

**Dates of Meeting:**

1st National United Front Work Conference

**Type of Meeting:**

16-3-1950 – 04-05-1950

**Place of Meeting:**

Beijing

**Attendance:**

93 people, North East 9 persons, North-China Bureau 8, Sanmin 3, East Bureau 13, Central China 17; Southwest Bureau 5, Northwest Bureau 6, central party and government union, Youth League Women federation and other mass organisations 29

**Major Agenda Items:**

The conference focused on studying the principles and tasks of united front work and various aspects of united front policy

**Speeches/Reports:**

**Mao Zedong** read the minutes of the meeting and made marginal comments. (1) On the main target of struggle. Today, the main target of struggle is imperialism, feudalism and the remnants of the Kuomintang reactionaries, not the national bourgeoisie. 2) Policy towards the national bourgeoisie. There is struggle with the national bourgeoisie, but it must be united with it. It is to adopt a policy of both unity and struggle in order to achieve the goal of uniting with it to jointly develop the national economy. (3) Which industries and commerce should be restricted, excluded, supported, or developed? Those that are detrimental to the national economy and people's livelihood, namely speculative commerce, luxury goods, and superstitious goods, should be restricted and excluded, rather than those that are legitimately beneficial to the national economy and people's livelihood. These industries and commerce should be supported and developed when they are in difficulty. (4) Regarding the relationship between public and private business. Unrestricted development of the state-owned economy is a long-term goal. At the current stage, it is impossible to develop without restrictions. Private capital must be utilized at the same time. Therefore, public and private positions should be divided, i.e., the scope of public and private business. "Competing with the people (referring to the national bourgeoisie) for profit" and "allowing officials to set fires while the people are not allowed to light lamps" are wrong. The idea that "if the big capitalists want to stop work, let them stop work" is wrong. Establishing department stores does not replace all private business. We can only control a certain amount of a few major commodities (grain, cloth, oil, coal), such as one-third of grain. Beyond that, we should define our scope and avoid monopolizing everything.

Comrade Mao Zedong told a representative from the Central United Front Work Department, who was reporting on the National United Front Work Conference, that the lack of attention paid to the democratic parties and non-Party figures is a social phenomenon, existing not only within the Party but also outside it. We must make it clear to everyone that, from a long-term and overall perspective, the democratic parties are indispensable. The democratic parties connect with the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, and their representation is essential in government. It is wrong to say that the democratic parties are "a hair's worth of credit," that it makes no difference whether a single hair is plucked or not. From the perspective of the people they connect with, they are not just a single hair, but a bunch of hair, and should not be despised. We should unite with them, help them progress, and help them solve problems such as funding for the democratic parties and travel expenses for democratic figures. We should give them work to do and respect them. We should treat them like our own cadres, like the palm and the back of our hands, each one a member of our flesh and blood; there should be no favoritism. We should treat them equally; we shouldn't discriminate between high and low, like lotus flowers emerging from water. Democracy must be implemented. Many people currently have a lot of anger they can't vent. There are only two kinds of anger: reasonable and unreasonable. We should accept the reasonable and reason with the unreasonable. We must be courageous and not afraid of criticism. We weren't even afraid of Chiang Kai-shek, so why should we be afraid of criticism from democratic figures? At best, we'll just be cursed at. If they use the "Common Program" to challenge us, let them fight and argue. A gentleman uses words, not fists. We shouldn't tolerate criticism. If someone can't speak to your face, they'll definitely speak behind your back. This will lead to sectarianism, and the same is true within the Party. Therefore, we must openly allow people to speak.

**Li Weihan:** "The united front the new situation and new tasks," 21 march 1950 laid out the united front's role in the consolidation of CCP rule: it would assist in eliminating enemies, help revive and develop a new economy and culture and help establish the conditions needed to enter the socialist

stage. The UFD needed to stabilize the middle elements' support for Party rule and begin the transformation of their middle and right wings. Li acknowledged that in the early-1930s Soviet period the failure to unite with "bourgeois" middle elements in order to pursue a leftist "overthrowing everything" policy, which had left the CCP fatally isolated.

