

## IMPROVE THE PARTY'S UNITED FRONT WORK

*July 18, 1953*

Departments of united front work of the Party at various levels, under the leadership of the Party committees at the corresponding levels, have in general done a lot of work and achieved success. The Party Central Committee recently discussed united front work and expressed satisfaction with the work done, but it also held that efforts should be made to strengthen united front working bodies at central and local levels, that is, at central, provincial, municipal and autonomous regional levels, including working bodies of a number of counties. Where necessary, working bodies for the united front should be established in counties. The ones already established and needed should be retained; but some that are rarely, if ever, needed and have little or no work to do should not be kept.

Within the Party some comrades believe that the Party's united front work is not really necessary, that it makes no difference whether or not we continue to do the work. Others hold that from now on united front work can be considered less important than it used to be and its scope reduced. Still others think the work should be suspended. These views are at variance with those of the Central Committee, hence they are incorrect. The Central Committee holds that as it was necessary in the past, united front work is necessary at present and will remain so for a fairly long time to come. We should try to improve this work. Why? Because, though the Chinese people have

---

Speech delivered at the National Working Conference on United Front Work convened by the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee. Liu Shaoqi revised the record of the speech at the time. He revised it again when the speech was included in the *Collection of Documents on United Front Policies* compiled by the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee in 1956. This article includes all the revisions made.

won complete victory in their revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, imperialism still poses a threat to us, Taiwan is not yet liberated and remaining forces of the landlord class and bureaucrat-capitalist class are still around and want to stage a comeback. In order to deal with them, we must unite with all people that can be united with, hence the need of the united front. This is one reason. Another reason is that China is still backward and has very little industry to begin with, heavy industry in particular. In order to end this backwardness, build up and industrialize the country and go over to socialism, we should also unite with all people that can be united with, hence, again, the need of the united front.

Today we have two alliances: That of workers, peasants and other labouring people, which constitutes the mainstay for our front, is most important and has a vital bearing on our destiny. This alliance also determines whether revolution can be victorious, political power can be consolidated, our country can be industrialized and socialism can be realized. The other alliance is between the labouring people and some exploiters and their representatives who can be allied. This means alliance with the national bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie and their intellectuals and political representatives on the basis of the alliance of the workers, peasants and other labouring people. In addition, this alliance includes a small number of members of the upper class of minority nationalities and public figures in religious circles. It is what we call the People's Democratic United Front. In order to achieve our great goal, we need not only a consolidated alliance among labouring people, but also an alliance with some of the exploiters. The latter, however, is subordinate to and serves the former. There is a common acceptance within the Party for an alliance of labouring people, yet some Party comrades differ on the issue of an alliance with some of the exploiters. The united front work we refer to now is chiefly alliance with some exploiters.

The Party's general line or general task is to gradually realize socialist industrialization and the socialist transformation of our country, transforming the present society into a socialist one over a fairly long period of time. In order to realize this general line or fulfill this general task, we must do a great deal of work, such as large-scale industrial construction, large-scale co-operative transformation of agriculture, co-operative transformation of the handicraft industry, development of state and co-operative commerce, and the transforma-

tion of capitalist industry and commerce under a policy of utilization, restriction and transformation mainly by means of state capitalism. So long as a good job is done in these fields of endeavour, China will become a socialist country that has abolished capitalism and the exploiting classes and will never produce new exploiting classes.

It will take a considerably long period of time to accomplish this task. No matter how we wish to shorten the period, a long time the job will take. In too short a time it would be impossible for us to accomplish it, and we would become impetuous. We must do a lot of arduous work, including political and economic work, and united front work forms an important part. The major task of our People's Democratic United Front is to unite, educate and transform the national bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie and their intellectuals and political representatives and to improve work among all nationalities in our country. There are two aspects to our work in this area. The primary one involves educating and organizing the labouring people of the minority nationalities; the other involves doing united front work among upper-class elements of the minority nationalities.

The Party's united front work is an indispensable part of the struggle to realize the Party's general line or fulfill its general task and constitutes one aspect of the general struggle. Under the present circumstances in China the Party's united front work is a special and absolutely necessary form of class struggle.

There are two ways to industrialize our country: the capitalist and the socialist. China must be industrialized and must take the socialist, not the capitalist, road.

We must eliminate all exploiting classes when we take the socialist road, making Chinese society a socialist one. There are two ways to abolish exploiting classes. One is to deprive them of their property, which we did when we were eliminating the landlord class and bureaucrat-capitalist class in the past. The Soviet Union and East European people's democracies also used this method to eliminate their exploiting classes, including the landlord class and the bourgeoisie. The other method is that of gradual transformation, through the united front, which means that we guide capitalists, who are willing to submit to socialist transformation or are not resolutely opposed to it, to the socialist road through both unity and struggle, through education, reasoning, criticism and self-criticism and making arrangements for them with regard to their political activities, work and

daily life. We must divide the bourgeoisie into two groups: those who are willing to submit to socialist transformation and those resolutely opposed to it. We should lead the former along the road to socialism. We should eliminate the latter as we did the landlord class and the bureaucrat-capitalist class. Fortunately, we are familiar with this method, which is simpler and easier and presents no problem. Comrade Mao Zedong once said, “there is no need to fear rebellion by the national bourgeoisie”.<sup>43</sup> The question is whether there isn’t some other way to keep them from resolutely opposing socialist transformation or to persuade them to submit to such a transformation. Some among them (perhaps only a handful) are certainly bent on opposing it. If we are not aware of this, we shall make mistakes. However, others (perhaps a large number) may follow us along the socialist road, if we adhere to the correct united front policy, which will benefit both them and us. We have gained the upper hand both politically and economically, and so long as our policy is correct and our work well done, they will feel it is beneficial to them to follow us. So, they will be willing to submit to socialist transformation.

