

Macau in Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1968

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Abstract: Despite the abrupt collapse of Portuguese power in Macau and the political turmoil that engulfed China during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese leadership did its utmost from 1966 to 1968 to keep Macau under Portuguese administration. China intervened politically and militarily to prevent the fall of the Portuguese administration in 1966 and signed an agreement with the Macau Portuguese administration to settle the crisis on 29 January 1967. However, the ongoing political crisis back in mainland China contributed to further political instability throughout 1967. Beijing became so apprehensive with the precarious situation in the tiny enclave that it had to intervene once again in 1968 to restore the *status quo ante*.

The impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the Portuguese-administered enclave of Macau has been a much neglected theme, notwithstanding the fact that it was one of the first foreign places to be hard hit by the unfolding events in China. As soon as the territory became engulfed in political turmoil, mainland China tried militarily to prevent an invasion by rebel Red Guards. For nearly a two-month period, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) maintained a tight security ring around Macau, which ultimately helped to bring about a political settlement between the Guangdong Government Foreign Affairs Bureau and the Portuguese administration, on the one hand, and the Anti-Portuguese Struggle Committee, also known locally as the Committee of Thirteen, on the other. The two

agreements, signed on 29 January 1967, basically envisaged the return to normality in Macau.

The ongoing political instability in mainland China and in Hong Kong reignited, however, the Cultural Revolution in Macau. In April 1967, there was a major confrontation between the Committee of Thirteen and the Macanese community in which the latter lost. The following month, the British Consulate and the Macau Branch of the Hong Kong Immigration Department were shut down after a thirteen-day harassment campaign. In June 1967, it was the turn of the Portuguese military garrison. A mutiny took place within its midst over the attitude that the Portuguese administration should take towards the Committee of Thirteen. The high command prevailed over junior officers and the Chief of Defense Staff had to apologize before the Committee of Thirteen and to pay compensation for the wounded Chinese. Finally, in the fall of 1967, the Committee of Thirteen tried to *kowtow* the Catholic Church, but failed.

In this paper I will analyze the emergence of these incidents and how China did its utmost to re-establish some form of normality in Macau, in December 1966 and January 1967. Despite its efforts, the situation deteriorated quite substantially throughout 1967. This state of affairs forced the Chinese central government to take several measures to restore the *status quo ante* in the Portuguese-administered enclave from late 1967 up to 1968.

The Taipa and Macau incidents

The incident that triggered Macau's turmoil occurred on Taipa Island, located on the southern part of Macau's peninsula. After waiting nearly three months for a building permit from the Island's Town Hall, on the morning of 15 November 1966, around a 100 youths started to dismantle without any authorization three dilapidated houses in the village of Taipa. This led to a standstill for seven hours between Chinese youngsters and the Public Security Police. To put an end to this situation, the Second Commandant of the Public Security Police ordered an intervention for four to five minutes. Although there were only two slightly wounded demonstrators, in order to mobilize the Chinese community against the Portuguese administration they alleged that several people had been injured. This scheme, however, failed. The Chinese community did not rise against the Portuguese administration (Fernandes, *Macau* 117-28).

Things started to change when the radicals in China were able to take control of the propaganda machine, in late November. Immediately, the events

in Macau were exploited to mobilize people. Between 30 November and 2 December 1966, several demonstrations took place inside the Macau Government House. They set the stage for the violent confrontations that would take place on 3 and 4 December (Fernandes, *Macau* 158).

In the meantime, the Portuguese administration kept making concessions to the local Chinese elite, although their desperate calls to the latter to set up an Inquiry Commission, with Chinese representatives, did not make any progress. On Saturday, 3 December, local Chinese pupils, instigated by the pro-Beijing business elite, ransacked two Portuguese institutions (the Macau City Hall and the Public Notary's Office, located on the main floor of the Holy House of Mercy) and a major symbol of Macanese identity (the statue of Colonel Vicente de Nicolau Mesquita).¹ The Public Security Police's failure to handle the riot led Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, Governor of Macau, to proclaim a state of siege and to order the intervention of the Portuguese military garrison. The following day, the pro-Beijing Chinese elite directed its violence towards local Chinese associations loyal to the Guomindang. The outcome of these two tumultuous days was 8 dead, 212 injured, and 62 detainees (Fernandes, *Macau* 151).

