

Forces of Disorder: The Army in Xuzhou's Factional Warfare, 1967–1969

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Dong Guoqiang¹ and Andrew G. Walder²

Abstract

Recent research on factional conflicts during the initial years of the Cultural Revolution has revealed the deep involvement of the armed forces in factional battles among rebel forces and the striking extent to which regional army units themselves were divided into factions. The origins of these intra-army splits have received little attention. In a detailed examination of the course of the army's involvement in the severe and prolonged factional infighting in the northern Jiangsu prefecture of Xuzhou, we trace intra-army splits to decisions made by local commanders in shifting circumstances, and their efforts to defend their initial actions after central policies changed, threatening to turn them into scapegoats. Pressures from above to force recalcitrant officers into line served to split local military commands and intensify alliances between opposed army and civilian factions. The complex organizational structure of domestic military commands exacerbated these locally generated divisions and made them more difficult to resolve. Xuzhou is an extreme case of a pattern that was likely repeated across hundreds of regions during this chaotic period, threatening the integrity of China's armed forces and influencing Mao's ultimate decision to curtail this phase of the Cultural Revolution.

¹Fudan University, Shanghai, China

²Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:

Andrew G. Walder, Department of Sociology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-2047, USA.

Email: walder@stanford.edu

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In late January 1967, when China's armed forces were ordered to "support the left" and stabilize rebel power seizures over regional governments across China, the Cultural Revolution entered an entirely new phase. This introduced a new and more powerful actor into local conflicts, and thrust China's armed forces into the middle of civilian rivalries in volatile and unpredictable ways. Although the army's intervention was intended to consolidate rebel power seizures and stabilize a new political order, the Cultural Revolution was in fact about to enter its most disruptive and violent phase. After an initial pause, factional violence escalated rapidly beginning April 1967, reaching a peak in the summer of that year, and continuing at relatively high levels until the consolidation of new revolutionary committees in mid-1968. Instead of quelling local conflicts, regional military units found themselves at the center of intensifying fights between rival factions, earning the support of some and the enmity of others (Walder, 2015: 242–58; Dong and Walder, 2011; Dong and Walder, 2012a).

One major reason for these developments is that the armed forces themselves became divided, with different units and different officers supporting opposed sides in civilian struggles. Analyses published shortly after these events noted clear signs of these divisions, although the sources then available yielded few details (Domes, 1968; Domes, 1970; Falkenheim, 1969; Robinson, 1971). Later accounts described more fully the contours of military factionalism. In Zhejiang province, different army units supported different sides in the escalation of armed conflicts in 1967 and 1968 (Forster, 1990). Throughout Shaanxi province both sides in county-level factional conflicts received arms and support from different military units (Tanigawa, 2017). In Guangxi province, the two major factional rivals had the support of different military commands, and the stalemate between them ended (very violently) only after the withdrawal of one of them in July 1968 (Bu, 2008: 706–24). In Jiangsu, local army units openly supported mass factions that waged armed battles against army units dispatched by the Nanjing Military Region, and regional and local military commands were themselves internally divided into factions, with army officers covertly and at times openly insubordinate to their immediate superiors in the military hierarchy (Dong and Walder, 2011; Dong and Walder, 2012a). Signs that the army's command structure was unraveling were likely a major reason Mao Zedong decided in late 1967 to decisively intervene on behalf of beleaguered

regional military commanders, providing them with the political backing they needed to impose order.

As research on different Chinese regions has begun to reveal with greater clarity the key role of the army in local political conflicts, we face a new question: How do we explain why factions appeared within the armed forces? The literature on this phase of the Cultural Revolution has long been preoccupied with explaining divisions among civilian rebel groups, but it has largely ignored the parallel question for the armed forces. The accounts of regional conflicts that we have cited in the paragraph above describe army divisions and their impact, but they do not attempt to explain their origins. Historical accounts published in China provide considerable detail about splits in the armed forces, but their analyses typically end by labeling them as unfortunate political errors committed by individual army units in the course of playing a generally positive role in restoring order and production (e.g., Li and Hao, 1989: 236–48; Deng, 2001; Yang, 2005; Liu, 2006). The emergence of factions within the military would seem especially puzzling. Unlike the loosely organized factional coalitions among civilians, the armed forces presumably entered this period with a unified and disciplined command structure. Inattention to the sources of military factionalism leaves a gap in the literature that has become more glaring as our understanding of the army's deep involvement in local conflicts has become increasingly clear.

Analysts of China's armed forces advanced several plausible arguments as they monitored the army's role in the ongoing Cultural Revolution, but these early contributions have not informed subsequent regional studies. The arguments come in two varieties: one can be characterized as a top-down view that focuses on relationships among ranking military commanders; the other is based on the complex bureaucratic structure of the armed forces. The top-down argument views China's military command structure as bound by personal networks and rivalries based on affiliation with different field armies in the era of the anti-Japanese and civil wars. Splits in the armed forces are therefore explained as the product of the personal relationships among senior military officers, which define the fault lines that broke open into overt factionalism in the lower ranks during 1967 (Whitson, 1969; for a skeptical review of the evidence, see Parish, 1973). The second view suggests that the army's splits were a product of the complex organizational structure of the armed forces. Main force and local army units were differently situated in the national chain of command, and their relationships with regional and local civilian authorities were very different. The main force units also had a higher status than local units and were better trained and supplied, suggesting possible status rivalries. Splits would therefore reflect their different missions

and the different initial decisions they made when intervening in local civilian conflicts (Nelsen, 1972; Nelsen, 1974; Nelsen, 1981: 24–43, 126–29).

We will consider these explanations, but we will also develop a third line of analysis, which focuses on the dilemmas faced by local military commanders when deciding how to enforce what they understood to be their orders. We will examine how their decisions in the early phases of the army's intervention served to embroil them in conflicts among civilian factions, and how subsequent shifts in directives from their superiors compelled them to defend their previous decisions in ways that fragmented and divided regional and local military commands. This bottom-up perspective differs from arguments that emphasize preexisting ties or organizational structures because it emphasizes the way that factions emerged from local political interactions under rapidly evolving circumstances. Essentially, the top-down and organizational structure arguments are "exogenous" to unfolding events, because they posit causes that existed before the political activities of interest. A bottom-up argument, by contrast, views the emergence of factions as "endogenous" to unfolding events—as the outcome of sequences of local political interactions. We will argue that factional conflicts, once they developed, were exacerbated by preexisting conditions—especially the army's organizational structure. But the army factions that emerged are hard to explain without close consideration of the dilemmas facing local commanders, the reactions of local rebels, and military officers' responses to shifting circumstances that potentially placed them in political jeopardy.