Li did not want to repeat the mistakes of the 1930s. The UFD would get the Party's united front allies take the Common Program to heart and then convince their constituencies to do likewise

Li Weihan detailed the tasks of the new united front. In addition to uniting with the bourgeoisie to combat imperialist and reactionary enemies, they were necessary because there was an urgent need to revive the economy and culture as a pre-condition for socialism. Private capital was still required to industrialize backward agriculture.

...although the middle and petit bourgeoisie were still regarded as the "middle force", and the author affirmed the importance of winning them over, they were classified into three groupings – "middle-left", "middle", and "middle-right", according to their potential attitudes towards the Common Program.

Moreover, it stressed that some feudal reactionaries and reactionary compradors among the national bourgeoisie, and those who had engaged in economic sabotage or conspired politically with reactionary groups both at home and abroad "should be given a necessary blow at the right time".

**Zhou Enlai** "Speech", 13-04-1950 "We have united democratic personages from religious groups just because they are democratic personages. Giving the permission to the freedom of religious belief is different from inviting the democratic personages from religious groups to participate in CPPCC or other representative meetings. The latter is done purely out of political consideration no matter they are priests or monks"

He pointed out, fifty percent of the 2,400,000 government personnel at the district level and above were non-Party people and the many intellectuals among them contained MPG elements. Relations with these groups therefore needed to be well handled. "We let the democratic parties exist and develop precisely to help organize these classes.... It is because we have democratic parties that we can use them to influence the unorganized bourgeois, petty bourgeois, the intellectuals and professionals and through the democratic parties' political activities temper and test this group." He defined that the UFD was a comprehensive functional department that played the roles of the party's staff office, political office, organization office, and also administrative office.

"We could not think that democratic parties are of no use in the party relations at the present stage. The people's democratic dictatorship task is not completed yet today. Even in socialism, democratic parties will go with us. We cooperate with the democratic parties in order to be more close to the masses"

"Due to the long-term war conditions in the past, we have developed a habit of often issuing orders in the name of the Party. It was especially so in the army. Now that we have entered a peaceful period and established our national regime, we should change this habit."

"There are connections, but also differences between the Party and the government. The principles and policies of the Party must be carried out through the government and the Party organization should guarantee the implementation."

cadres want to merchandise all goods themselves and leave no room for private department stores. Can this be called a booming economy? With both large and small businesses closed down and many jobless people around, we are getting ourselves into trouble. While these businesses remain shut down, our taxes are gone as well. Who will benefit from this?

**Xu Bing**: (Beijing's deputy head of the Central UFD) presents the Party's proposals for the re-organisation of the MPGs. The MPGs were to be limited in number rather than abolished or amalgamated. Nor was the Democratic League to become an "alliance of the working People" However, their previous constitutions and programs still contain elements of the old democracy. They will revise their constitutions, review their past work, and reorganize their organizations in order to strive to realize the New Democratic Program. After introducing the meetings of the democratic parties, Xu Bing addressed several issues in party work: First, the issue of unity among progressive elements. He pointed out that these progressive elements currently engage in clique-based behavior, narrow sectarianism, and are isolated from the masses and their lack of engagement with them. Second, the issue of the rectification of the local organizations of the democratic parties. On the eve of liberation, some democratic parties absorbed new elements to expand their organizations. The internal composition of some local organizations was complex, and even enemy agents had infiltrated. To protect their reputation, we must help them rectify their local organizations. We must also help them resolve housing issues and career problems for their members. Third, we must help the democratic parties study Mao Zedong Thought, provide theoretical and political education, and help them understand Party policies. We must also make appropriate arrangements for them, ensuring that, as

Chairman Mao advocated, "each doing his own thing, each getting his due." Fourth, we must study and resolve the issue of funding for the democratic parties.

