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*The role of the military in political transitions:  
from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day*

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## Volume I





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# URBAN MILITARY CONTROL BEFORE AND AFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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## Abstract

The founding of the People's Republic of China was a ground-breaking event on the ancient soil of China in modern history. Facing severe challenges both at home and abroad, as well as social turmoil, the Communist Party transitioned from seizing power to achieving initial victory during this sensitive and complex historical period. To ensure a smooth transfer of power, rapidly restore order, and prevent further chaos, the Communist Party imposed military control became a key instrument ensuring national security and regime stability during this period.

The development of military control, from its inception to establishment and maturity, was based on extensive experience. Starting from the later phase of the Liberation War, the People's Liberation Army continuously liberated major cities previously occupied by the KMT. Confronted with an unfamiliar urban environment, it was no longer appropriate to continue using the methods established for rural revolutionary bases. In the absence of a mature urban management system, military control was proposed and widely implemented across the nation. Although it exhibited some distinct characteristics at different stages and in various regions, it generally accomplished the tasks of taking over and transforming the management of cities. With the successful convening of the People's Congresses at all levels, which represented the people's democratic regime, military control subsequently withdrew from the historical stage.

**Key words:** urban military control, founding of the People's Republic of China, the People's Liberation Army

During the process of political change, cities are of utmost importance. Only by controlling cities can an influential political center be established. However, during the struggle for power and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China (CPC) placed the control of cities as the last step. The CPC directed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to engage in rural struggles for 20 years, and only in the final two years before taking power did they swiftly capture hundreds of cities. In the final decisive battles, the cities that had suffered from warfare did not suffer severe damage. Social order was quickly restored and a new regime established. The smooth transition of urban political power was a result of the military control of the PLA. This article focuses on discussing two issues: Why did the CPC order the military to implement military control over cities? And how was such effective military control carried out?

### **The features and requirements of power transition in China demanded military control over cities**

From 1927 to 1949, the CPC, through large-scale warfare, successfully took control of the country and established the People's Republic of China. During this period, the PLA not only completed the task of capturing cities and land, but also adapted timely to the profound shift of struggle focus from rural to urban areas, and took on the task of military control in cities and facilitating the establishment of urban democratic governments.

### **The characteristic of China's political transition was violent revolution, and the PLA had to undertake the dual tasks of combating and establishing political power**

In modern China, political transitions were extremely difficult. The old regime practiced dictatorial rule, the country lacked democracy and the rule of law, and the people had no right to free election. The CPC once led workers' movements, student movements, and peasant movements, hoping that strikes of workers and of students, as well as various demonstrations, would prompt the government to implement democratic politics, but these activities were brutally suppressed again and again. Therefore, the transition of political power in China could not be achieved through peaceful means.

It had to be achieved through armed struggle, completely smashing the old regime to establish a new one.

In August 1927, the CPC began to lead the military to resist the old regime through warfare. Mao Zedong proposed the famous dictum that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun<sup>(1)</sup>”. Since then, the CPC established its own military, the Chinese Workers and Peasants Red Army. This military was renamed the People's Liberation Army in 1948. At the beginning of its establishment, the Red Army was very weak and could easily transformed to a bandit-like armed force in the brutal struggle environment. Mao Zedong along with other founders of the CPC proposed that the Red Army must establish military bases to integrate warfare and political power establishment, mutually reinforcing. Therefore, the military's task was not only to fight but also to assist in establishing grassroots political power. In this way, the Red Army undertook the “three major tasks”: fighting, raising funds, and mass work.

It can be said that the Red Army was not only a combat team but also a work team and a publicity team. In addition to the military system, the Red Army also established a complete political work system, which became one of its characteristics.

**The path of the CPC to seize political power was to first occupy the countryside and surround the cities, forming a political model centered on resource redistribution in the countryside**

At the beginning of the CPC's seizure of political power, attempts were made to first control the cities. The idea at the time was to command the military to capture major cities, achieve victory in one or several provinces first, and then extend the same model of political power shift nationwide. However, in China the old regimes in the cities were very strong. The weak Red Army repeatedly failed to capture cities. The CPC realized that when the forces were insufficient, it was necessary to stay away from the cities and enter the countryside. They brought the military into the vast rural areas with poor transportation and economic backwardness, surrounded the cities from the countryside, and finally captured the cities.

