, 23 February 1967, p. 1.

55 This editorial finally was published in *Hongqi*, 1 March 1967, but Zhou had reviewed the prepublication draft on 18 February. *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 129.

56 Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 16 July 2008.

57 "Tan Zhenlin shi pohuai Jiangsu wenhua da geming de zuikui huoshou" ("Tan Zhenlin is the ringleader and chief culprit in the sabotage of Jiangsu's Cultural Revolution"), *Jinggangshan*, 23 June 1967, p. 3, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 32, p. 13920.

58 Interview with Du Fangping, 8 October 2007, also "Du Fangping zai jing xuexi hui shang jiantao

the Jiangsu issue, do you think the leaders of the Nanjing Military Region dare oppose the Centre?"<sup>59</sup>

Eventually the pro-power seizure rebels were worn down by the pressure and approved the plan. Zhou Enlai and Tan Zhenlin arranged to bring Jiang Weiqing's former staff to Beijing to draft his self-criticism speech, which he would subsequently read out to a planned mass rally in Nanjing to pave the way for his rehabilitation.<sup>60</sup> At this point it appeared that Jiangsu was heading towards a power structure that included former Party leaders, military officers and co-operative mass representatives.

### The Other Nanjing Rebels

While the Jiangsu delegation was in Beijing, the rebels who dissented from the power seizure formed their own delegation. These rebels had played a leading role in bringing down the Nanjing authorities. The first mass organization was founded on 23 August 1966: Nanda's Red Rebel Brigade. Wen Fenglai, a political instructor and Party member, was its primary leader. A second rebel organization was founded at Nanda four days later: Nanda 27 August. Their leader was Zeng Bangyuan, a young teacher in the Mathematics Department. The two Nanda rebel organizations fought together as allies against Nanda's Red Flag Fighting Group, which supported the provincial Party committee. As their rebellion spread beyond the campuses in November 1966, however, the two allied organizations competed for citywide influence. Soon they formed two separate citywide alliances: the Jiangsu Red Rebel Headquarters (headed by the Nanda Red Rebel Brigade), and Nanjing 27 August (headed by Nanda 27 August). The two alliances worked together to defeat the conservative Scarlet Guards workers' organization, but their latent competition for leadership of the citywide movement was rekindled as soon as their enemies were defeated. Some 27 August leaders, like Zeng Bangyuan and Yuan Fuwu, objected to the other alliance's move to seize power. Unfortunately for them, the power seizure went ahead without them. Recognizing that they had missed the boat, Zhang Jianshan and Ge Zhonglong, two leaders of 27 August, defected and pledged their support for the power seizure.

Because they had withdrawn from the power seizure, the opponents had only three representatives on the 28-member Beijing delegation. Back in Nanjing, the dissidents launched a propaganda campaign, charging that the power seizure

---

*footnote continued*

zhailu" ("Extracts from Du Fangping's self-examination at the Beijing study meeting"), 12 November 1967, in *Jiangsu gongren*, 15 March 1968.

59 Interview with Du Fangping, 8 October 2007.

60 Interview with Dai Guoqiang, 8 July 2007. Dai participated in the Beijing delegation; he was a reporter for the Jiangsu branch of New China News Agency and a leader of the rebel group there that supported the 26 January power seizure.

reflected the political ambitions of certain rebel leaders rather than the wishes of the broad masses. They called for withholding recognition of it. The supporters of the power seizure escalated the stakes when they responded, "whoever opposes the 26 January power seizure is counter-revolutionary."<sup>61</sup>