China's reaction to the events was quite terse. Guangdong's Deputy Governor, Zeng Sheng, told Ho Yin, the pro-Beijing leading businessman, that "the Chinese authorities did not approve the violence which has been used by the demonstrators, yesterday and today, nor the looting of Macau City Hall and the loss caused to public and private property" (Fernandes, *Macau* 167).

Besides this admonition, China persuaded the local Chinese elite to set up a "Struggle Committee against Portuguese Persecution," locally known as the Committee of Thirteen. To ensure that the latter had "revolutionary" credentials and to avoid the accusation of being "revisionists," the local businessmen appointed the leader of the pro-Beijing Macau General Association of Labour, Leong Pui, chairman of the Committee of Thirteen. The trade union leader was a secure bet, for many reasons. First, he was a carpenter by trade, a former police officer in the Macau Public Security Police, and an ex-refugee from mainland China. Second, his organization was aligned, since 1 October 1950, with the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Third, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the influential Macau Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Fourth, he received instructions from Guangzhou through Ma Man-kei, a key CCP leader in Macau (Fernandes, *Macau* 178-79).

In the meantime, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) intervened militarily with two objectives in mind: first, to prevent an invasion of the

Portuguese-administered enclave by rebel Red Guards; second, to stabilize the political situation in Macau. General Huang Yongsheng, commandant of the Guangzhou Military Region, and the insecure party and government leaders in Guangdong, Zhao Ziyang, first secretary of the Guangdong CCP, and Lin Liming, Guangdong's acting governor, respectively, imposed a military security ring around Macau to prevent the territory's invasion by rebel Red Guards (Fernandes, *Macau* 181-82).

On the afternoon of 3 December, the Chinese military garrisons in Guangzhou and Shiqi came under a "special prevention regime." Meanwhile, rebel Red Guards on Zhonghsan Island moved rapidly towards the Chinese side of the Barrier Gate, the border between mainland China and Macau. In order to stop the invasion of the enclave, the PLA ordered the stationing of 5,000 troops loyal to the Guangzhou Regional Commandant (Fernandes, *Macau* 182-91).

Moreover, the PLA Navy deployed a naval force expedition made up of eight rapid motorized gunboats, "primarily Shanghai, Shantou, and smaller classes" (Muller 147), which came from nearby Chinese naval bases. The placement of four navy frigates near the Outer Harbor and four patrols in the Inner Harbor of Macau Peninsula was an attempt to avoid an infiltration by rebel Red Guards with rubber boats or motorized junks.

This tight security grip was tested on 4 December. A flotilla of rebel Red Guards' armed junks, which was navigating towards Macau, was instructed by the PLA Navy to stop to be inspected. However, they did not obey. After some verbal warnings, the PLA Navy opened fire. Some of the junks that carried weapons and ammunitions exploded. The blasts were so violent that they were heard in Macau. Besides this naval intervention, the PLA Army also got involved. According to the Portuguese Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha:

An enormous crowd of "Red Guards" concentrated near our territory, right in front of the Barrier Gate. The Governor warned me by telephone. If an attack were launched, it would be impossible to resist militarily. I warned the Defense Minister, and we spent the whole evening in the Overseas Office waiting for the worst. [...] When the "Red Guards" demonstration was held, the PLA's troops occupied immediately positions to avoid the invasion of our territory. (Cunha 250-51)

The Governor's message was confirmed by the deployment of new PLA Army reinforcements on 5 December. The 5,000 soldiers concentrated in the vicinity of Macau were reinforced with 10,000 extra troops near the Barrier

Gate border, the Ducks Channel, and on the eastern side of the neighboring *Wanzai*, *Xiaohengqin*, *Dahengqin* islands (*La Cité*, 21 Dec. 1966), increasing the total number to nearly 15,000 troops. They “never showed any hostility” against their Portuguese counterparts.² This fresh supply of troops was followed by the placement of a “minefield camp located 200 meters from the Portuguese border” (*A Notícia*, *O Jornal do Brasil*, *Le Courrier de l’Escaut* 20 Dec. 1966) and of “three artillery pieces in a rice-field in the vicinity of Macau and quite contrary to traditional tactical doctrine.”³