From a general point of view, the Party’s united front work is only one aspect of the general struggle to fulfill the Party’s general task and is supportive and supplementary work. But, when it comes to eliminating the existing exploiting classes in China, united front work, or peaceful transformation, may be the chief approach we should use, and direct deprivation of property a secondary method. So united front work can serve the fulfillment of the Party’s general task or general struggle and play a major role in eliminating the existing exploiting classes.

Some say that doing united front work invites trouble. It does invite trouble, but it also saves trouble. It is troublesome to do united front work, but big trouble can be avoided if, through our united front work, the majority of the bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie and their intellectuals and political representatives do not rebel against socialism but instead submit to and serve it. It is only partly true that doing united front work invites trouble. Such a view is one-sided. The other side is that it saves trouble, and big trouble at that. The entire truth is that it invites small trouble, but saves big trouble.

Why should and can we use the united front to transform the majority of the national bourgeoisie? The reason is that members of the national bourgeoisie in colonial and semi-colonial China were

---

discriminated against and oppressed by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. Basically they never had political power in their hands and they were weak in character. In the past they co-operated with us in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, and after liberation they have participated in the people's democratic regime and national construction and are willing to accept state capitalism in matters of accepting orders placed by the state for processing materials or supplying manufactured goods and establishing joint state-private enterprises. In future most of them will probably submit to socialist transformation. With regard to these members of the bourgeoisie Comrade Mao Zedong said, "The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway."<sup>44</sup> So long as they do not rebel and are willing to follow us, we have no reason to reject them. But, if they give up halfway, cease to co-operate with us and rebel, we shall have good reason to reject them.

More important, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie we enjoy great superiority politically, economically and internationally. Under these conditions the bourgeoisie cannot but follow us towards socialism. If they do not follow us or give up halfway, it will be bad for them.

Therefore, united front work is necessary to the Party and the people and it should be improved in future.

Let's look at the matter conversely. What will happen if we abandon the Party's united front work and ceased co-operation with the national bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie? Our relationship with them and with their intellectuals and political representatives, and with the upper-class elements of the minority nationalities would be broken off. They might oppose us and rebel. This would create great difficulties and big trouble, landing us in a passive position for a considerably long period of time, from which it would be very hard for us to extricate ourselves. For instance, at a certain time in some localities an ultra-Left policy was adopted towards the national bourgeoisie. As a result, a number of private enterprises closed down and workers lost their jobs. This put us on the spot. If private enterprises throughout the country, which employ 3.8 million workers and shop assistants, closed down in large numbers and their employees were left jobless, we would be

in an even more difficult position. Also, if the upper-class elements of the minority nationalities fell out with us and rose in rebellion, we would be in great trouble. Such things did happen in the past. In order to put down rebellions in areas inhabited by minority nationalities, we expended large amounts of money and manpower and people got killed. Some say united front work will cost money, time and energy and it is not worth the cost. Well, if we do not do it, that may cost us more money, more time and more energy, and more people will die.

It should be made clear that our political alliance with exploiters is solely in the interest of workers, peasants and other labouring people. United front work serves the interests of the working class and other labourers. In order to emancipate itself, the working class must liberate the labouring people as a whole. For the emancipation of the working class and other labouring people, it is necessary to transform exploiters. It is not that we like exploiters, but that to emancipate the working class, we have to put ourselves to the trouble of transforming exploiters. The working class cannot win liberation unless it emancipates mankind. Therefore, doing united front work is not for any other purpose but to serve the interests and emancipation of the working class and other labouring people. This is our stand on united front work.

So the conclusion is: united front work cannot be dispensed with; it is a necessary component of the Party's work and will remain so for a long time to come. It is wrong to abandon united front work, and it is also wrong to look down upon it.

United front work is a form of class struggle and it is glorious revolutionary work. Some comrades think united front work consists of only entertaining and seeing off guests, so it is not revolutionary work and not indispensable. This view is incorrect. If comrades engaged in united front work know only about entertaining and seeing off guests, and they wine and dine merely for the sake of wining and dining and know nothing about the purpose of the work, they cannot do a good job. We should drive it home to them that they are working for the Communist Party, for the working class, for the labouring people, for the industrialization of the country and for the smooth transformation of our society into a socialist one. United front work is revolutionary work, a special form of class struggle, that involves both unity and struggle. It is an honour for comrades to be engaged in united front work.

It is said that some comrades, including a number of comrades doing united front work, are not clear about the hows and whys I have mentioned above and do not understand the necessity for united front work. They have not worked out the proper size of departments of united front work and the number of cadres needed. We must explain things clearly to them. So long as the ideological problem is solved and the task is clearly set forth, organizational problems can easily be solved, because the question of organization will always be solved in line with necessity and possibility.

I hope greater achievements will be scored in our united front work.