Comrade Wang Feng of the United Front Work Department of the Northwest Bureau delivered a report entitled "Northwest Nationality Issues and United Front Work in the Political Power"; Comrade Kuang Lin of the United Front Work Department of the Hubei Provincial Committee delivered a report entitled "The Treatment of Former Employees and Unemployed Persons in Hubei"; Comrade Zhang Zhiyi of the United Front Work Department of the Central South Bureau delivered a report entitled "Party Work and Work in the Industrial and Commercial Circles in the Central and Southern Regions"; Comrade Cui Zhongyuan of the North China Revolutionary University delivered a report entitled "A Report on the Situation of the Political Research Institute of the Revolutionary University"; Comrade Rao Zhangfeng of the United Front Work Department of the South China Branch delivered a report entitled "Issues of Democratic Parties in South China and the Industrial and Commercial Circles in Hong Kong and Macao"; Comrade Ouyang Fang of the United Front Work Department of the Hunan Provincial Committee delivered a report entitled "On the Work of the Hunan Uprising Troops"; Comrade Li Junfeng of the United Front Work Department of the Hunan Provincial Committee delivered a report entitled "On the Work of the Hunan Uprising Troops"; Comrade Li Jun Comrade Cheng Zijian of the United Front Work Department of the Southwest Bureau delivered a report on "On Work in Chongqing and Party Work"; Comrade Zhou Jifang of the United Front Work Department of the Hubei Provincial Party Committee delivered a report on "Issues of the Wuhan Conference of Representatives from All Circles"; Comrade Zhou Erfu of the United Front Work Department of the East China Bureau delivered a report on "Shanghai's Industrial and Commercial Work and Party Work"; Comrade Li Yuchao of the United Front Work Department of the Shandong Branch Bureau delivered a report on "Issues of the Conference of Representatives from All Circles in Shandong Province"; Comrade Ping Jiesan of the United Front Work Department of the North China Bureau delivered a report on "The Situation and Experience of the Conference of Representatives from All Circles in North China"; and Comrade Cui Yueli of the United Front Work Office of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee delivered a report on "United Front Work among Professors in Beijing."

Comrades Deng Yingchao, Xue Muqiao, and Nan Hanchen spoke respectively on women's issues and strategies toward the bourgeoisie. Comrade Xu Bing delivered a report on "Issues of the Work of Democratic Parties" at the meeting. Comrade Li Weihai delivered a report on "The New Situation and New Tasks of the People's Democratic United Front."

#### **Other Decisions and/or Actions:**

Li Weihai: [Briefing report on the First National United Front Work Conference May 4, 1950

#### **Remarks:**

many delegates advocated struggle against the bourgeoisie. With regard to capitalists' requests to divide up the business domain between the state and the private sectors lest both compete with each other, they neglected to do so. They also suggested to step up the development of the state-run economy "boundlessly" and left the depressed private businesses in the lurch so as to cut the Gordian knot by expelling the private sector completely from the economic sphere.

CC approved and circulated MPS report "Report on the National Public Security Conference" 28 December 1950

MPG leaders held during this conference meetings, hosted receptions and discussed issues of establishment, funding, study for MPG cadres, and the problems of unemployment amongst their members.

the originally scheduled two-week conference actually lasted for one and a half months.

On January 23, 1950, the Central United Front Work Department issued a telegram, approved by Comrade Liu Shaoqi and reviewed by Comrades Zhu De, Chen Yun, and Dong Biwu, regarding the "preparation for convening a united front work conference." The notice stated that "after the first CPPCC session, the democratic parties have held or are preparing to hold meetings to discuss and determine their future political lines, activity directions and work tasks based on the spirit of the CPPCC and the Common Program." "The Central United Front Work Department is currently exchanging opinions with the various parties on the work of their local party committees and plans to

hold a meeting of our party's united front work on March 15th." "To discuss local united front work and the local organizations of the democratic parties." It required all localities to determine the candidates to attend the meeting and prepare materials and opinions on united front work, especially: (1) experience in general united front work; (2) the work of the local organizations of the democratic parties, and the unemployment and study problems of the members of the democratic parties; (3) the work of the People's Congresses of all walks of life and local consultations, and the participation of Communist Party members in work and cooperation with them. The notice required that the central bureaus, branches, provinces and municipal committees should "give instructions to the attendees on these issues."