The case of Xuzhou is particularly significant because factional warfare in the region led to the breakdown and abandonment of the first two revolutionary committees established there. Not until August 1969 was a third and final revolutionary committee established. It was by far the last of Jiangsu's prefectures to consolidate a final revolutionary committee—seventeen months after Huaiyin prefecture, the next to last. By August 1969, 99% of all prefectures in China had established revolutionary committees. Only one city in the entire country had yet to do so—neighboring Lianyungang, which did so shortly after Xuzhou (based on data in Walder, 2014). Essentially, Xuzhou was one of the very last places in China to bring factional conflict under an acceptable level of control. Central authorities were compelled to intervene repeatedly in Xuzhou's affairs. Mao himself singled out Xuzhou in late 1968 as a region where stubborn factional conflicts persisted among both civilian organizations and military units (Mao, 1968).

Xuzhou's troubles reverberated to the end of the Mao era. The factional animosities finally suppressed in Xuzhou in late 1969 resurfaced after the withdrawal of army officers from civilian administration in 1973, leading to the reemergence of conflict between the two civilian factions in 1974 and

1975 (Dong and Walder, 2012b; Dong and Walder, 2014). These conflicts so thoroughly disrupted the important railway hub centered on Xuzhou that it required the direct intervention by a central work team under Deng Xiaoping's direction to suppress resurgent rebel forces—an action for which Deng would shortly be criticized when he came under fire and lost his leading position once again in early 1976 (Dong and Walder, 2014; Teiwes and Sun 2007: 382–461; Vogel, 2011: 103–9).

The purpose of this article is to explore the origins of political divisions within the military in a close examination of the military's role in one sub-provincial region. Detailed local studies of military factionalism have been rare because evidence about them is difficult to obtain. Materials bearing on intra-army factions are much less abundant than for civilian conflicts. Army units operated under military discipline throughout this period. Unlike mass factions, they did not publish tabloids and handbills that detailed their viewpoints and their disagreements with opponents. Their internal directives, work reports, and appeals within the military and civilian hierarchies of the period are not open to inspection.

Our account of the conflicts in Xuzhou is based on five types of sources. The first is a large collection of unofficial rebel tabloids from Xuzhou in 1967 and 1968, when local factions were active. In these tabloids, the debates between the two sides played out, during the course of which the army's political role is described in considerable detail. The second are internal party documents that chronicle the events of that period in Xuzhou. The third are retrospective interviews with civilian and military veterans of these conflicts. The fourth are written memoirs, notebooks, and diaries kept by participants during the period under examination. The fifth are documents that these individuals have preserved over the years that shed light on key events and are unavailable elsewhere.

Many of these sources, as will be especially evident in their titles, are highly partisan, and at times contain exaggerated charges against opponents. Many of the individuals interviewed as part of this research defended their points of view, and some to the present are trying to justify their actions during this period and obtain redress for punishments they suffered at the time. Researchers must navigate these kinds of sources with care. We have had access to both sides of the conflicts, among civilians and military officers alike. In constructing this account, we have looked for common points of agreement about the basic sequence of events, while trying to filter out partisan biases to the best of our ability. The wide range of viewpoints and types of material, dating from both the period in question to many years afterward, permits us to reconstruct the course of these obscure local conflicts with an unusual degree of detail and, we hope, historical accuracy.

Xuzhou's Troubled Politics

The northern Jiangsu prefecture of Xuzhou 徐州 bore the name of its administrative seat, a city of some 510,000, and included eight rural counties. After a power seizure by civilian rebels on January 21, 1967, in Xuzhou City, and another over Xuzhou's prefectural government on January 26, army units were called in to "support the left." The units of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in charge declared the establishment of a revolutionary committee some two months later, on March 18. Local rebels initially welcomed this as a vindication of their power seizure, but some later objected that the army played too large a role in the new arrangements. The faction that continued to support the army's intervention became known as the "Support" faction, or *zhipai* 支派, while the faction that opposed it wanted to "kick it out," and became known colloquially as the "Kick" faction, or *tipai* 踢派. From that point forward, the two rebel factions engaged in a protracted struggle over this revolutionary committee and a subsequent one. As sponsors of the revolutionary committee, the army was drawn into the center of these rivalries.

One of the reasons Xuzhou's conflicts became so protracted was the conflicting lines of military and civilian authority in the region. Xuzhou prefecture is on Jiangsu's northern border with Shandong province. Although the rest of Jiangsu was under the Nanjing Military Region 南京军区, Xuzhou prefecture, along with the neighboring port city of Lianyungang 连云港, was not. The provincial military districts of Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang, along with the Shanghai Garrison, were under the jurisdiction of the Nanjing Military Region (Nelsen, 1981: 120). However, the Ji'nan Military Region 济南军区 was given responsibility for the adjacent Jiangsu port city of Lianyungang, along with Xuzhou prefecture.

This created a potential for conflict between civilian and military lines of authority and within the military bureaucracy itself. During the 1960s the PLA was divided into two distinct forces: mainline combat forces, known as "corps" or "armies" 军, and regional forces composed of independent divisions and regiments. There were 36 army corps under the command of the 13 military regions in existence at that time. These forces were under the military region headquarters and the Central Military Commission. The independent divisions and regiments that comprised the regional forces, however, were under the command of 29 military districts, which in most cases were coterminous with provincial boundaries. These forces were under the dual leadership of provincial-level party committees and the military region headquarters (Nelsen, 1981: 7–9, 115–23; Zhongguo renmin jiefang jun junshi bianxiezu, 2011: 37–38). The dual leadership principle was replicated down through prefectures, cities, and counties, with military sub-districts, garrison

commands, and People's Armed Departments integrated into civilian party committees at their respective levels, while also responsible to the next higher level in the provincial military district hierarchy (Nelsen, 1974; Nelsen, 1981: 177–82). The Jiangsu Military District, headquartered in Nanjing, was in charge of the Military Subdistrict of Xuzhou, along with the People's Armed Departments at the county and city level.

The army units dispatched to “support the left” in Xuzhou at the end of January 1967 therefore came from both the Ji'nan Military Region and the Jiangsu Military District. Three main force units from the Ji'nan Military Region were sent to Xuzhou—the 68th Army Corps (68军), the 29th Air Force Division (空29师), and the 2nd Armored Division (坦克2师). But military units under the command of the Jiangsu Military District—for example, from the Xuzhou Military Subdistrict 徐州军分区 and the Xuzhou Municipal People's Armed Department 徐州市人民武装部—were also stationed throughout the prefecture.

Normally these divided lines of authority were not problematic, but the Cultural Revolution required much closer coordination between different army units. Because the 68th Army was the highest-ranking military unit, its commanders were placed in charge of all of Xuzhou's armed forces in the novel “support the left” effort. However, commanders from the Ji'nan and Nanjing Military Regions eventually developed different views of local factionalism in Xuzhou, which later generated conflict between two powerful regional leaders: Wang Xiaoyu 王效禹, the civilian radical who became head of the Shandong Provincial Revolutionary Committee in early February 1967, and who became first political commissar of the Ji'nan Military Region in May 1967; and General Xu Shiyu 许世友, head of the Nanjing Military Region since 1955, who became head of the Jiangsu Provincial Revolutionary Committee when it was established in March 1968. The disagreements between these leaders, both of whom had a hand in Xuzhou's affairs, perpetuated and prolonged the Xuzhou conflicts after they had initially developed.