In spite of the considerable show of force and the reprisals by the PLA, rebel Red Guards kept challenging the former. On 6 December, eight Red Guards were killed and nine were wounded by the PLA (*A Notícia*, *O Jornal do Brasil*, *Le Parisien libere*, *Le Courrier de l’Escaut* 20 Dec. 1966). This was not, however, the first incident between the Red Guards and the PLA. According to a Brazilian newspaper, “Hong Kong Chinese residents reported that, on several occasions since the beginning of the crisis, Chinese troops located near the Macau border did not allow Red Guards to infiltrate the Portuguese enclave” (*O Jornal do Brasil* 20 Dec. 1966). Ten days later, new incidents between Red Guards and the PLA took place on the Chinese side of the Barrier Gate in which 17 Red Guards were killed or injured (*O Jornal do Brasil* 20 Dec. 1966). In short, more Red Guards died or got wounded in the clashes with the PLA in the surrounding Chinese areas of the Portuguese-administered enclave than in the Macau incidents.

The struggle between the PLA and the rebel Red Guards was so violent that the Macau Kiang Wu Chinese Hospital started to pay a hefty price for the purchase of blood in the enclave. The demand was so high that Portuguese soldiers started to sell blood with great frequency; “some went twice and three times a day” to the Chinese hospital (Glyn-Daniel 124). Shortly afterwards, quite a few soldiers became anemic and started to collapse in military reviews, “or in fact everywhere.” This situation generated the “blood scandal” in the territory (Glyn-Daniel 124). In order to stop the latter the Portuguese administration and the garrison command tried to put an end to this practice, and were in part successful. Confronted, however, by a new shortage of blood, the Kiang Wu Chinese Hospital published an advertisement in the Portuguese press, on 21 December 1966, asking “the public-at-large of any nationality and sex, to give blood for transfusion, at 100,00 as compensation for 200cc of blood” (*Notícias de Macau* 21 Dec. 1966).

This conflict-ridden setting generated great apprehension among the three communities living in Macau. When Chan Kwei, a member of the Board of Directors of the Mong Ha district neighborhood association, crossed from the Portuguese side of the Barrier Gate border to the Chinese side, on 17 December, to attend the funeral of three Chinese killed in the Macau incidents, he was astonished by the Chinese military apparatus. According to him:

When we crossed the Barrier Gate, we saw ourselves in a no man's land. Nearby we saw Chinese soldiers in a combat posture, strung-up in trenches. They had machine-guns and they had their sight fixed on Macau. It was a surprise and we were afraid. We understood that the situation was tense. We walked a little bit more and we saw several military vehicles and tanks at a standstill and many more soldiers. I had never had seen such a thing. Personally, I admit, I was afraid. (Pinto and Lam)

On the other hand, many relatives of people working for the Portuguese administration and military garrison, who, since 3 December, had taken shelter at the Guia Fortress, the São Paulo do Monte Old Fort, and the São Januário Military Hospital, and who were afraid and confused by the prevailing political environment, tried to escape from the enclave (*The Herald*, 6 Dec. 1966). On 5 and 6 December, nearly 2,000 people abandoned Macau and went to Hong Kong (Fernandes, *Macau* 186). The Chinese were also highly afraid of the situation. According to the London *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in Macau, on 4 and 5 December, more than 850 Chinese had gone to Hong Kong (6 Dec. 1966). The vast majority of the Chinese refugees decided to "come to Hong Kong until we know more about China's plan for Macau" (*The Herald* 6 Dec. 1966). On 7 December more than 1,800 were reported to have arrived in the British colony (*South China Morning Post* 9 Dec. 1966). The same newspaper revealed that nearly 13,600 persons had abandoned Macau, between 3 and 7 December (*South China Morning Post* 8 Dec. 1966).