Entering the countryside, the CPC recognized that “China's land system is extremely unreasonable”. Long-term land annexation led to a few landlords occupying the vast majority of land and brutally exploiting farmers. “This serious situation is the root cause of our nation's history of being invaded, oppressed and mired in poverty and backwardness; it is the fundamental obstacle to our country's road to realize democratization, industrialization, independence, unity, and strength.”<sup>(2)</sup> For this reason,

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1. *Selected Military Writings of Mas Tse-tung*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2017), Volume 1, 2.

2. *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of the Communist Party of China (1921 - 1949)*, Volume 24, 416.

the CPC launched a war with the goal of “land revolution” and established a democratic political power with workers and peasants as the main body.

The key to this large-scale rural political change was to deprive landlords of the wealth they accumulated through monopoly and exploitation, and to distribute the land equally among the farmers. This changed the feudal exploitation system and fully mobilized the enthusiasm for social production. As a result, the Red Army and the peasants developed a revolutionary perspective of destroying the old economic system and sharing monopolized resources. Even moving some war materials from the cities was considered “necessary and correct”.<sup>(3)</sup>

By 1947, the land reform in China had reached its apogee. The vast rural areas “abolished all land ownership of landlords”, and all land was “equally distributed without distinction of gender, age, or status”.<sup>(4)</sup> At the same time, the PLA captured some larger-sized towns and cities, and this method of equal resource distribution inevitably was applied in those cities. In November 1947, the PLA captured Shijiazhuang, a major city located at a railway transportation hub with high industrial and transportation value. However, as soon as Shijiazhuang was liberated, farmers from the surrounding areas flocked into the city, capturing landlords, dividing property, and some troops also moved away machines and food, resulting urban disorder and economic stagnation. The CPC realized that cities were different from rural areas. The focus in the cities should be on construction rather than destruction. So they began to look for ways to manage cities.

### **The CPC’s work focus shifted to cities, and the rural political power change method was not suitable for cities. The PLA created an urban political construction model based mainly on military control**

The chaos in Shijiazhuang attracted high attention from the CPC. In February 1948, the CPC Central Committee demanded: “Prevent the erroneous application of the methods of struggling with landlords and rich peasants and eliminating feudal forces in rural areas to cities”.<sup>(5)</sup> It was necessary to develop production and prosper the economy in cities to support the war and ensure the construction of New China. Though the policy was decided clearly now, there was still a lack of effective methods on how to receive and manage cities. Therefore, the CPC Central Committee required various leading bodies to distill urban work experience, hoping to find good practices and experiences.

More than three months later, a work report from the Northeast Bureau of the CPC attracted the attention of the CPC Central Committee. The report proposed: “Implement a short-term military management system in newly occupied cities. In the early stage of

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3. Archives Bureau, CCCPC, *Selected Works of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, (Beijing: Party School of the CPC Press, 1991), Volume 17, 210.

4. *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of the Communist Party of China (1921 - 1949)*, Volume 24, 417.

5. *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of the Communist Party of China (1921 - 1949)*, Volume 25, 185.

occupation, the military management must be undertaken by the highest command organ of the attacking city's troops. All local party and government agencies and personnel entering the city must obey its command", so as to restrain various personnel and protect urban industrial and commercial business. The CPC Central Committee believed that military control was a good method, and immediately forwarded this experience to various regions, requiring them to follow it. Since then, after each army captured a city, military control was immediately implemented. The CPC Central Committee continued to pay attention to the situation and evaluate the effects. It pointed out in November 1948 that "The method of implementing military control is very effective".<sup>(6)</sup>

In March 1949, the CPC decided that "the focus of the party and the military must be placed on cities, and great efforts must be made to learn on how to manage and build cities".<sup>(7)</sup> The Central Military Commission of the CPC issued instructions to the military: "In the future, the practice in the past 20 years of 'Putting rural areas first and cities second will be reversed to 'cities first and rural areas second'. The military is not only a combat team but also a work team. Military cadres should learn to receive and manage cities as a whole".<sup>(8)</sup>

According to these requirements, the PLA expanded its missions and functions comprehensively. While continuing to fight and capture cities, it trained a large number of personnel to implement military control in the newly occupied cities, keep cities stable and restore production after experiencing shelling, in order to achieve a smooth transition of power and maintaining the interests of the people.