The dissident rebels were at odds with both Zhou Enlai and the Nanjing Military Region, but they received support from Xing Wenju, the CCRG liaison. Journalists like Xing were originally expected only to provide intelligence on rebel activities, but many of them developed close relationships with local mass organizations and came to advocate the local rebel cause. Xing Wenju played this role in Nanjing: he drafted the plan for Jiangsu's power seizure and had urged the local rebels to seize power. He observed that Nanda's 27 August faction had a much larger membership than its campus rival, the Red Rebel Brigade. When the student rebels sent delegations to Beijing in late 1966 to protest against the behaviour of the Nanjing authorities, they used the name 27 August, so many officials at the Party Centre associated that name with the rebel movement.<sup>62</sup> Yet Wen Fenglai, the leader of the rival Red Rebel Brigade, was Nanjing's best-known rebel leader. He was one of the first to criticize the school's work team. When he submitted a petition in Beijing in August 1966, Kang Sheng selected him as a representative of revolutionary teachers to sit on the rostrum at Mao's 18 August rally at Tiananmen Square, and in its coverage of the event *People's Daily* mentioned Wen Fenglai by name.<sup>63</sup> So in Xing's view, Wen should be included in the new leadership as a leading rebel, while 27 August should be included as an exemplary mass organization, with Gao Xiaoping representing the revolutionary cadres and Liang, Du and Wu representing the leftists in the army.<sup>64</sup>

Xing's view obstructed Zhou's plan and made for an uneasy relationship. It is telling that Zhou asked the Nanjing military, not Xing, to organize the Jiangsu delegation. Xing was frustrated that the 27 August rebels lacked representation on the Beijing delegation and that Gao Xiaoping, the radical senior cadre close to 27 August, was excluded. Xing did not accompany the Zhou-organized delegation to Beijing. Instead, he helped Zeng Bangyuan and Gao Xiaoping organize a "Petition Delegation" to argue against the power seizure.

61 "Yi.erliu duoquan jiushi hao" ("The 26 January power seizure is indeed good"), *Xinhua ribao*, 8 February 1967, p. 1; also, "Whose newspaper is *Xinhua Daily*?", "Before and after the 26 January power seizure," and *A Chronology of the "Great Cultural Revolution,"* p. 45.

62 See "Zhongyang shouzhang zai xiang zichen jieji fandong luxian menglie kaihuo shishi dahui shang de jianghua" ("Speeches by central leaders at the mass rally to swear to fiercely open fire on the bourgeois reactionary line"), 6 October 1966, and "Zhou Enlai liuliu zhi liuba nian you guan Jiangsu sheng wenhua geming de bufen jianghua" ("Some of Zhou Enlai's statements from 1966 to 1968 on Jiangsu's Cultural Revolution") in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

63 Interview with Geng Changxian, 1 February 2007. Also see "Zhongyang shouzhang jiejian Jiangsu sheng fu jing daibiaotuan jianghua de jiyao" ("Minutes of the talks of central leaders with the Jiangsu delegation to the capital"), 5 March 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, during which Kang Sheng was quoted as saying, "I say support Wen Fenglai, and I said this even before you did." See also "Mao Zhuxi he women xinlianxin" ("Chairman Mao cares deeply for us"), *Renmin ribao*, 19 August 1966.

64 Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007, and "Before and after the 26 January power seizure."

Zhou initially refused to meet the group after their arrival on 10 February, and they had to find their own accommodation, sleeping on the floor of an office building.<sup>65</sup> The CCRG welcomed them, however, and moved them into the Beijing Aeronautics Institute guest house.<sup>66</sup> Jiang Qing 江青 and Kang Sheng summoned Gao Xiaoping, the Nanjing leftist cadre, to private meetings at the CCRG's Diaoyutai offices.<sup>67</sup> After hearing this, Zhou contacted the Nanjing dissident delegation, moving them to more luxurious accommodation at the Jingxi Hotel.<sup>68</sup>

Ever the flexible tactician, Zhou brought the dissidents into the negotiations.<sup>69</sup> He unexpectedly found that most members of the dissident delegation immediately supported his plan to rehabilitate Jiang Weiqing.<sup>70</sup> The dissident rebels needed the support of Beijing officials, and appeared willing to accept any resolution that led to a power structure that was not dominated by their rebel rivals. The radical cadre Gao Xiaoping, however, opposed Jiang's rehabilitation; he was already collaborating secretly with the CCRG to frame Jiang for involvement in a fictional murder plot. Moreover, Gao knew that if Jiang Weiqing returned to power, he would be able to take revenge. Zhou expressed frustration with Gao, arguing that he was too junior to represent the local cadres and should return to Nanjing.<sup>71</sup>