Confronted with the imminent collapse of Macau, the PLA intervened because it feared an invasion of the enclave by the rebel Red Guards. It was estimated that between 9,000 and 15,000 Red Guards were located in Zhuhai County in the first two weeks of December. *Xinhua she's* news bulletins mentioned that 9,000 Red Guards took part in demonstrations and rallies in Zhuhai on this occasion (*Survey of Mainland China Press* 14 Dec. 1966: 38). On the other hand, the *chargé d'affaires* of the Republic of China (Formosa/

Taiwan) in Lisbon, Wu Wenhui, told the Acting Director-General of Political Affairs of the Portuguese Foreign Office, João Hall Themido, on 28 December 1966, that nearly “15,000 Red Guards” were “near the Macau border.”⁴

An invasion of Macau by rebel Red Guards armed with light weapons and artillery would most likely result in a bloody conflict with the Portuguese garrison. The latter were highly conditioned by the Portuguese central government’s instructions to be unyielding with the Red Guards. The Portuguese Defense Minister, General Gomes de Araújo, ordered Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, on 10 December, that

it should guarantee the maintenance of public order and the integrity of our national territory. The resistance to secure the integrity of the territory shall be held until the exhaustion, we repeat, until the exhaustion of all means of warfare. The government trusts that you and the military and police forces under your command shall carry out in full this mission and that in no circumstances whatsoever shall there be a repetition of what happened in India.⁵

There was never a reason to carry out these instructions. The security ring placed by the PLA Army and Navy in the vicinity of the enclave prevented the invasion of Macau by rebel Red Guards. This was confirmed by the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Franco Nogueira. On 15 January 1967, he told his Thai counterpart, Colonel Thanat Khoman, that the rebel Red Guards wanted to invade Macau, but that the PLA had used force to prevent such outcome (Fernandes, *Macau* 186).

Besides foreclosing the possibility of an invasion, the PLA authorized the shipment of food to Macau on 8 December, thus giving a clear signal that it wished to maintain the *status quo ante*. If the embargo were kept it would be just enough to force the Portuguese to leave the territory. The third key signal that it did not wish to see the Portuguese leave was the fact that in spite of the huge political turmoil in Guangdong Province and in the vicinity of Macau, the PLA made sure that the water supply would not be disrupted (Fernandes, *Macau* 189).

Why did the PLA intervene to secure the Portuguese administration? First, as a conservative institution, the PLA knew quite well that it had to maintain the status of Macau while the weak party and state apparatuses did not reach a decision on the territory. Second, the PLA was keenly aware of Macau and Hong Kong’s importance to China in political, commercial, and financial terms, at home and abroad (Fernandes, *Macau* 191-93).

While the PLA placed a tight security ring around Macau, the director of the Guangdong Government Foreign Affairs Bureau issued a public notice, on 9 December. Basically, it supported the demands made by the Chinese community in Macau aligned with Beijing. They insisted on the presentation of a public apology to the Chinese population of the enclave, the punishment of three Portuguese Army officers and of the Taipa Island administrator, and the payment of compensation for the loss of life and injuries. Moreover, it demanded the banning of the Guomindang organizations and personnel in Macau and the handover of seven Taiwanese intelligence agents held by the Portuguese administration since June 1963. To ensure full backing for their demands, they were published on the first page of *Renmin ribao* the following day, and broadcast by Beijing Radio. This pressure forced Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho to accept the demands on 12 December (Fernandes, *Macau* 206).

His decision facilitated the beginning of negotiations between the Portuguese administration and the Committee of Thirteen, on the one hand, and with the Guangdong Government Foreign Affairs Bureau, on the other. After a month-and-a-half of talks, Governor Nobre de Carvalho signed two agreements to settle the crisis: one with the Committee of Thirteen, and the other with the Guangdong Government Foreign Affairs Bureau, on 29 January 1967. The former reinforced the role of the Macau Chinese business elite in the running of the enclave's affairs, for three main reasons. First, the Portuguese administration apologized in public before the Committee of Thirteen for the incidents. Second, it promised that it would never use force again to control the Chinese community. Third, it paid slightly more than MOP\$2 million to the Committee of Thirteen as compensation for the eight dead and 212 injured (Fernandes, *Macau* 236).