### **Urban military control ensured a smooth transition of power and promoted the political reforms**

The PLA organized capable forces to establish Military Control Commission before and after the occupation of a city as the highest power organ in the city to implement systematic management. Generally speaking, urban military control is carried out in three steps: First, eliminate and transform the old power organs. Second, take over the urban system and maintain production and life. Third, establish a people's democratic regime through election.

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6. Party Literature Research Centre, CCCPC, PLA Academy of Military Science, *Selected Military Works of Zhou Enlai*, (Beijing: People's Publishing House Press, 1997) Volume 3, 536.

7. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, (Beijing: People's Publishing House Press, 1997) Volume 4, 1427-1428.

8. *Selected Military Writings of Mas Tse-tung*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2017), Volume 5, 495-496.

## **Implement military control immediately after occupying the city, and eliminate the old political power institutions and reactionary organizations**

The precondition of establishing a new regime is to completely eliminate the old political system and crack down on the destructive activities of die-hard elements. The CPC required the cancellation of the reactionary political power organs, and all affairs should be put under the jurisdiction of the Military Control Commission and the People's Government. It required to "eliminate all remaining forces of counter-revolution", and to "dissolve and close all organizations and organs of reactionary parties, groups and special service agencies, confiscate all their public properties and files, and strictly prohibit them from continuing any activities".<sup>(9)</sup> The Military Control Commissions in various places, in accordance with the policy of "punishing the principal offenders, leaving the accomplices alone, and rewarding those who merit", and the principle of "combining leniency with suppression", resolutely carried out the work of banning reactionary organizations, eliminating spies and purging bandits. Shenyang and Tianjin dissolved hundreds of organizations engaged in illegal activities, with more than 30,000 people registering at the Military Control Commission to accept reformation.<sup>(10)</sup> In 1949, the Military Control Commission in Beijing alone took under control a large number of spies engaged in reactionary activities and seized 407 radio stations and 1,559 guns.<sup>(11)</sup> Public security departments across various regions also registered and took in a large number of displaced soldiers. In the first month after Shanghai's liberation, nearly 20,000 soldiers from the old regime reported to the garrison command and the public security bureau.<sup>(12)</sup>

Military control actions shattered the reactionary organizations left in the cities by the old regime, foiled their sabotage plans, investigated and prosecuted thousands of cases of looting, theft, and other destructive activities. In this way, it eliminated serious safety hazards for the new government, prevented turmoil and chaos, maintained stable order in the cities and protected the lives and property of the people.

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9. *Selected Works of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, (Beijing: Party School of the CPC Press, 1992), Volume 17, 540.

10. The Compilation Group of the Financial and Economic History of the Northeast Liberated Area, *Selected Materials of the Financial and Economic History of the Northeast Liberated Area*, (Heilongjiang: People's Publishing House, 1988), Volume 1, 228-230; *Unforgettable Years - Records of Initial Social Governance in Tianjin*, (Party History of the Communist Party of China Press, 1994), 207.

11. Beijing Archives, *Before and After the Peaceful Liberation of Beiping*, (Beijing Publishing Press, 1988), 307-315.

12. Liu Songbin, *The Communist Party of China's Take - over of Big Cities (1945 - 1952)*, (Beijing Library Publishing Press 1997), 250.