There were field army ties that connected Nanjing and Ji'nan military commanders on the eve of these events. The commander of the 68th Army, Zhang Zhixiu 张铨秀, had served as a division commander under Xu Shiyu during the Civil War from 1946 to 1949. Two of Zhang's deputy commanders, Wu Huaicai 吴怀才 and Hu Xiancai 胡贤才, also had served earlier under Xu in the Red Army (Qi, n.d.; Zu, 2012). One might expect that such ties would have created at least some degree of personal loyalty between the 68th Army and the Nanjing Military Region prior to the Cultural Revolution. When Beijing ordered army units to “support the left” in early 1967, the Nanjing and Ji'nan Military Regions were in complete agreement that the 68th Army should take the lead (Zu, 2012). Units from the two military

regions joined the effort as a unified force under the 68th Army's command. This sense of common purpose later changed drastically when individual officers within units reacted differently to local events.

Conflicts over the First Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee

Mass movements in Xuzhou unfolded in the last months of 1966 in ways familiar elsewhere in China. Rebel factions defended local party authorities against other factions that attacked them. Prominent rebel organizations opposed to the Xuzhou Party Committee included the Huaihai August 31st and the Xuzhou Third Red Guard Headquarters, in which university students predominated; the Maoist Red Guard Headquarters, and the August 1st Red Guard Headquarters, both alliances of middle school students; and the Red Worker Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 379–87).

Spurred by the example of Shanghai's January 6 power seizure, local rebel organizations carried out similar actions, taking control of party newspapers, radio stations, and local government and party offices. These actions culminated on January 21, 1967, when the Maoist Red Guard Headquarters and the August 1st Red Guard Headquarters jointly declared a power seizure over Xuzhou city (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 386). This marked the collapse of the Xuzhou Municipal Party Committee and the mass factions that had defended it. The mass organizations of the party's defenders fell apart and were no longer active in local politics. On January 23, the Beijing authorities issued an order for military units throughout the country to "resolutely support the masses on the revolutionary left" (CCP Central Committee, 1967a). On January 28, troops stationed in Xuzhou under the command of the 68th Army intervened. Military officers convened a meeting with rebel leaders to create a "Preparatory Committee for a Great Alliance of Revolutionary Rebels" that would create a new government known as a "revolutionary committee." Lü Wenjun 吕文俊, a section chief in the 68th Army headquarters, led the effort, with the participation of some three dozen rebel organizations (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 387; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968h; Xuzhou fandaodi, 1968b).

The intervention of the armed forces did not sit well with all the rebel groups. Some of them, like the Red Worker Headquarters, argued that the imposition of military control violated the spirit of the mass movement. Beijing's calls for "all power to the rebels" seemed to imply that civilian rebels would wield real power, but the orders for the armed forces to "support the left" in practice left the army in a dominant position. Beijing's guidance

of the movement contained ambiguous and indeed contradictory signals to local activists. Army commanders in Xuzhou brought this issue to a head when they took harsh measures in a mid-February campaign to “suppress counterrevolutionaries.” They branded the Red Worker Headquarters counterrevolutionary and placed its leaders in prison. When several other rebel groups criticized the arrests, they were also suppressed and their leaders imprisoned. By the middle of March, a total of 34 rebel groups were banned as “counterrevolutionary,” 146 of their leaders were arrested, and several thousand of their members placed under “mass supervision” in their work units (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968g; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968j).

Other rebel organizations, intimidated by the PLA, chose reluctantly to collaborate with the army. One such organization was the Xuzhou Railways Red Rebel Locomotive Headquarters, known locally as “Locomotive” 火车头, led by a middle-aged railway engineer. Other rebel organizations, however, supported the military authorities with enthusiasm, for example the August 1st Red Guards, a group made up of high school rebels, many of whom had parents serving in the armed forces. Several others maintained good relations with the armed forces during this period: Huaida August 31st, led by a Xuzhou Normal University student; the Maoist Red Guards, led by a student from Xuzhou No. 1 Middle School; and the Red Peasants Association, led by a farmer from the suburbs (Kong, 2012; Liu, 2012; Zhang Xiaoyang, 2012).

Following its forceful actions to assert control, the 68th Army moved to establish a revolutionary committee on March 18. In doing so it followed the pattern in Shandong province, which had established a revolutionary committee on February 3, 1967, one of the few provinces to gain approval from Beijing in early 1967. Jiangsu province did not have an approved revolutionary committee until 1968, and was instead placed under military control in early March 1967 (Dong and Walder, 2010). All the prefectures and cities in Shandong, under the direction of their own “support the left” PLA forces, established revolutionary committees by April 1967. From the perspective of Jiangsu, however, this was a precipitous action. The Jiangsu power seizure failed to obtain Central approval, and the provincial revolutionary committee was not formed until more than a year later—March 1968. In almost every case, Jiangsu’s prefectures and cities established their own revolutionary committees after this date.¹

Despite the early formation of a Xuzhou revolutionary committee, at this point there were no political disagreements between the Nanjing and Ji’nan Military Regions. The new revolutionary committee had 44 members and was headed by the 68th Army’s deputy political commissar, Liu Ruxian 刘汝贤. It included a handful of “revolutionary cadres,” like the former mayor of

Xuzhou and a former party vice-secretary of the city. Many rebel leaders earned slots as “mass representatives”: Zhu Chengming 朱成明, leader of the Red Peasants Association; Yang Zhengxiang 杨正祥, leader of “Locomotive”; Tian Chao 田超, a rebel leader from *Xuzhou Daily*; Wu Fangxin 吴方新, leader of Huaihai August 31st; and Zhang Xiaoyang 张晓阳, the leader of the August 1st Red Guards. Zhu Chengming was vice-head of the revolutionary committee, but in reality, these “mass representatives” had little authority. Rebel leaders occupied more than a third of the positions on the revolutionary committee, but only one of the six vice-heads, and only three of the fourteen members of the standing committee, were students or workers. An eleven-member “party core group” held real power and none of the rebel leaders were included (Hongse huochetou, 1967c; Hongse huochetou, 1967d).

These arrangements were quickly undermined by an April 1 Central document on “the Anhui Question,” which forbade the army to brand mass organizations “counterrevolutionary” and arrest their leaders. Instead, those who had made “mistakes” should be dealt with through “criticism and self-criticism.” The document marked a shift in Beijing’s policy about the role of the armed forces. Members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) became alarmed by the suppression of rebels in many provinces (CCP Central Committee, 1967b). The next day a *People’s Daily* editorial reaffirmed the political loyalty of rebels and their importance as the vanguard of revolution (Renmin ribao, 1967). This was followed several days later by a new directive from the administrative office of the Central Military Commission, which reiterated the main points of the directive on Anhui, and which stated that “counterrevolutionaries and rightists” like the military commander of the Qinghai Military District, where a massacre of rebels had occurred, should not be permitted to lead the army’s “support the left” work (Central Military Commission, 1967a).