On the other hand, the two main conditions of the agreement signed with the Guangdong authorities were quite favorable to the Portuguese side. The ban on nationalist organizations and the expulsion of eight Guomindang leaders from Macau removed one of the hardest problems in the informal relationship between Macau and Beijing. Second, it put an end to the problem of Chinese refugees from mainland China, a situation that had plagued Macau since 1949. China agreed to take back all the refugees who came from the mainland from 30 January 1967 onwards, thus helping to ease this serious matter (Fernandes, *Macau* 237). China kept this promise until 1978.

With the celebration of the two agreements, Guangdong's decision-makers expected that the situation would return to normal in Macau. After having presented the agreement to representatives of the Guangdong Government

Foreign Affairs Bureau, in Gongbei, the latter told the Chief of Staff of the Governor's Office, Colonel Mesquita Borges, that the situation should return to normal and that "the lives and the belongings of all Chinese inhabitants of Macau were now entrusted to the government" (Fernandes, *Macau* 234), i.e., that the Portuguese administration continued to have legitimacy to run the enclave. The same was told to the members of the Committee of Thirteen. In addition, they were exhorted to "persuade their representatives to return to their normal work and activities in Macau and to instruct them that the incidents were over" (Fernandes, *Macau* 235). Shortly afterwards, the PLA security ring around Macau was withdrawn and the Chinese mainland media ceased to make any reference to the enclave (Fernandes, *Macau* 235).

This attitude of the Chinese leadership led the Portuguese decision-makers to believe that the crisis was over. The Acting Director-General of Political Affairs of the Portuguese Foreign Office, João Hall Themido, a member of the three-man special mission sent to Macau by the central Portuguese government to evaluate the crisis at the end of January 1967, told the Portuguese Ambassador to the Vatican, António de Faria, that "during the crisis China did not give an indication that it wanted Macau" (Fernandes, *Macau* 280). On the other hand, the Portuguese Foreign Affairs Minister, Franco Nogueira, reasoned that China wished to maintain the *status quo ante* in Macau. In a foreign policy lecture delivered at Pius XII University College in Lisbon, he argued "that what has happened in Macau will be beneficial to us, because it demonstrates that a huge country like China, which does not approve of 'colonialism,' accepts its existence on its doorstep, and did not refuse to negotiate with Portugal" (Fernandes, *Macau* 280).

The 1967 Turbulence

Despite the enthusiastic belief demonstrated by Chinese and Portuguese decision-makers that the situation in Macau would improve in 1967, in fact it got worse. Between April and September the Chinese elite was able to publicly force three institutions associated or accredited with the Portuguese administration to submit: the Macanese community, the British Consulate and the Macau Branch of the Hong Kong Immigration Department, and the Portuguese garrison. The elite's intent was only frustrated by the local Catholic Church.

The first two submissions took place without Beijing uttering any word in public. The first had as its target the Macanese community and took place on 13 April 1967. One hour before the official arrival of the first Macanese

Chief Secretary of the Portuguese administration, Alberto Eduardo da Silva, a conflict erupted with a Macanese couple named Rosário. Nearly 200 Chinese demonstrators, shouting Mao Zedong slogans, stormed Rosário's private residence and pasted the outside walls with *dazibao*. Later, this couple's workplace, the European *Farmácia Popular*, located near City Hall, also got the same treatment. Moreover, to intimidate the Macanese, Rosário's car was vandalized and paraded in the enclave's main thoroughfares.