## Comprehensively Take Over the Urban System and Stabilize the Order of Production and Daily Life

Cities are complex systems that integrate finance, banking, civil affairs, education, culture, health and more. Problems in any area will affect the entire city, leading to panic and chaos. The Military Control Commission adopted a method of package reception and incremental transformation, systematically taking over the city. In Shenyang and Beijing, the Military Control Commission adopted a principle of “individual system, top to bottom, keep intact, and receive first and divide later”. The management structure of all old regime departments, enterprises and institutions was kept unaltered. They were received intactly from top to bottom without change. Transformation was carried out after the reception. The Shanghai Military Control Commission adopted the policy of “receiving the system in a package, investigating and researching, and gradually transforming”.<sup>(13)</sup> It implemented a quick and detailed reception. This method proved to be significantly effective. And in merely two weeks, the reception of the old Shanghai government system was complete.

At the same time, the CPC clarified that restoring and developing production in the cities should be a central task. The military control authorities implemented the policy of “original position, original salary and original system”.<sup>(14)</sup> It demanded former staff to work according to the original position and system, only sending military representatives for supervision without interfering in the business activities of enterprises and factories. It fully handed the industrial and commercial enterprises over to the appropriate responsible institutions for management and transformation. Thus production was quickly restored and people's employment and life ensured.

There also happened the famous “Silver Dollar Battle”, which was a fierce financial struggle between the military control commissions and speculators. The military control commissions and the people's governments issued orders that the Renminbi was the only legal currency, and gold bars, silver dollars, and foreign currencies must all be exchanged at the People's Bank, strictly prohibiting free circulation in the market. However, some financial speculators turned a deaf ear, speculated on gold and silver, hoarded rice and cotton, and drove up prices. Shanghai speculators even boasted: The People's Liberation Army could enter Shanghai, but not the Renminbi! For this reason,

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13. Central Archives, the Archives of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, *Liberation of Cities (Volume 2)*, (China Archives Press, 2010), 502.

14. This was the policy determined by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to protect industrial and commercial enterprises in newly liberated cities. It required that the existing management system be retained unchanged, the original employees be kept in place, and the original salaries be maintained. “When we are not yet able to formulate a more reasonable and effective system to replace certain unreasonable or obsolete elements in the old system, it is better to be cautious and not act rashly, so as not to affect the production organization and lead to anarchy”. Regarding the reform and transformation of the old system and old employees, “be extremely cautious” and a prudent attitude must be adopted. Seeing by *Selected Works of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, (Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Press, 1992), Volume 17, 313 - 315.

the military control commission took decisive measures, sealed the Shanghai Stock Exchange Building and arrested more than 200 principal members who disrupted the financial order. Wuhan, Guangzhou, and other places also sealed underground money shops, severely cracking down on the illegal activities of speculators. The national grain and oil prices subsequently fell. The implementation of military control prevented the city from experiencing serious situations such as production stagnation and people being displaced, providing good conditions for the construction of New China.

### **Gradually Promote Democratic Reforms and Facilitate the Birth of the People's Government**

In the transition of urban power from old to new, military control also played an important role in ensuring democracy. The Military Control Commission and the municipal government implemented a joint office system, with two hats and one body, which was efficient and convenient. Corresponding district people's governments and street offices were also established to form a systematic administrative structure.

Governments at all levels adopted a representative meeting system to ensure that government personnel were elected by the people. In 1947, the CPC clarified that the People's Representative Conference was the highest authority of governments at all levels, and all powers were centralized in the representative meeting. The People's Representative Conference needed to be produced through universal elections. Since each region had just been liberated and all aspects were not yet in order, the conditions for elections were temporarily not met. The CPC also stipulated: "Before the general election of the People's Congress at the local level, the local people's representative meetings from all walks of life will gradually exercise the powers of the People's Congress". In this complex process of government building, the Military Control Commission served temporarily as the highest authority in the newly liberated cities, acting as the administrative management body and facilitating the construction of democratic politics.

Construction of political democracy was divided into two steps. The first step was that the Military Control Commission appoints or hires representatives from all walks of life to form a representative meeting of all sectors, serving as a counseling and consulting institution, contacting people from all walks of life, and making necessary preparations for the subsequent establishment of the People's Congress at all levels. The representative meeting of all sectors is a temporary negotiation institution and has no binding power on the government.

The second step was that after the people's organizations in the cities are organized, the representative meetings of people from all walks of life are elected. When conditions are ripe, they act on behalf of the authority of the Municipal People's Congress. The representative meeting of people from all walks of life can review and approve the

government's guidelines and policies, and elect members such as the mayor and deputy mayor of the city government.