This reversal of central policy weakened local military units and profoundly altered the political situation in Xuzhou, as it did in many other localities across the country. Some of the army’s allies, headed by Yang Zhengxiang, head of the Locomotive alliance, demanded the retraction of charges against the suppressed rebel organizations and the release of their leaders. After the army refused, they announced their withdrawal from the revolutionary committee. Several other organizations—including Huaihai August 31st and the August 1st Red Guards—saw no reason to withdraw their support for the revolutionary committee. This was the origin of the split between the Support faction, which stuck with the revolutionary committee, and the Kick faction, which withdrew (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968c).

Local military officers were frustrated by this shift in policy and dragged their feet in implementing the new directives. For more than a month they

kept the prisoners in jail and refused to lift the ban on their organizations. They relented only after Zhang Chunqiao, sent by Mao to adjudicate conflicts in Shandong and Jiangsu, met with the 68th Army's commanders in Nanjing in the first half of May and ordered them to reverse their stand on the suppressed rebels. On May 16, the army command announced that the arrests and verdicts would be reversed, but it refused to reorganize the Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee by adding released leaders to the standing committee. These rebels joined the Kick faction after their release (Tian, 1968).

Prohibited from arresting rebels, the Xuzhou military switched tactics and provided support behind the scenes to rebels who continued to support the revolutionary committee. It helped the Support faction establish command posts and organize an armed fighting group that would take the lead in attacks on the Kick faction (Hongse huochetou, 1967d). The armed offensive began with a major battle on May 31, after which several thousand Kick faction militants were driven out of Xuzhou. Officers from the 68th Army helped the Support faction prepare for the battle, but during the hostilities they stood aside—citing the early April directive—and let the rout proceed (Xuzhou fandaodi, 1968b; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968i; Duan, 1985). The incident resulted in 6 deaths and 1,200 wounded (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 389–90). The defeated Kick faction sent more than a thousand of its members to Nanjing, Shanghai, and Beijing to lodge complaints.

With the Kick faction weakened by the offensive, the Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee and Xuzhou Garrison issued a joint statement at the end of June calling for unity between the two sides, and declaring opposition to the revolutionary committee a political error. They called on the Kick faction to join a great alliance of rebels (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 390). However, the army's backing for the Support faction's violent offensive deepened the split in the rebel camp and intensified the Kick faction's animosities toward the army. The local armed forces were still united in their stand on the rebel factions. Divisions within the military occurred only later.

The Intervention of Shandong's Wang Xiaoyu

The Kick faction's appeals caught the attention of sympathetic officials in the CCRG, and in July they dispatched Wang Xiaoyu, head of the Shandong Revolutionary Committee, to mediate. Wang rose to prominence during the summer of 1966 when, as vice-mayor of Qingdao, he openly declared his support for Red Guard attacks on the Qingdao Municipal Party Committee. This earned him Mao's praise as a model "revolutionary" cadre. He subsequently organized the Qingdao power seizure and was dispatched by the CCRG to Ji'nan to seize power over Shandong province (Qu, n.d.).²

Wang Xiaoyu was chosen as mediator in part because Xu Shiyou, head of Jiangsu's military forces as commander of the Nanjing Military Region, could not have been a neutral arbiter. Xu was facing the same kind of opposition from Nanjing rebel groups to the establishment of military control, and was similarly frustrated by the early April policy reversal. Like the commanders in Xuzhou, he had also leaned to one side in local splits among rebels, tacitly supporting one side against the other (Dong and Walder, 2011). Beijing could not rely on Xu Shiyou to fairly adjudicate in Xuzhou, since he was a party to similar conflicts in Nanjing. Wang Xiaoyu, on the other hand, was a recognized rebel cadre trusted by Mao and the CCRG. He was not appointed as political commissar of the Ji'nan Military Region until May 1967, which meant that he was not implicated in the 68th Army's prior actions, which as it turns out, he strongly condemned. It soon became clear that Wang himself was anything but a neutral arbiter. He was harshly critical of the 68th Army's actions in Xuzhou, and soon would openly characterize the situation there during May and June in extreme terms, as "white terror" (Wang, 1967).

Wang arrived in Xuzhou on July 5 and immediately declared that the 68th Army's stance was incorrect. Contradicting the officers' position that the Support faction was the core of the new arrangements, he argued instead that groups that exhibited the greatest "revolutionary fervor" should be favored. Local military commanders, perceiving that was a plea for the Kick faction, resisted the suggestion (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968h). Wang Xiaoyu then convened separate meetings with cadres at division, regiment, and battalion levels, pressuring individual officers in subordinate units to support his proposal. His tactics worked, and the first unit to relent was the 29th Air Force Division, which on July 11 issued a self-criticism for its prior actions and vowed support for Wang's stance (Mu, 1969). Wang immediately circulated the self-criticism to all of the other local military units, along with his expression of approval on behalf of the Ji'nan Military Region. Under pressure, the 68th Army Party Committee reluctantly issued a similar self-criticism, but many commanders were not reconciled to this decision and were unhappy about the defection of their subordinates.

In the wake of the Wuhan Incident of July 20, in which the local military commander was vehemently denounced for allegedly defying Beijing's authority, the Center's attitude hardened toward stubborn military commanders in late July (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2006: 199–21, 229–33). The Central Military Commission and Central Cultural Revolution Group commended the officers of the 29th Air Force Division in a document that declared them a model for the entire PLA (Central Military Commission, 1967b). The 29th Air Force Division held a large rally and military parade

along with Kick faction rebels on July 24 and 25. The 2nd Armored Division and the 203rd Division of the 68th Army soon fell into line and supported them. However, many members of the 68th Army Party Committee, along with commanders of the Xuzhou Military Subdistrict, under the Jiangsu Military District, clung to their original stance (Zu, 2012; Qi, n.d.).

Wang Xiaoyu moved to undermine military commanders who still refused to admit error, stripping the 68th Army Party Committee of real power. He set up a new command post to “support the left” and appointed to it officers who had supported his position. He also set up a new Xuzhou Garrison Party Committee, with his supporters in charge. Although formally subordinate to the 68th Army Party Committee, these new organizations actually replaced it.

On July 24, Wang departed, feeling that he had resolved Xuzhou’s problems (Qi, n.d.). But the main commanders of the 68th Army stuck to their original positions, and Support faction rebels remained opposed to Wang Xiaoyu’s stance. During Wang’s stay in Xuzhou, Support faction activists besieged him at the 29th Air Force Division headquarters, arguing vehemently in an effort to get him to change his stance. The incident ended only after their leader was arrested and his followers dispersed. On July 23, a Support faction group ambushed and beat up several soldiers from an unsympathetic military unit and stole their vehicle. Support faction activists also disrupted a rally held by the Kick faction on July 24. Finally, on August 5, all the Support faction leaders announced their withdrawal from the revolutionary committee in protest. On August 26, they attacked the army’s “Support the Left” Command Post, and confronted several commanders who supported Wang Xiaoyu (Hongse huochetou, 1967a; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968f).