The impact was quite immediate. The reception of the Macanese Chief Secretary in the Outer Harbor was extremely discrete, on the Portuguese side, and no one from the Chinese community showed up. On the other hand, the swearing-in ceremony had to be moved from City Hall, the traditional site of Macanese power, to Government House. Once again, no one from the Chinese elite made an appearance. The demonstrations against the Rosário family and the Macanese ceased only when the Judiciary Police concluded that there was no evidence for the alleged abuses committed against the servant Leong Lai-choi, and the Portuguese Governor paid her a compensation (Fernandes, *Macau* 284).⁶

One month later, it was the turn of two British institutions: the Consulate and the Macau Branch of the Hong Kong Immigration Department. To show their political support for the attempts in Hong Kong to undermine the local British colonial government, on 10 May 1967 demonstrators appeared near the British Consulate and the Hong Kong Immigration Department's branch in Macau (Fernandes, "As prostrações" 138-39). They plastered both residences with slanderous *dazibao* due to the fact that the Hong Kong government was having some success in reducing the violence perpetrated by pro-Beijing Chinese (Fernandes, "As prostrações" 138-39).

In the meantime, with the goal of mobilizing as much support as possible, the *Fok Lei* Bus Company, owned by Ho Yin and Macau's pro-Beijing business elite, offered two new free bus itineraries, one to the British Consulate and the other to the Hong Kong Immigrant Department's branch, on 15 May (Fernandes, "As prostrações" 143). Owing to the passivity of the Portuguese administration and security forces, the British consul and vice-consul, Norman Ions and Joseph Kemble, respectively, started to be harassed by demonstrators near their official residences. For security reasons, they took refuge at the Estoril Hotel (Fernandes, "As prostrações" 144).

Notwithstanding the multiple private assurances given by Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho to Norman Ions regarding the status of British institutions in Macau, the fact is that the demonstrations increased quite considerably, as did

the psychological pressure associated with them. The misdemeanors committed against the British consul and vice-consul became so intense that it contributed to their withdrawal from the enclave on 25 May 1967 and to the closure of both posts (Fernandes, “As prostrações” 150-51). This decision was a significant victory for Macau’s Chinese elite. Indeed, it put an end to intelligence gathering by the British Consulate and to the attempts to control the migration flows of Chinese refugees living in Macau who wished to go to Hong Kong, which were under a certain limited control since the establishment of the Macau Branch of the Hong Kong Immigration Department, on 24 August 1961 (Fernandes, “As prostrações” 154-55). On the other hand, it revealed the total lack of capacity by the Portuguese administration to render protection to foreign consular posts in the enclave (Fernandes, “As prostrações” 169-70).

The third successful submission was inflicted on the Portuguese military garrison. Three weeks after the withdrawal of the two British institutions from the enclave, Macau went through a major political and military crisis. Near the end of another demonstration against the British colonial government of Hong Kong, on 16 June 1967, a Portuguese corporal passed through a group of demonstrators, in order to arrive on time at Military Headquarters (Fernandes, “A prostração” 628).

Without delay, a small group of demonstrators pursued the corporal. However, he eluded them and went straightaway to Military Headquarters. Frustrated by the outcome, the demonstrators got together at the main door of the Portuguese barracks and protested against “fascist atrocities” allegedly committed by the military garrison. Imbued with a certain *esprit de corps*, the garrison’s rank and file threw stones and bottles at the demonstrators, injuring seven Chinese (Fernandes, “A prostração” 628-29).

Meanwhile, as a reprisal, a Portuguese soldier who was returning late to the barracks was detained by security elements belonging to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. He was taken to the *Hong Lok* football ground. During the trip he was badly beaten. Later he was taken to the head office of the Macau Chinese Chamber of Commerce (Fernandes, “A prostração” 630).

After several attempts by the Portuguese administration to settle this issue quietly, the soldier in question was handed over to the Public Security Police at the end of the night. Yet, in return, Governor Nobre de Carvalho agreed with the Committee of Thirteen that an apology would be publicly presented either by the Commandant of the Portuguese military garrison, Colonel Luís Mendes, or by the Chief of Defense Staff, Major Hernâni Ventura, and that

the victims would be compensated for injuries and other losses (Fernandes, "A prostração" 631).