With the birth of the government institutions which were elected by the people, the mission of military control also came to an end. In February 1951, the Beijing People's Congress pointed out, "When the People's Congresses at all levels and the People's Governments can fully perform their duties, military control naturally becomes unnecessary, and all its powers are naturally replaced by the People's Governments at all levels".<sup>(15)</sup> In January 1953, the Central People's Government Committee passed the "*Resolution on Convening the National People's Congress and the Local People's Congresses at Various Levels*." Subsequently, all over the country, through universal election of representatives and the convening of the People's Congresses at all levels, the People's Governments at all levels were established, and the new regime was founded. The PLA's military control mission for the cities was declared a victorious end.

### **The influence of urban military control on the construction of the new Chinese regime**

Urban military control was not an original initiative of the Communist Party of China. Many cities in China in the first half of the 20th century had changed hands several times. They were fought over by warlords, occupied by the Japanese invaders, recovered by the Kuomintang army, and finally liberated by the People's Liberation Army. These cities and their residents had become accustomed to the change of city administrators, and the economic level and quality of life had declined with each change. Just as an ancient Chinese poem says, "In prosperity, the common people suffer; in decline, the common people also suffer." Only the urban military control by the People's Liberation Army was different. It made the urban citizens have confidence in the new regime, thus supporting the birth and stability of the new urban regime.

#### **For the first time, it presented the progressiveness and democracy of the new regime to the urban public, which enabled the new regime to quickly gain extensive trust and support from the public**

For Chinese cities, the most painful experience was being captured by the Japanese invaders. From 1931 to 1945, the Japanese invaders captured important Chinese cities such as Beiping (now Beijing), Shanghai, Nanjing, Tianjin, and Wuhan. After the Japanese troops entered the cities, they wantonly plundered resources and randomly massacred the people. People were like living in the dark. Every day when they woke up and opened their eyes, they still couldn't see the light. Recalling being invaded and oppressed, with the nation in ruins and the mountains and rivers broken, they felt as if a huge boulder was weighing on their hearts. In September 1945, the Japanese invaders surrendered,

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15. *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi (Volume 2)*, (People's Publishing Press, 1985), 60.

and The War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression welcomed a glorious victory. Residents in cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, Beiping, and Tianjin took to the streets one after another, cheering “China is free” and “It’s dawn.” As the victors of the war, what people welcomed most was the entry of their own national army into the cities. A writer wrote: “The people had been in great distress for a long time and were looking forward to the ‘national army’ as a parched land looks forward to rain clouds. Standing by the roadside, seeing the ecstatic shouts and cheers for the army in the crowd, I couldn’t help but have my eyes filled with tears.”<sup>(16)</sup> But what they welcomed were groups of new “robbers.” The takeover of the cities by the Kuomintang army was a looting - style takeover. Officers greedily searched for the “five things”: gold, cars, houses, women, and money. The officials who took over the factories put seals on the front doors and quietly removed the supplies from the back doors and took them for themselves, causing the factories to stop production and the workers to lose their jobs. In a steel mill in Beiping, when the iron was being melted at high temperature, the Kuomintang army randomly drove the workers away and put up seals, causing the molten iron and the machines to fuse together, destroying all the parts. A poet wrote: “Hungry eagles fly all over the sky, hungry tigers roll on the ground.” “Is this really dawn?”<sup>(17)</sup> A newspaper commented: “In the future, the government should focus on how to win back the hearts of the people.”<sup>(18)</sup> A Kuomintang official said worriedly: “If this continues, although we have recovered the territory, we will lose the hearts of the people!”<sup>(19)</sup>