### CCRG Countermoves

Zhou's effort to stabilize Jiangsu with Jiang Weiqing in charge soon fell victim to Beijing leadership conflicts. The famous Huarentang incident, which became the pretext for a counterattack against the "February countercurrent," took place at an enlarged Politburo meeting in Zhongnanhai on 16 February. Tan Zhenlin, Chen Yi 陈毅 and Xu Xiangqian 徐向前 angrily confronted CCRG members about their attacks on veteran cadres.<sup>72</sup> Mao interpreted this as an attack on

65 Interviews with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007, and Ge Zhonglong, 14–15 April 2007.

66 Interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007.

67 Xing Wenju, "My days as a reporter for the 'Central Cultural Revolution Group,'" pp. 14–15. According to Xing's memoir (p. 12), Gao Xiaoping had already become involved with the CCRG after relaying two anonymous letters, reportedly discovered by rebels in the files of the provincial public security bureau, to the CCRG. They accused Jiang Weiqing of conspiring with Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai to murder Lin Biao. The CCRG appointed Gao to lead a special investigation group to look into the allegations.

68 Interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007. See also "Huiyi Zhou zongli dui ba er qi de zhichi he wu" ("Recalling the support and inspiration Premier Zhou has given 27 August"), *Ba'erqi zhanbao*, 14 January 1968.

69 Interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007, and "An account of the restoration of the 'Underground Provincial Party Committee'."

70 See "Tan Zhenlin is the ringleader and chief culprit in the sabotage of Jiangsu's Cultural Revolution."

71 Interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007. Zhou may already have learned of Gao's behind-the-scenes plotting with the CCRG. He was reported to have said at the 22 February meeting: "Gao Xiaoping has a complicated background," "This guy is no good," "When he talks to me he always embellishes the facts," and "I don't advocate a second power seizure, but according to what Gao Xiaoping suggests, he really wants to seize it all over again!" See "Gao Xiaoping shi zenyang zai Jiangsu fubi ziben zhuyi de? Ge Zhonglong zai Nanda Mao Zedong sixiang xuexi ban douzheng fangeming liangmian pai Gao Xiaoping dahui shang de fanyan" ("How did Gao Xiaoping restore capitalism in Jiangsu? Ge Zhonglong's speech at the Mao Zedong thought study class struggle meeting against the counter-revolutionary double-dealer Gao Xiaoping"), *Jiangsu hongweibing*, 25 June 1968, p. 4, in *New Collection of Red Guard Publications*, Vol. 32, p. 13621.

the Cultural Revolution, and summoned the Politburo to his residence on 19 February, ordering that Tan, Chen and Xu must step down from their posts and reflect on their errors.<sup>73</sup> Tan Zhenlin refused to do so and fired off an emotional letter to Lin Biao, expressing determination to struggle against the radicals to the end, even if this meant sacrificing his life.<sup>74</sup> Mao became even angrier, and had Zhou convene a series of Politburo meetings to criticize Tan. The sessions began on 25 February, just in time to kill Zhou's efforts.<sup>75</sup>

Tan Zhenlin had worked closely with Zhou on the Jiangsu problem and had promoted Jiang Weiqing, who had been his subordinate before 1949 and during the early 1950s.<sup>76</sup> After Tan's disgrace, the CCRG blocked Zhou's plan and sought to use the incident to attack him. On 25 February Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng summoned Chen Guang, Jiangsu's Second Party Secretary, to their Diaoyutai offices. They told Chen they were trying to identify the mastermind behind Jiang Weiqing's rehabilitation. Chen attributed all the responsibility to Tan, refusing to implicate Zhou. This reportedly angered Kang Sheng, who pointed at Chen's nose and yelled: "You're being dishonest!"<sup>77</sup> Gao Xiaoping told other members of their petition group that Tan Zhenlin had committed severe errors, and that they should write a report of what Tan had said and done during their negotiations and submit it to the CCRG.<sup>78</sup> On 2 March CCRG officials met the original Jiangsu delegation and revealed a new decision. They stated that Jiang Weiqing would be overthrown, and they asked the delegation to identify the revolutionary cadres among the former provincial leaders to head the new "three in one" power structure. Wang Li 王力 pressed the delegates to approve their rival Gao Xiaoping, but made little headway.<sup>79</sup>

72 *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, pp. 126–27, and MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, pp. 191–94.