In order to diminish the public consequences of another prostration before the local Chinese elite, there was a change in plans. Instead of the Commandant or the Chief of Defense Staff, the public apology would be presented by the Commander of the Fourth Cavalry Battalion, Major Rui Coelho Abrantes, since the soldier that had been beaten up belonged to this unit (Fernandes, "A prostração" 631). Despite his initial acceptance, at the last minute Major Abrantes led a mutiny against the Commandant and the Chief of Defense Staff. Basically, he disagreed with the policy of submission that was being pursued by the Portuguese administration and the commandant of the garrison. Trusted elements of his unit detained Colonel Luís Mendes and Major Hernâni Ventura and refused to carry out the instructions that they had received. They alleged that the latter constituted a humiliation for the Portuguese garrison. In addition, he wanted to detain all members of the Committee of Thirteen (Fernandes, "A prostração" 634-39).

The outcome of this failed mutiny was that the Chief of Defense Staff had to go to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to apologize for the incident and to promise the payment of an undisclosed amount of money to the wounded. Moreover, after the conclusion of this ceremony, he went to the Kiang Wu Chinese Hospital to pay a visit and to offer his respects to the injured, to present, once again, the same apology, and to promise the payment of MOP\$80,000 as compensation (Fernandes, "A prostração" 641). Beijing became so concerned with the worsening political and military situation in Macau that the Hong Kong office of *Xinhua she* issued a press release describing the incident, but in highly moderate language (Fernandes, "A prostração" 652-53).

The last institution to be assailed by the Macau business elite was the Catholic Church. Although the attacks had begun in December 1966, the latter did not become the main target of the Chinese elite until the last week of August 1967, when a small group of middle school pupils restarted the campaign against the Diocese (Fernandes, "A 'revolução'" 881-82). Shortly after, they plastered the main churches and Catholic-run middle schools with appalling *dazibao* that demanded a reply from the Bishop, Dom Paulo José Tavares, to the three demands presented by the Macau General Association of Chinese Students. In order to pressure the church to give in to their demands, a series of demonstrations took place on 1, 2, and 9 September. Nevertheless, the Church kept a firm

position and remained silent on this matter. On 8 September 1967, Dom Paulo José Tavares declared that “the talks were completely over” due to the mischievous tactics used by the Chinese (Fernandes, “A ‘revolução”” 882-83).

With the end of the secret talks, the Bishop decided immediately to issue a press release in Chinese, English, and Portuguese regarding the Church’s position on the dispute. The prelate stated categorically that he was the sole authority over Catholic affairs in the territory, that he had entertained secret talks with Ho Yin due to the pressure applied by the Portuguese administration, but that he did not accept the demands made by the Chinese elite. He forcefully argued that “no temporal force,” be it the Portuguese administration or the Chinese business elite, had the right to impose conditions on the Church (Fernandes, “A ‘revolução”” 883-84).

Besides its wide distribution in Hong Kong, it was fully printed in the Macau Catholic press. The Church’s bi-weekly newspaper, *O Clarim* (*The Bugle*), published it on 10 September, while the fortnightly *Religião e Pátria* (*Religion and Motherland*) printed it five days later. Resentful of Dom Paulo José Tavares’ attitude, Governor Nobre de Carvalho suspended the publication of the bi-weekly newspaper for ten days, and that of the fortnightly for twenty days. At the same time, he demanded from the Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha, the withdrawal of the prelate from the enclave, on 14 September 1967. He kept reiterating this demand until January 1968, but the Portuguese central government and the Vatican did not accept it (Fernandes, “A ‘revolução”” 884-86, 889-90).

Despite the schism between the bishop and the governor, the Chinese elite and the Portuguese administration were defeated in this confrontation. The prelate did not allow the teaching of “Mao Zedong thought,” the exercise of pro-Beijing political activities, and the employment of Maoist teachers in Catholic-run schools.

China Restored the *status quo ante*

The political turmoil that overwhelmed the enclave throughout 1967 displeased the Chinese leadership. A few highly significant measures were taken by the latter to restore the *status quo ante* in Macau.

The Acting Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade, Lin Haiyun, used the good offices of a well-known Brazilian lawyer, Danillo dos Santos, who had close relations with the Chinese leadership and with the Portuguese authoritarian regime, to find out if the Portuguese government was interested in sending a private mission to the fall Canton Trade Fair, which was planned to take place

from 15 October to 15 November 1967. Right away, Danillo dos Santos got in touch with the office of the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Franco Nogueira. The latter showed a keen interest in sending a trade mission to Canton, and the Portuguese Commerce Department recommended that José Celeste, head of the Far Eastern division of the biggest Portuguese corporation, *CUF*, should be in charge of the delegation (Fernandes, *Macau* 295-97).