On August 31, street clashes between the two sides broke out across the city. Officers in the “Support the Left” Command Post decided to issue arms to the Kick faction in line with Mao’s recent instructions to “arm the left.” They requested permission from the Ji’nan Military Region, and received it within a few hours. They issued more than a thousand firearms to the Kick faction (Hongse huochetou, 1967e; Zu, 1985; see also Schoenhals, 2005). This turned the tide in the local struggles; the Kick faction won several skirmishes over the next week. Wang Xiaoyu urged rebel groups in nearby Shandong to go to Xuzhou and support the Kick fighters. The conflicts led to 23 deaths and 400 casualties. Approximately 1,000 Support faction activists fled to Nanjing, Shanghai, and elsewhere. On September 4, the Kick faction held a mass rally to celebrate their victory, and Zhang Zhixiu, the commander of the 68th Army who had reluctantly gone along with Wang Xiaoyu’s initiative, gave a speech declaring that the Xuzhou troops resolutely supported the Kick faction (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 390; Mu, 1969).

The Xuzhou military's stand in favor of the Kick faction was upended by the September 1967 purges of Wang Li 王力 and Guan Feng 关锋, CCRG members who were blamed for inciting attacks on the military and escalating violent conflicts in August. Both individuals were closely associated with Wang Xiaoyu. This gave rise to controversy on the Standing Committee of the 68th Army Party Committee about the distribution of arms on August 31. The 68th Army Party Committee convened a secret meeting over six days to debate whether the latest shift in Cultural Revolution politics indicated that the distribution of arms had been a political error. Most members of the party committee, including Commander Zhang Zhixiu and Deputy Commander Wu Huaicai, argued that this was a major error. A minority argued that the decision was basically correct, though too many arms were distributed, and called for unity in support of Wang Xiaoyu. The majority, which was critical of Wang Xiaoyu, prevailed. Wang reacted by holding an enlarged session of the 68th Army Standing Committee. He attended the meetings along with Ji'nan Military Region Commander Yang Dezhi 杨得志, and forced the leaders of the 68th Army to change their stance on the August 31 events (Hongse huochetou, 1967f; Mu, 1969). Yang Dezhi declared the Xuzhou conflicts a "struggle between two lines" in which there was no room for reconciliation or compromise, and warned the 68th Army leaders to change their stance (Hongse huochetou, 1967f).

The Standing Committee of the 68th Army Party Committee was forced to submit a self-criticism for their wavering, and the 68th Army's commander, Zhang Zhixiu, read out this apology at a November 11 rally in Xuzhou organized by the Kick faction (Yang, 1967; Hongse huochetou, 1967b). During this period Wang Xiaoyu ordered special trains to Shanghai to bring back exiled Support faction activists. Several of their leaders were welcomed back to Xuzhou in rallies designed to mark a "great alliance" of rebel forces (Xuzhou fandaodi, 1967a). This resolution of the Xuzhou problem proved to be temporary. The only enduring result of Wang Xiaoyu's intervention was to create political divisions within the Xuzhou armed forces, prolonging Xuzhou's conflicts rather than extinguishing them.

Starting Over: The Second Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee

In the aftermath of the violent events of August 31, several leaders of the Support faction led some one thousand of their followers to lodge appeals with authorities in Nanjing, Shanghai, and Beijing. In mid-September, they established a new alliance and set out to reverse their defeat by the Kick faction and their military backers. During October, some of the original Support

faction leaders returned to Xuzhou to take up the offer of an alliance under the Kick faction, but the majority were unwilling to return to Xuzhou on these terms. After the Shanghai authorities asked them to quit the city, many of them moved to Nanjing (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968d; Hongse huochetou, 1968c). In early October Wu Fangxin and Tian Chao, two Support faction leaders, returned quietly to Xuzhou and tried to organize resistance among local followers. Detected by their opponents, they both fled to Nanjing once again along with some of their supporters. The number of exiled Support faction activists in Nanjing soon grew to more than two thousand (Hongse huochetou, 1968c).

Tian Chao, a former soldier who worked at *Xuzhou Daily* after his military service, rose to a position of leadership in the Support faction (Liu, 2014). After he and Wu Fangxin arrived in Nanjing they gave rousing speeches to their followers, denouncing the Shandong troops in charge of Xuzhou, and calling for officers from the Nanjing Military Region to take over. They charged Wang Xiaoyu with incorrectly supporting one faction and attacking another, and they demanded that Beijing authorities declare their stance regarding Wang's actions in Xuzhou (Hongse huochetou, 1968c; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968d). In early November, the Support faction in Nanjing established a new leading group under Tian Chao. Dissatisfied at being excluded, some Support faction leaders quit the opposition and went back to Xuzhou along with their followers to merge into the Kick faction (Hongse huochetou, 1968b; Hongse huochetou, 1968c; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968d).

In early November, the Support faction leadership in Nanjing prepared a campaign to “surround the city from the countryside” and linked up with rebel forces in the Xuzhou suburbs. They contacted rebels in coal mines near Xuzhou and in several suburban communes to establish a “base area” (Hongse huochetou, 1968c; Xuzhou fandaodi, 1967b). In late January 1968, Tian Chao went to Beijing to discuss plans for military operations with other Support faction leaders and then returned to Nanjing in the middle of the month to plan an offensive. One group would infiltrate Xuzhou in advance and set up a base in the Xuzhou Military Subdistrict compound, collect intelligence on the troops in the town, and look for opportunities to seize guns and attack the post office and radio station. A second group would assemble in Xuzhou's southwestern suburbs, block roads and blow up bridges to attract the attention of authorities in Beijing. A third group would remain in Nanjing and work to influence public opinion by placing the blame on Wang Xiaoyu and the Kick faction (Xuzhou fandaodi, 1968a; Xuzhou gongren, 1968a).

Dissident military officers in Xuzhou covertly supported these efforts. Lü Wenjun, section chief in the 68th Army headquarters, was in contact with Support faction leader Wu Fangxin, and several officers from the 68th Army

headquarters traveled to Shanghai in secret to meet with Support faction leaders and coordinate strategy. When Wu Fangxin traveled covertly to Xuzhou to meet with underground followers, Lü Wenjun arranged his transport in military vehicles, and Wu stayed in the 68th Army compound. When Tian Chao fled to Beijing after the August 31st incident, the wife of a deputy commander of the 68th Army provided him with ration coupons and cash. Lü Wenjun and other officers helped him return to Xuzhou later on, and after his mission failed they arranged his transport back to Nanjing and provided funds (Duan, 1985; Hongse huochetou, 1968c; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968d).