The citizens who enthusiastically expected the Kuomintang regime received a cold - hearted return. This made it inevitable for them to be on guard and skeptical when the Communist Party captured and took over the cities again just two or three years later. However, the urban policies of the Communist Party and the People’s Liberation Army led by it were completely different from those of the Kuomintang. There was only one starting point, that is, for the fundamental interests of the broad masses of the people. Therefore, when there was looting of supplies in newly liberated cities, the Communist Party immediately attached great importance to it and quickly adopted the method of military control. It sent a large number of troops to take over the cities and implemented military - style control to avoid interference and destruction of urban production and people’s lives. The urban control actions of the People’s Liberation Army not only avoided the possible losses and chaos during the transition of the old and new regimes, creating a favorable environment conducive to production development, but also resumed production soon after taking over the affiliated enterprises. For example, in Tianjin, in seven textile mills, more than 90% of the employees returned to the mills on the second day after being taken over and immediately started production. All 69

16. Zheng Zhenduo, “The First Step towards Democracy”, *the inaugural issue of Democracy*, October 13, 1945.

17. Tao Juyin, *What I Saw and Heard on the Isolated Island*, (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing Press, 1979), 323.

18. Song Ping, “Records of Cold Spring in the Ancient Capital”, *Weekly Report*, Issue 30, March 20, 1946.

19. Shao Yulin, *Before and After the Victory*, (Taipei: Biographical Literature Press, 1967), 76.

factories resumed work within one and a half months. <sup>(20)</sup>In Beiping, more than 20 enterprises were in a shutdown state, and they resumed production within less than half a year after being taken over, and many factories and mines achieved the best results in history. The output of Yanjing Paper Mill increased by 26% compared with that before liberation, and the output of Mentougou Coal Mine increased by 13% compared with that before liberation. <sup>(21)</sup>By January 1950, the output of Shijingshan Iron and Steel Plant exceeded the highest annual output in history by 73%. <sup>(22)</sup>The number of new enterprises increased rapidly. In Beiping, within one year after liberation, the number of private - industry households increased by 51% and the number of employees increased by 47%. In Shanghai, within half a year after liberation, the proportion of private - enterprise start - up households increased from 25% to 61.7%, and industries such as shipbuilding, rice milling, and medical devices all started production.

These situations made the urban citizens see the vast difference between the Communist Party's takeover of the cities and that of the Kuomintang. For the first time, the Chinese people truly had the hope of building the country in peace and creating a better life. In addition, the People's Liberation Army's urban control was not autocratic, compulsory management and restriction. In all aspects such as society, economy, and life, before formulating policies, the People's Liberation Army's urban control committees would widely solicit the opinions of the general public. These measures greatly inspired the pride and sense of responsibility of the citizens as the masters of the city, making them know that their own destinies began to be in their own hands. Thus, they trusted the new regime of the Communist Party of China more, dared to offer bold suggestions, and enthusiastically engaged in production and city construction.

### **Quickly stabilize the chaotic economic and trade order, and provide a solid foundation and favorable conditions for the comprehensive construction of the new regime**

Before the People's Liberation Army took over the cities, the political rule, social governance, economic and trade management of the old regime were in chaos. The most obvious phenomenon was the incredible skyrocketing of prices, and both the speed and degree of the increase were astonishing. The quality of life of urban residents declined rapidly, and a large number of people became destitute in a very short time. From July 1937 to May 1945 during the full - scale Sino - Japanese War, the retail price index in important cities soared from 104.5 to 216,786, an increase of more than 2,000 times. <sup>(23)</sup>After the victory of China's War of Resistance Against Japan, although the war ended,

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20. *People's Daily*, February 4, 1949.

21. *The Peaceful Take - over of Beiping*, (Beijing: Beijing Publishing Press, 1993), 152.

22. *The Communist Party of Beijing Municipal Committee, Stand at the Forefront of Revolution and Construction*, (Beijing: Beijing Publishing Press, 1992), 118 - 119.

23. The Counselor's Office of the Head Office of the People's Bank of China, *Historical Materials on the Currency of the*

the price increase and inflation still did not end, and the rising speed became faster and faster. The foreign minister of the Kuomintang government wrote in his diary: "The public opinion is very desperate about the government. The main reason is the high price, and the future of the government's finance is very bleak. The government shows 'incompetence' in this aspect, and I am really worried."<sup>(24)</sup> By the end of 1946, the price index had risen to 627,210, which was four times higher than that in 1945. This was a great inflation rarely seen in Chinese history. In 1947, the urban grain prices rose rapidly. On May 2, the price of rice in Nanjing increased from 130,000 yuan per dan to 200,000 yuan within 10 days. On May 7, it rose from 190,000 yuan to 300,000 yuan within a few hours. In anger, the people began to loot rice shops everywhere. Tram workers began to strike, and school teachers began to go on strike, demanding that the government raise their salaries. Hungry young students began to launch a large - scale "Anti - Hunger, Anti - Civil War" march, but they were brutally suppressed and arrested by the Kuomintang government.