This was followed by the full restoration of Portuguese power, i.e., the return to the *status quo ante* in the enclave. In August 1968, the Deputy Director of the Hong Kong office of *Xinhua she*, Qi Feng, came to Macau to instruct local pro-Beijing leaders and organizations to obey the Portuguese administration and laws, pay taxes, and to let them know that China did not want to take back the territory for the time being. He reminded local communists that in “Macau prevailed the capitalist system, while in China the socialist system” (Fernandes, *Macau* 299). Moreover, he criticized local leaders and organizations for having challenged the Portuguese administration throughout 1967, especially after the 29 January agreements. According to Qi Feng, the “patriotic” associations should settle their differences among themselves. However, if they failed to do so, they should “appeal to the Macau Government.” In order to ensure compliance with the new set of instructions, some of the sessions “lasted five, six, and seven hours” (Fernandes, *Macau* 299).

Finally, from 1968 onwards, China gave precise instructions to the Chinese business elite to demobilize local “mass organizations” and imposed a strict regime for the use of the Chinese national flag in the enclave. For them, the territory was administered by Portugal and it was politically undesirable to have further challenges to the local administration (Fernandes, *Macau* 299-303).

Conclusions

This behavior demonstrates that mainland China was neither an anti-systemic actor, i.e., committed to the violent overthrow of the international system, nor a revolutionary or an anti-colonial state, dedicated to the active toppling of colonial administrations. On the contrary, it was rather a conservative and pragmatic player in world politics. China restored quite successfully the *status quo ante* in Macau, not only once, as the two agreements of 29 January 1967 attest, but several times, with the invitation for a Portuguese trade mission to be sent to the Canton Trade Fair, the set of specific instructions of August 1968, the demobilization of the Chinese community, and the restricted use of the Chinese national flag in Macau. In short, China, supposedly one of the

most revolutionary powers at that time, did its utmost to restore the *status quo ante* in the tiny Portuguese-administered enclave.

Notes

¹ Vicente de Nicolau Mesquita was considered a “hero” and a “martyr” by the Macanese and by some Portuguese after he was able to lead a successful retaliation against Chinese forces by the Portuguese garrison following the assassination of Governor Ferreira do Amaral in the mid-nineteenth century. This monument and the Governor Ferreira do Amaral statue were erected in 1940, when China was occupied by the Japanese (Pina-Cabral 68).

² “The Macau Incidents: Report by the Second Commandant of the Macau Portuguese Public Security Police, Major António Vaz Antunes, for the Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha, 3 January 1967: 12,” MU/GM/GNP/028/E-06-15-40, Overseas Historical Archives (AHU), Lisbon.

³ “The Macau Incidents: Report by the Second Commandant of the Macau Portuguese Public Security Police, Major António Vaz Antunes, for the Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha, 3 January 1967: 11,” MU/GM/GNP/028/E-06-15-40, Overseas Historical Archives (AHU), Lisbon.

⁴ “Report of the Acting Director-General of Political Affairs of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, João Hall Themido, 28 December 1966,” PAA M. 1171, Portuguese Historic-Diplomatic Archives (AHDMNE), Lisbon.

⁵ “Top secret, urgent, and operational message from the Defense Minister to the Governor of Macau, 10 December 1966,” AOS/CO/PC-78-L, Pt. 13, fl. 370, Portuguese National Archives (ANTT), Lisbon.

⁶ The Judiciary Police is a law enforcement agency that acts in conjunction with the court system to prevent and investigate crimes, and that prepares cases for prosecution. Somewhat comparable to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States, the Hong Kong Police, or the English Metropolitan Police. For a detailed description of its goals, see “Welcome to the Homepage of the Judiciary Police of Macau SAR” (http://www.pj.gov.mo/800/pj_en/content_en.htm).

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