At this point Xu Shiyou, commander of the Nanjing Military Region, had recently weathered a fierce summer campaign against him by factions opposed to military control. Mao belatedly decided to support him (Dong and Walder, 2011). Xu disdained civilian officials who meddled with the military's efforts to "support the left," particularly Zhang Chunqiao, who had covertly encouraged attacks on him by Nanjing rebels. Xu had a similar view of Wang Xiaoyu for his meddling in Xuzhou. As a result, Xu tacitly supported Support faction leaders in Nanjing. At the same time, officers in the Xuzhou Military Subdistrict, feeling oppressed by Wang Xiaoyu and the Kick faction, sent representatives to Nanjing to establish ties with Support faction leaders in the provincial capital. Xu Shiyou expressed sympathy for Xuzhou's Support faction in a statement read out to a meeting of the faction in Nanjing in early 1968 (Duan, 1985).

On February 1, Tian Chao launched the offensive in the Xuzhou suburbs (Xuzhou gongren, 1968b). In the early morning hours of February 3, the Support faction blew up four railway and two highway bridges. They robbed 2 passenger trains and 5 freight trains, stealing 47 guns from road patrols (Report, 1968; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968a). Rail traffic to Nanjing and Zhengzhou was halted for four days, paralyzing railway networks in East China.

The Beijing authorities were alarmed by the attacks. On February 4, 1968, Zhou Enlai sent a message to Mao, declaring that this went beyond factional conflict and was counterrevolutionary sabotage, and Mao agreed (Zhou, 1968; Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1997: 3.216–17; Mao Zedong nianpu, 2013: 4.150; Qi, n.d.). In the early hours of February 6, the CCP Central Committee, State Council, Central Military Commission, and the Central Cultural Revolution Group issued an urgent joint order, declaring such actions counterrevolutionary banditry. Road patrols and public security personnel were ordered to use force to stop the sabotage (Mao Zedong nianpu, 2013: 4.150; Report, 1968; Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1997: 3.217). Three regiments were dispatched to the scene under the command of Zhang Zhixiu of the 68th Army, and they rounded up the perpetrators in the western and southern suburbs (Qi, n.d.).

Investigators sent to the scene to interrogate the captured suspects uncovered extensive involvement of Xuzhou military officers in the Support faction's offensive. Of the 327 people implicated in the destruction of roads and bridges, 170 were members of the armed forces (Report, 1968). Several Support faction leaders were arrested, including Wu Fangxin. Tian Chao escaped and fled to Northeast China, and was not apprehended until months later (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968e).

Under a further instruction from Zhou Enlai and Yang Chengwu 杨成武, acting chief of staff of the PLA, the 68th Army Party Committee put Deputy Political Commissar Liu Ruxian in command, conducting another round of investigations (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968b; Zheng, 2008). It revealed extensive collusion with the Support faction by top officers in the 68th Army, the Xuzhou Military Subdistrict, and the Xuzhou People's Armed Department. Some of the top officers were arrested on Zhou Enlai's orders (Wang, 1968; Wang, 1999; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968b; Zu, 2007: 90). With evidence of such extensive military involvement, the Ji'nan Military Region set up a special military tribunal in Weifang 潍坊, Shandong, to take charge of the hearings. Before the cases were transferred from the 68th Army Special Case Group, however, the 68th Army's deputy commander had the interrogation records destroyed, essentially bringing the Weifang tribunal to a halt, and most of those involved were released by July 1968 (Zheng, 2008).

Although the investigation into military conspirators stalled, the Support faction and its army backers were dealt a severe blow, which seemed to confirm Wang Xiaoyu's view that the Kick faction was a more reliable partner for reestablishing order. The result, on March 1, 1968, was a new revolutionary committee—the second within twelve months. Mass representatives from the Kick faction now held prominent positions. Yang Zhengxiang, a Kick faction leader, was appointed as its head, and two other leaders from the Kick faction were among the deputy heads. While on the surface the new revolutionary committee reflected greater representation of civilian rebels, real power remained in the hands of the military officers. On March 10, the Ji'nan Military Region Party Committee appointed Liu Ruxian to head the Xuzhou City CCP Core Leading Group. The deputy heads included Zu Yuerong 祖岳嵘, a military representative, and Han Benchu 韩本初, a former member of the Xuzhou Party Committee, but no rebels (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 392; Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968j).

The new revolutionary committee set out to impose order. More than 7,000 coercive “study classes,” attended by some 200,000 people, were organized in the ensuing weeks. By the end of July, 80% of work units in the city had established their own revolutionary committees (Xuzhou hongweibing, 1968j). Despite the frenetic organizational activity, factional animity remained

elusive. On March 9, the revolutionary committee and the Xuzhou Garrison Command ordered all arms distributed to mass factions returned to the army. The same order was issued in July, indicating that factions were still holding on to their weapons (Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 392). On March 18, Support faction fighters besieged and occupied the courtyard of the Xuzhou Garrison. They remained there until April 7, at which point the army called in fighters from the Kick faction to drive them out (Hongse huochetou, 1968a).

Acknowledging the problems of the new revolutionary committee, on April 12 the Beijing authorities ordered the Ji'nan Military Region to send representatives from each of the two factions to Beijing and negotiate a "great alliance." Wang Xiaoyu ensured that all the Support faction representatives had already accepted the new revolutionary committee. The Support faction forces still in Nanjing denounced them as "fake" representatives, and demanded that they be allowed to send their own representatives, which they did (Mu, 1969; Xuzhou CCP History Chronology, 1999: 392; Zu, 2007: 96–98).

Zhou Enlai, along with members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group and the Central Military Commission's administrative office, convened the sessions in Beijing near the end of May. The meetings included delegations from the Nanjing and Ji'nan Military Regions, as well as representatives from the armed forces stationed in Xuzhou and from the two Xuzhou factions, including representatives from the Support faction group in Nanjing. The participants argued endlessly, unable to come to any kind of understanding. Zhou Enlai sent the querulous participants to study classes designed to remold their thinking (Mu, 1969; Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1997: 3.236; Zu, 2007: 96–98).

Toward the Third Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee

The study class was tacit acknowledgment that Wang Xiaoyu's efforts had failed. From the outset, the study class was troubled and Wang's interventions became the center of the disputes. Moreover, Wang continued to try to tip the balance in favor of the Kick faction, which served to undermine the study class and prolong the conflicts. Mao eventually lost patience with Wang and repudiated his interventions, leading to yet another drastic change in Xuzhou's revolutionary committee.

By late July 1968, more than 2,000 civilian and military delegates from Xuzhou prefecture assembled in Beijing to attend the "Xuhai Class" on the campus of the PLA Political Institute. The sessions were troubled from the

beginning. Angered by the presence of the Support faction delegates from Nanjing, the Kick faction stormed out along with the Support faction delegates that the Nanjing group denounced as “fakes.” Some of them departed by train for Xuzhou, while another group lodged a complaint with Central leaders. Zhou Enlai ordered them to go back to the study class, but they refused (Zhang Ludao, 1968). From July 10 to August 15, eighteen brawls broke out in the study class, with injuries on both sides (Yiyue fengbao, 1968). By this point, Wang Xiaoyu was actively trying to defend his past actions, and he helped coordinate meetings by Kick faction leaders back in Xuzhou to work out strategy. They launched a furious denunciation campaign against the Nanjing group’s alleged “anti-army” activities (Qi, n.d.). The leaders of the study class, however, took a dim view of the Kick faction’s walkout and related factional activities. They criticized the Kick delegates and demanded a self-criticism (Zhang Ludao, 1968).