73 See MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, pp. 194–97; *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 129, and Wang Li, *Xianchang lishi: Wenhua da geming jishi (At the Scene of History: An Account of the Cultural Revolution)* (Hong Kong: Niujin daxue chubanshe, 1993), pp. 31–32.

74 "Tan Zhenlin gei Lin Biao de yi feng xin ji Lin Biao he Mao Zedong de piyu" ("Tan Zhenlin's letter to Lin Biao and Lin Biao and Mao Zedong's notations"), 17 February 1967, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, and *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 128.

75 *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 129. The uproar over the "February Adverse Current" apparently caused Mao to change his mind about restoring Jiang to power. Mao seemed to have a positive view of Jiang, and consulted him personally during the 11th Plenum in August 1966. While Mao permitted Jiang to be repudiated as the "Khrushchev-type revisionist of Jiangsu," he repeatedly denied subsequent CCRG requests for Jiang to be taken back into rebel custody in Nanjing. See Jiang Weiqing, *70 Year Journey*, pp. 526–28 and 548–49.

76 They were both from Hunan and joined the CCP in the 1920s. Jiang had served under Tan in the New Fourth Army and as a member of the Jiangsu Party secretariat when Tan was on the East China Bureau secretariat.

77 Interview with Ge Zhonglong, 16 July 2008.

78 Interview with Zeng Bangyuan, 2 December 2007. The delegation in fact did hand over their charges against Tan Zhenlin. See "Gei zhongyang wen'ge de yifeng xin – Jiangsu geming zaofan pai fu jing konggao tuan konggao Tan Zhenlin" ("A letter to the CCRG – accusations of the Jiangsu Petition Delegation against Tan Zhenlin"), *Dongfanghong zhanbao*, 21 June 1967.

79 "Zhongyang wen'ge xiaozu jiejian Jiangsu daibiaotuan de tanhua" ("Central Cultural Revolution Group's talks with Jiangsu Delegation"), 2 March 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

### Stalemate: Military Control

While the rival delegations were in Beijing, Nanjing spun out of control. Violent clashes between rebel groups intensified as each side tried to alter the balance of power and influence the Beijing negotiations.<sup>80</sup> Similar events occurred in many other provinces, spurring Zhou to convene a series of military conferences beginning on 26 February. The meetings produced a new policy about provincial power seizures. The resulting document praised the rebel movements but lamented their splits and rivalries. This permitted “fake power seizures” by “bourgeois elements” and chaotic violence that disrupted order. The Centre would henceforth dispatch troops to “support the left,” and in some places impose military control. There was now a three-step road map for power seizures: all power should be handed to the army; the army would eventually hand over power to a “three in one” interim power body of mass organizations, military officers and senior cadres; and a permanent power structure would thereafter be established.<sup>81</sup>

Jiangsu was placed under military control on 5 March, the day that Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng held a joint meeting with both Jiangsu delegations to announce that the Nanjing Military Region would be in charge of discussions with the Centre about the new power structures.<sup>82</sup> The representatives had little option but to express support. The month-long negotiations were over. On 10 March the Jiangsu Military Control Committee was established, headed by Du Ping 杜平, Political Commissar of the Nanjing Military Region. The Power Seizure Committee was disbanded.<sup>83</sup> Local public security forces and mass media were put under military control. Officers were dispatched to take over factories, stations, dockyards and post offices. Rebel leaders were organized into study groups to reflect on their errors.<sup>84</sup>

### Conclusion

Nanjing’s failed power seizure provides several new insights into factional politics in the provinces. The first is the Nanjing rebels’ initial reluctance to seize power. They did not contemplate doing so until prodded by Zhou Enlai. According to their retrospective testimony, the rebels felt that once they had achieved apologies and confessions from the leaders who had earlier threatened them with political labels, their primary aims had been met. They sought vindication of their earlier actions, not radical changes in the status quo. The power seizure was Beijing’s idea.

80 *A Chronology of the “Great Cultural Revolution,”* pp. 45–49, describes a series of eight violent conflicts between 8 February and 1 March.

