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Speeches/Documents

Title: THE ENTIRE PARTY SHOULD ATTACH MORE IMPORTANCE TO UNITED FRONT WORK

Author: Deng Xiaoping

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Description: Excerpt from a report delivered at the first conference on united front work held by the Southwest Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Central Committee of the Party and Chairman Mao have pointed out time and again and made it very clear that united front work should be improved. Our victory in the revolution is inseparable from the united front work we did. Without the united front we could not have fought battles so successfully; even though we may be victorious, we still cannot do our work well without it. However, not all our cadres realize its importance. That is why the Central Committee and Chairman Mao have once again brought up this matter and the Central Committee has issued [a special directive on it](#). In accordance with this directive, we are holding this conference on united front work. The requirements in the Central Committee's directive are quite specific, so there is no need for me to dwell on them. Today I shall mainly discuss problems concerning erroneous ideas.

We say that united front work must be improved. Why must it be improved? First of all, we should get a clear understanding of the importance and principle of the united front. Our Party adheres to the axiom that in order to do our work well, we must first understand its importance. As in fighting, first of all, we need to know why we are fighting as well as with whom we should ally ourselves and whom we should attack. So far only a small number of comrades have attached importance to united front work, and the majority do not yet have a true understanding of its importance and underlying principles. It is true that many of our cadres in the southwest have achieved good results in united front work. However, many other comrades are not doing the work conscientiously, only doing it when pushed. After February or March of last year bandits became a serious problem all over the place and prices were affected. Our troops and local cadres went everywhere asking enlightened gentry and public figures of industrial and commercial and other circles for their support in the suppression of bandits and collection of public grain. This is also a form of doing united front work. After the bandits had been eliminated and the grain collected, they stopped doing it or did only a little. Why should we ally ourselves with as many people as possible to suppress bandits and collect grain? The fact reflected here is: In times of difficulty, we need them to work together with us, which means that we cannot do without them. The reason we were victorious in the revolution is that we won over all the friends we could and isolated the enemy.

Some comrades in our army units hold that our victory came solely through the barrel of our gun. This is not the complete picture. Over the years, the Central Committee and Chairman Mao have always attached great importance to united front work, performing it meticulously. On the one hand, our victory was achieved through the barrel of our gun, but on the other hand, it cannot be separated from our united front work. When we arrived in northern Shaanxi after the [Long March](#), there were only six thousand men in the First Front Army of the Red Army; and only a little over ten thousand men in all, including the troops of the 25th and 26th Corps of the Red Army in northern Shaanxi. Furthermore, we were surrounded by more than 100,000 enemy troops, so conditions were extremely bad. Thanks to the fact that the Party

had sent out some of its finest cadres to do united front work, as well as work in other fields, new prospects for resisting Japan and saving the nation opened up after the [December 12th Incident in 1936](#). After our troops arrived in north and central China during the War of Resistance Against Japan, everyone felt the need of united front work, because we realized that we could not gain a firm foothold without friends. In those days we even did united front work among puppet troops in a blockhouse at the risk of our lives. During the War of Liberation we paid special attention to matters of policy and other work relating to united front, resulting in our winning over all democratic parties. Chiang Kai-shek also tried to win them over, but it was we who succeeded. Because we had won the support of people from all strata of society and of all the democratic parties, we had justice on our side and were able to maintain a high morale -- this is why we won the war in the end. When the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea began, some people, including some democrats and public figures from the industrial, commercial and intellectual circles, had misgivings. Later, as we strengthened our propaganda work, people from all walks of life began to favour and support our efforts in the war; the democratic parties issued [a joint declaration](#) and the bourgeoisie came out as well to demonstrate in support of the war. All this served to boost our morale and deflate the enemy's arrogance. Some of our comrades did not appreciate the significance of the joint declaration, thinking it just a formality, but people from all strata of society set great store by it. This declaration demonstrated that the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea had the unanimous support of the entire nation. Can we carry on the war in the absence of a united front and internal unity? Facts have shown that the united front is one of the [three decisive factors](#) for our victory in the revolution. Without united front work we can accomplish nothing.