The negotiations continued into October 1968, and officers representing the Central Military Commission got involved. Huang Yongsheng 黄永胜 and Wu Faxian 吴法宪 met with officers from the 68th Army and other units in Xuzhou. They criticized them for failing to resolve remaining disagreements. They instructed delegates to ignore widespread rumors about Wang Xiaoyu’s ebbing support in Beijing and asserted that calling for his overthrow was a political error. They argued that the delegates from Nanjing were genuine Support faction representatives (Zhang Liansheng, 1968; Zhang Ludao, 1968). The negotiations dragged on into 1969. Walkouts and fights recurred among study class participants, and armed confrontations on the streets of Xuzhou continued (Zhang Liansheng, 1968; Zhang Ludao, 1968; Zhang Ludao, 1969).

Mao himself expressed his frustration with the situation in Xuzhou, commenting directly on the region’s problems in a speech to the party’s 12th Plenum in October 1968: “Xuhai’s ‘Support faction’ flees north to Shandong and south to Shanghai, while the ‘Kick faction’ runs a single-party dictatorship. Xuzhou has a ‘Support faction’ and a ‘Kick faction’; even the army is divided, party members are fighting with party members” (Mao, 1968).

Matters in Xuzhou remained at an impasse until the CCP’s Ninth Party Congress in April 1969, at which point Wang Xiaoyu was blamed for the problems there. After the congress, the Shandong delegation was ordered to remain in Beijing for a new study class, and Wang Xiaoyu was targeted for criticism. On May 24, Wang along with Yang Dezhi and another subordinate submitted a self-criticism about their disruptive political interventions in Xuzhou and in Shandong (Central Leaders’ Speeches, 1969).³ Mao met with the Shandong delegation and expressed support for the criticisms of Wang, which charged that he had committed a “severe error” of political line. Wang

was effectively removed from his position as head of the Shandong Revolutionary Committee in favor of Yang Dezhi, head of the Ji'nan Military Region (Wang was formally removed in March 1971) (Mao Zedong nianpu, 2013: 4.252; Shandong Chronology, n.d.).

With their patron Wang Xiaoyu in trouble, the Kick faction was willing to compromise. On May 25, Zhou Enlai convened a meeting with the Xuhai study class along with several members of the CCRG and Central Military Commission. The primary purpose was for Wang Xiaoyu to read a self-criticism (Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1997: 3.299–300). The central leaders in attendance harshly criticized the violent tendencies and anti-military rhetoric of the Kick faction and called for the elimination of Wang Xiaoyu's malign influence. In early July, the 68th Army assumed command over all troops in Xuzhou, after first making a self-criticism for past errors (Shandong Chronology, n.d.; Zhang Liansheng, 1969; Zhang Liansheng, 2014; Zhang Ludao, 1969). The long and detailed self-criticism was issued as a Central Party Document and circulated throughout the country, along with an appendix that approved the membership of a new revolutionary committee (CCP Central Committee, 1969).

The third Xuzhou Revolutionary Committee was established on August 1, 1969. It reflected a more even representation between the Kick and Support factions, but in fact the 68th Army was in charge. Zhang Zhixiu, commander of the 68th Army, was the head, and two of the six vice heads were ranking officers in the 68th Army. Zhang was also head of the party core group. Shortly afterward, however, the military officers who had sided with Wang Xiaoyu were removed from power and replaced by those who had resisted Wang and covertly favored the Support faction. Lower-levels officers who had switched to support for the Kick faction under Wang Xiaoyu found themselves put under investigation in a rectification campaign and were later investigated as ultraleft "May 16 elements." Three division-level officers and over a hundred regimental level officers were sent to "study classes" to confess their errors. They were put under detention, denounced in public meetings, and dismissed from their posts. One officer died in detention. Members of the anti-Wang Xiaoyu faction in the 68th Army were promoted to important positions (Qi, n.d.; Zu, 2007: 92–111). During the Cleansing of the Class Ranks campaign and the May 16 Elements investigations, the leaders of the Kick faction and the former Support faction leaders who had sided with them were purged from the revolutionary committee.⁴ Some were imprisoned for counterrevolutionary activities and several died in detention. The leaders from the Nanjing group that had directed the destruction of roads and bridges were excluded from the revolutionary committee, but the investigations into their activities were quietly dropped (Tian, 2014; Zu Yuerong, 2012).

Under cover of an evenhanded resolution of Xuzhou's factional conflicts, the third revolutionary committee actually represented a turning of the tables against the Kick faction and the military officers who had worked together with the now-purged Wang Xiaoyu. This drove factional animosities underground, and they would be rekindled with a vengeance in Xuzhou in 1974, disrupting the railway network and forcing the intervention of Deng Xiaoping and other central leaders in the waning years of Mao's life (Dong and Walder, 2014; Vogel, 2011: 103–9).

Conclusion

The cleavages that defined factions in Xuzhou were generated by the initial actions of military officers in carrying out what they understood to be their orders to support the left, by the negative reaction by part of the rebel alliance that had seized power, and in turn by the army's harsh response to the rebels who challenged its authority. These interactions split the rebel movement into two camps: one that supported the new revolutionary committee and the army officers that had created it, and another that opposed the new arrangements and the officers of the 68th Army. These locally generated cleavages were deepened by new orders from Beijing in April 1967 that demanded the release of arrested activists and an end to bans on their organizations. This inadvertently cemented ties between the 68th Army's commanders and the rebel factions that supported them, but it also strengthened the rebel forces opposed to the army's recent actions.

It was at this point that the structures of the overlapping military and civilian bureaucracies came into play. Wang Xiaoyu's intervention in favor of the opponents of the 68th Army served only to split the Xuzhou military command and deepen the hostilities between the rival rebel factions. Disgruntled commanders of the 68th Army continued to provide covert assistance for the violent activities of the rebels who supported them, and this faction gained the support of the commander of the Nanjing Military Region, who had little use for what he saw as the meddling of the civilian radical Wang Xiaoyu. Cleavages appeared within the mainline forces, as expressed by the defection of the 29th Air Force Division, and within the command structures of the 68th Army itself, as individual officers took sides in civilian disputes and formed alliances with regional forces under the Jiangsu Military District and Xuzhou Subdistrict.