The People's Liberation Army implemented military control over the cities, focused on stabilizing the market and financial order, comprehensively used economic and administrative means, gave full play to the high - efficiency effectiveness of the military control system, and waged a fierce struggle against speculative capital. First of all, it was the exchange of old and new currencies. In 1945, after the Kuomintang took over the cities from the Japanese invaders, according to the price comparison calculation, the exchange rate between the old and new currencies should not exceed 100:1, but the Kuomintang government set it at 200:1, which led to the price drop that had just emerged after the victory of the war quickly turning into a rise. Even government departments such as the post office and transportation took the lead in raising prices, and the people were in great distress. After the Communist Party took over the cities, the situation was completely different. In early 1949, when Beiping exchanged old and new currencies, 992,000 people got preferential treatment, with an average of 116 yuan more per person in RMB, which could buy 11.6 catties of millet.<sup>(25)</sup> Regarding the purchasing power of the people's wealth, one was getting less and less, and the other was getting more and more, which reflected the fundamental difference between the two regimes in terms of whether they competed with the people for profits. Secondly, it was to stabilize prices. After the grain harvest in the summer of 1949, lawbreakers took the opportunity to hoard grain, snapped up gauze, hardware, chemical raw materials, coal, etc., and bid up prices, causing prices to rise by 3.26 times in the fall and lasting for more than 40 days. The economic battle was on the verge of breaking out. The military control commissions of the People's Liberation Army cooperated with local governments to transport large

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*Republic of China*, (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing Press, 1991), Volume 2, 385-386.

24. Wang Shijie, *Wang Shijie's Diary*, (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, 1990), Volume 5, 341.

25. Rong Zihe, *Recalling the Financial and Economic Take - over Work in Beiping*, included in Compiled by the Cultural and Historical Materials Research Committee of the Beijing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference: "Dawn in Beijing", (Beijing Publishing Press, 1988), 183.

- scale grain, cotton, cotton cloth, and coal across the country, and took advantage of the panic buying trend to sell unpopular goods to speculative merchants. On November 25, major cities took unified actions to sell major supplies in large quantities, causing the market quotations to drop significantly. At the same time, they tightened the money supply and froze loans, forcing speculative merchants to sell the goods hoarded with high - interest principal at reduced prices, and the more they sold, the cheaper they became. During the Chinese Spring Festival in the winter of 1950, Shanghai sold more than 200 million catties of grain openly, forcing speculative merchants waiting for huge profits to sell all the hoarded rice at a loss. State - run trading companies quickly bought a large number of supplies when prices dropped in order to continue to stabilize prices and the market. The state - run economy newly established in New China had grasped the initiative in the market.

**Cautiously and steadily establish grass - roots people's political power, so that national decrees can be quickly unified to the Central People's Government, and realize the "grand unification" pattern of the new regime**

Chinese culture has several of the most prominent characteristics, including national unity, family harmony, and valuing peace. Among them, the foremost is the complete unity of the country. However, China has a vast territory and a large population. Whenever the regime becomes corrupt and the country is divided, there will be many warlords, large and small, who rely on their military forces and rule over the areas they have carved out. It is the last thing the Chinese people want to see that people of the same clan kill each other. Therefore, every time there is a change of the old and new regimes, preventing division, maintaining unity, and at the same time maintaining a certain degree of autonomy in various places are very important topics in institutional design.