81 “Jun ji yishang ganbu huiyi jingshen chuanda” (“Transmission of the spirit of the meeting of officers at the army level and above”), March 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

82 “Zhongyang shouzhang jiejian Jiangsu fu jing daibiao tuan de jianghua” (“Central leaders’ speeches in meeting with Jiangsu Delegation in Beijing”), 5 March 1967, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

83 *A Chronology of the “Great Cultural Revolution,”* p. 51.

84 *Ibid.* pp. 49–50. This source gives the date for the orders as 5 March, but *Zhou Enlai Chronology*, Vol. 3, p. 134, gives 10 March as the date.



The second insight is about the issues that divided the rebels in 1967. The subtle competition between rebel alliances in late 1966 led to open discord over the power seizure. When the 27 August rebels withdrew from the negotiations to protest against their rivals' dominance, they suddenly faced marginalization. Their objections were not to a power seizure but to their subordinate role in it. When they were threatened with repression as counter-revolutionaries for opposing the power seizure, they dug in and resisted, just as they resisted similar charges made by the former Nanjing authorities. They had not fought to achieve vindication for their cause only to be labelled and suppressed by their former allies. The splits in the rebel camp were fundamentally different from the December 1966 struggle with "conservative" organizations that defended the Party authorities. It is not possible to identify one or another side in this new factional divide as "radical" or "moderate." These labels make little sense in the Nanjing context. Was a Zhou Enlai-initiated power seizure "radical" or "conservative"? Did the rebels know that Zhou planned to put Jiang Weiqing back in power? Were the rebels who opposed the power seizure "radicals" because they opposed the restoration of order, or were they "moderates" because they agreed to Zhou's plan to restore Jiang Weiqing? The repeated tactical shifts in the stances of competing rebel groups make it impossible to attribute political labels to either side. Their divisions were nevertheless real and deeply felt.

The third insight is about the reasons for the failure of Nanjing's power seizure: it was Beijing's inability to agree upon a senior cadre to head the new government. Neither Zhou Enlai nor the CCRG – reflecting Mao's own views – were willing to contemplate a rebel leader as the primary civilian power holder. Zhou wanted Jiang Weiqing, while the CCRG favoured Gao Xiaoping. Zhou clearly detested Gao, and saw him as too junior, while the rebels who carried out the power seizure saw him as a rival. The CCRG, in turn, could not swallow the restoration of Jiang, and took advantage of Tan Zhenlin's political troubles to sabotage Zhou's efforts. But they could not sell Gao Xiaoping to the locals or, apparently, to Mao. In the resulting stalemate the violence in Nanjing intensified. The only recourse was to put the province under martial law, indefinitely delaying the certification of a new government. This temporarily suppressed factional warfare, ensuring that it would be rekindled when military authority was undermined by events later in 1967.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, we turn to the question that we posed at the outset. Can the mass factionalism that plagued China in 1967 and 1968 be accurately characterized as a struggle between conservative and radical factions? Not in Nanjing, where the division between the two wings of the rebel movement did not break into the open until just before the power seizure. The Beijing negotiations in

85 See Dong Guoqiang, "1967 nian xiatian Nanjing 'dao Xu' fengchao de taiqian muhou" ("The story behind the summer 1967 'Overthrow Xu' movement in Nanjing"), *Ershiyi shiji* 56, online edition (October 2006), <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/>, and Michael Schoenhals, "Why don't we arm the left? Mao's culpability in the 'great chaos' of 1967," *The China Quarterly*, No. 182 (2005), pp. 277–300.

mid-February appeared to be moving towards a resolution. Their disagreements reflected a short-term political dispute over their relative positions in the final power settlement, not differences of opinion over China's political and social system. Both rebel factions agreed to Jiang Weiying as the head of the revolutionary committee, though one side did so reluctantly. And neither side objected to the role of the People's Liberation Army. Only the Nanjing cadre Gao Xiaoping vehemently objected to Zhou Enlai's plan, and he was supported by the CCRG, who saw Zhou's efforts as a bald-faced attempt at capitalist restoration. After Zhou's plan fell victim to Tan Zhenlin's purge, Mao and Zhou turned, instead, to a holding strategy of military control. This had the unfortunate effect of injecting the army into the middle of unresolved factional struggles, which would break out once again in the summer of 1967.