The splits within the armed forces emerged during the course of these events. The sharp reversals in policies toward the army's role in April 1967, enforced by Wang Xiaoyu's July 1967 intervention in Xuzhou, threatened to turn army commanders into scapegoats for the indecision and vacillation of

civilian leaders in Beijing. Many of them refused to accept this, and resisted. Efforts to force army commanders to relent—exemplified by Wang Xiaoyu's pressures on the 68th Army's subordinate units—served to split the mainline forces dispatched to Xuzhou. This turned a minority of powerful local commanders into dissenters who quietly supported rebel factions that were shunted to one side. After that point, different military units and commanders within the same units became involved in covert or overt support for opposite sides in the factional battles among rebels. In some periods, the civilian battles came to resemble a proxy war for factions within the military. For almost two years, the army's actions in Xuzhou served to exacerbate and deepen local factional antagonisms, and the arms supplied to the combatants escalated the casualties. The divisions within the army were never healed, and after Wang Xiaoyu's purge undercut the Kick faction and its military supporters in 1969, retribution against them was swift and severe, leaving a wound that was reopened later in the 1970s.

What can we conclude about the origins of military factionalism from this study of Xuzhou? The first observation is that there was nothing inherent in the bureaucratic structure of the armed forces, in factional tendencies within the armed forces or civilian leaders in Beijing, or in the political orientations of civilian rebel factions that would have predicted the divisions that emerged in the first three months of 1967. The factions and alliances that emerged in Xuzhou developed out of choices made by both military commanders and rebel leaders in a series of interactions beginning with the rebel power seizures of January 21 and 26 and the formation of a revolutionary committee under military auspices on March 18. Some of the rebel factions that took part in the power seizures supported the army's actions; others opposed them. When the armed forces moved against the rebels who opposed them with arrests and banishment of their organizations, they simultaneously created obdurate enemies and split the rebel movement between supporters and opponents of their actions.

If matters had ended there, as they did in Shanghai and other regions where early power seizures resulted in Beijing-approved revolutionary committees, splits would not have occurred in the military commands. However, Jiangsu, like most other provinces, failed to earn Beijing's support for its power seizure and was placed under military control. This is where factional divisions among civilian leaders in Beijing and beyond, along with the complex structure of the military bureaucracy, enter into the explanation. The factional divisions that mattered most do not seem in this case to be clearly related to revolution-era field army ties, but to disagreements in the civilian leadership—to some extent reflected among their military commanders. These disagreements played a major role in prolonging and exacerbating

factional fighting in Xuzhou, creating splits within the 68th Army and between units commanded by Ji'nan and Nanjing.

The first instance was the April 1967 directive that essentially reversed the initial January orders, calling for local armed forces to stand down, release their jailed opponents, and absorb dissident rebels into new power arrangements. In Xuzhou, as in many other places in China, local commanders dragged their feet, and instead provided covert support for friendly rebel groups. This April directive was the product of factional divisions in Beijing, in particular with concerns by civilian radicals associated with the Central Cultural Revolution Group that the initial intervention of the army was crushing rebel activity, bringing the Cultural Revolution to a premature end, and in their view serving the ends of moderate officials like Zhou Enlai and military commanders whom they saw as dissenting from the aims of the Cultural Revolution.

The second instance was the intervention of Shandong's Wang Xiaoyu, who pressured the commanders of the 68th Army to fully comply with the new directives. When they resisted, he coerced commanding officers in several subordinate units to apologize for their actions, essentially undermining their military superiors, finally creating enduring splits in the local military command. From this point forward different officers supported different sides in struggles between divided rebel forces, making them in some ways actors in a proxy war for different army factions. The complex bureaucratic structure of the military further contributed to these developments—Jiangsu Military District units commanded from Nanjing resisted the interventions of Shandong's Wang Xiaoyu, and Nanjing's military commander Xu Shiyou ended up working at cross-purposes from Shandong's military commander, Yang Dezhi, who was obligated to support Wang Xiaoyu.

Close observation of local developments like those in Xuzhou clarifies the extent to which the intervention of the armed forces not only failed to quell factional conflicts, but actually ended up serving to intensify and prolong them. Perhaps more important, however, this local case study also shows how the integrity of the armed forces was threatened as they became deeply involved in civilian conflicts. National policy oscillated and reversed itself, and representatives of different leadership factions intervened in ways that threatened to make local commanders into political scapegoats. As local commanders were pushed and pulled by these interventions, they formed alliances with mass factions and with other military officers, and sought civilian support where they could find it. Their awareness that central policy was changeable, and that it was the outcome of factional divisions in Beijing and beyond, strengthened dissident military commanders' resolve to persist in the expectation that they would eventually be vindicated. In the end, the perseverance of the dissident officers

of the 68th Army and their rebel clients in the Support faction paid off after the purge of Wang Xiaoyu in April 1969. Their opponents within the armed forces and in the Kick faction paid a heavy price.

When we explore the local origins of splits within China's armed forces, we become more acutely aware of how deeply implicated were army units in the factional violence that raged across the country in 1967 and 1968. Dispatched to preserve order, in the end they became a powerful force that accelerated the deterioration of civil order far beyond anything observed in 1966. In the course of these struggles, regional military commands themselves began to fragment into factions. Once we fully appreciate these developments, we understand more clearly how deeply this early phase of the Cultural Revolution threatened irreversibly to undermine China's post-revolution political order. The civilian structures of the party and the state had been effectively destroyed by the wave of power seizures in early 1967, and the only intact party organization and coherent national hierarchy was within the armed forces. If this hierarchy also disintegrated, there was no sure path back to political order. This consideration was surely paramount in the mind of Mao Zedong when he decided to lean decisively on the side of beleaguered military commanders and shut down factional struggles among rival rebel factions, with brute force if necessary. It is hard to know what Mao's ideal outcome would have been, but it is also hard to view this as anything more than an expedient response to dire circumstances.

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Notes

1. Information about the dates of establishment of revolutionary committees comes from the database employed in Walder, 2014. The only city in Jiangsu other

- than Xuzhou to establish a revolutionary committee during 1967 was Suzhou (February 18), and it may have done so due to its rebels' close ties to nearby Shanghai, which also established a revolutionary committee in February 1967.
2. A reliable summary of Wang Xiaoyu's biography can be found online at <http://baike.baidu.com>.
 3. The document includes speeches by Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, and Kang Sheng, and self-criticisms by Zhang Zhixiu, Wang Xiaoyu, and Yang Dezhi and others.
 4. The nationwide campaign known as the "Cleansing of the Class Ranks" 清理阶级队伍 typically followed immediately after the establishment of a revolutionary committee, and targeted factional opponents and a wide range of "class enemies," as conventionally defined (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2006: 253–72; Walder, 2015: 271–77).

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Author Biographies

Dong Guoqiang 董国强 is professor of History at Fudan University, Shanghai. His current research focuses on the compilation, editing, and analysis of materials on the Cultural Revolution in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, with support from Fudan University's fund to support collaborative research.

Andrew G. Walder is the Denise O'Leary and Kent Thiry professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University, where he is on the faculty of the Department of Sociology and a Senior Fellow at the Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies. He is the author of *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Harvard, 2009), and *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Harvard, 2015).