For this reason, while the military control commissions in various cities managed the cities and gradually generated urban political power through all - sectors representative meetings, electing people's representatives, and people's congresses, New China also established military - control - nature military and administrative committees in large administrative regions. Because the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Field Armies of the People's Liberation Army (equivalent to front - army - level, generally having more than 10 corps, with the number of people ranging from 180,000 to 880,000) liberated four large areas in northwest, southwest, east, and central - south China, the leading institutions of these four field armies undertook the tasks of the military and administrative committees in six large administrative regions (the country had five - level local administrative systems: large administrative regions, provinces, counties, districts, and townships) in northwest, southwest, east, and central - south China. Its basic function was to implement military control over the entire region, eliminate the remaining reactionary forces of the old regime, restore and maintain social order, and provide a good environment for the construction of local political power at all levels within the jurisdiction. Indeed, some

people pointed out that the power of the military and administrative committees in large administrative regions was too concentrated and the regions under their jurisdiction were too large. However, China has its own special circumstances. China has a large territory and a large population, and the economic development in various regions is unbalanced. Only under the condition of economic development can it gradually move towards complete unity. Therefore, the division of national political power organizations should be conducive to both national unity and adapting measures to local conditions. Under the unified policy leadership, adapt measures to local conditions, give play to the enthusiasm of local areas, and seek unity in the development of adapting measures to local conditions. As the representative organs of the central government and the highest organs of local political power, the military and administrative committees in large administrative regions are conducive to the central government realizing unified leadership across the country through local Party organizations at all levels and state organs through government power organs.

## Conclusion

Around the founding of New China, it was a period of the transition between the old and new regimes in China and of drastic social upheaval. In newly liberated cities, although the Kuomintang regime had been overthrown and its military groups had been eliminated, there were still a large number of secret agents, bandits, and stragglers and disbanded soldiers, and the social order was rather chaotic; while the people's regime had just been established and was not yet consolidated, and its institutions were still not fully - fledged. This situation determined that in order to complete the dual tasks of completely destroying the old regime and establishing and consolidating the people's democratic regime in newly liberated cities, extraordinary measures must be taken to quickly stabilize the social order and smoothly realize the regime transition. The military control actions of the People's Liberation Army emerged under this background and were gradually perfected in practice.

Military control actions mean the people's dictatorship to the hostile forces and true democracy to the masses of the people. Realizing military dictatorship and at the same time promoting people's democracy, and organically combining the two through military control is a major feature of the military control actions of the People's Liberation Army. The more thoroughly the military control actions clean up the hostile forces, the more consolidated the people's democratic regime will be. The military control of the People's Liberation Army has completed this task through two - stage actions. First, carry out surface - level strikes, that is, to eliminate the remaining enemies, dissolve reactionary organizations, arrest war criminals and reactionaries, etc., and basically stabilize the situation. Second, carry out in - depth clean - up, that is, fully mobilize the masses, dig deep for hidden reactionaries, local tyrants, etc., eliminate all kinds of hostile forces and



saboteurs, destroy the social foundation of actions that undermine urban construction, and eradicate hidden dangers.

As true democracy for the masses of the people, the military control of the People's Liberation Army spares no effort to protect the democratic rights of the people, helps the people get rid of the oppression and restraint of the old forces with all its strength, and fully supports the people to truly exercise their power as masters of the country. The military control commissions of the People's Liberation Army mobilize citizens to form various mass organizations, let citizens participate in politics and discuss political affairs in the form of all - sectors representative meetings, and finally elect people's representatives to form people's governments at all levels. This enables the masses of the people to fully participate in the process of establishing the people's democratic regime and fully exercise their democratic rights. Liu Shaoqi, one of the main leaders of New China, believed that: "The military control of the People's Liberation Army was the initial people's democratic dictatorship. It strongly suppressed the reactionaries and, at the same time, did everything possible to defend, encourage and help the people to establish people's representative meetings and people's governments at all levels."

Under specific historical conditions, the urban military control of the People's Liberation Army provided favorable guarantees for the process of the Communist Party of China's democratic regime - building. It not only filled the power vacuum after the Kuomintang regime was destroyed but also provided an experimental space for the Communist Party of China in the process of establishing and perfecting the new - born democratic regime, making special contributions to the establishment and consolidation of the regime in New China.

## Authors short CV

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