There are some within our Party who still think along the lines that so long as we have the workers and peasants on our side, we can do everything. This view is not entirely correct; to be more specific, it is only fifty per cent correct. Workers and peasants indeed form the main body of the masses on whom we should rely. However, working only with them cannot solve all our problems. For instance, can we deal with relations between the state and private sectors of the economy if we do not work with the private sector or deal with relations between employees and employers if we do not work with the capitalists? In reducing rent and returning security money we mobilized some democrats and members of enlightened gentry to go to the countryside (for example, to northern and western Sichuan), and with their help deadlocks were easily broken and the task was easily accomplished. By contrast, in other places where this was not done, the movement progressed rather slowly and there were some glaring problems. Without democrats and members of democratic parties writing articles about what is happening in the countryside after their return to the cities, city dwellers are sure to think the countryside is "a mess" and that it is "absolutely lawless". This can isolate us from the people. Some of our comrades lack an adequate understanding of the role played by democratic parties and democrats and they do not know that the democratic parties are representative of people from different strata of society who like to listen to what they say, have faith in them and find those parties' declarations more to their liking than ours. These comrades are not looking at problems in the light of the complicated conditions created by the existence of different social strata; therefore, they often neglect the united front. This idea of relying solely on workers and peasants and paying no attention to uniting with the petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and other patriots is an important root of closed-doorism.

Some comrades believe that united front work will last for only two years and that we can end it as soon as [agrarian reform](#) is completed. Chairman Mao said that experts should be trained for united front work, whereas some of our comrades have said that united front work will end

in two years and that it has no future. In fact, united front work is a component of our Party's general line and policy and is to be carried through to the end. We say this not just to set people's minds at rest, because it is true. The principal task for united front work is to strengthen education among democrats and democratic parties through the united front and to ally ourselves with them to step into socialist society together. After the realization of socialism the bourgeoisie will no longer exist, but there will still be people belonging to different strata in society, most of whom will be our friends, plus a handful of hostile elements bent on undermining socialism. So long as there are friends and enemies, we should ally ourselves with our friends in order to isolate and attack the enemy; hence we need united front work. It follows that this work must continue even in the days after socialism is materialized.

Other comrades think that the united front's only function is to split the enemy. This view is also incorrect. To be sure, united front work has its tactics, but more important is its strategy - uniting a broad range of people, including the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie and people from other strata. We must unite with everyone we can and reduce opposition to our cause wherever possible in order to isolate the enemy. The reason some comrades think democrats and democratic parties are not important is that they mistakenly believe united front work is only meant to split up the enemy camp, without understanding that this work has two aspects. One aspect is allying ourselves with the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and any other friends we can ally ourselves with -- this is the principal aspect of the work. The other aspect of this work involves splitting the enemy so that some members of the enemy camp will come over to the side of the people. Because these comrades fail to see both aspects of united front work, they do not pay attention to uniting with democrats and democratic parties and people from all social strata. They are not being far-sighted.

Still other comrades, though they may approve of united front work, think it is the responsibility of united front work departments and it has nothing to do with them. Therefore, they seldom bother themselves to contribute to the success of the work. For instance, when we were suppressing [counter-revolutionaries](#) in Chongqing, some democrats became panic-stricken because our Party comrades did not explain the need to them amply beforehand, which relegated us to a passive position. It is true that few people today regard united front work as lavishly entertaining people, but some people still think it troublesome and are not doing meticulous work among non-Party people.

The above shows that we should really do what the Central Committee has required us to do, that is, we should further publicize the importance of united front work so that the number of Party comrades concerned about this work will increase from the present minority to a majority. Improving united front work is one of our Party's long-term tasks, involving all fields of endeavor, and is not merely the responsibility of united front work departments. All departments should do united front work. Take the industrial departments, for example. Not all engineers and staff are Party members. In government departments there are cadres who are not Party members, and the same is true of a large number of cultural workers, teachers, doctors and technicians. We should, therefore, do a good job of uniting with and educating these people, so that we can all follow the same road to socialism. United front work should be done by all departments in the Party. We cannot make a success of the work unless we drive this point home to every cadre and every Party member.