



## Brief Discussion on the Strategies of the Southern Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in the Work of Unifying Front

PENG Xinglin<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Lecturer, Chongqing Youth Vocational & Technical College, Chongqing, China.

\*Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

The work of unifying front of the Southern Bureau of the CPC Central Committee under the direct leadership of Zhou Enlai has been developed deeply within the Kuomintang's (KMT) territory and part of enemy's territory is full of strategies, mainly as the consequences of the strong and effective leadership of the party, the clarity of the objects of united front work, the varied methods of united front work, focusing on combining the current situation as well as the personal charm of the leader of united front work.

**Key words:** Southern bureau; United front; Fighting strategies

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### INTRODUCTION

In January 1939, Southern Bureau of the CPC Central Committee is established in war-time capital, Chongqing, in the period of resistance against Japan stealthily. The area that it covers mainly includes Chongqing, as well as the southern part of KMT-ruled area, part of the occupied area, Hong Kong and Macao. Its historic task is to represent the CPC Central Committee to operate with the KMT on resistance against Japan, process national united front of Counter-Japan, and strengthen construction of the Party in those areas. Southern Bureau

of the CPC Central Committee has extremely strategic work on unifying front under extremely complicated circumstance.

### 1. STRONG LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY

Southern Bureau of the CPC Central Committee has been working on unifying front led by the CPC Central Committee. Mao Zedong, leader of the Party, has a critical conclusion on importance of unifying front which is "whether China is able to be liberated from this heavy national and social crisis depends on progress of unifying front" (Mao, 1991, p.364). To working policy of the Southern Bureau, Mao Zedong pointed out on August 24, 1939 that "(a) stabilize the Party, (b) goes deep into the mass, (c) develop united front in the middle class. Those are important tasks of the Southern Bureau. It needs to fit the new environment and general task of the Party in this way" (Literature Research Center, 1998, p.516). Between 7 and 8 August 1940, during the meeting that Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee discussed works of Southern Bureau and united front, Mao Zedong emphasized that: "In the past, Central Committee was biased toward military and war area rather than southern part and Japan-occupied area. In the future, Political Bureau will need to strengthen this part hard". He provided important advice that "focuses of Central Committee from now on should be, KMT-ruled area firstly, occupied cities secondly, our war area thirdly." (Jin, 1998, p.582) Southern Bureau, the stealth organization of the Party, has constructed strong leadership, led by the Central Committee. The leadership includes Zhou Enlai, Bo Gu, Kai Feng, Wu Jianke, Ye Jianying and Dong Biwu as standing committee members, Enlai Zhou as secretary. It has developed rigorous organization, combined public

and stealth activities relying on office of Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army in Chongqing, *Xinhua Daily* and *Qunzhong*, which are open and legal, been firm on correct working policy provided by the Party, which is “independence in unifying front, both united and independent” (Mao, 1991, p.540), and processed unifying work creatively.

## 2. CLEAR OBJECTS OF THE WORK ON UNIFYING FRONT

Clear objects are guarantee of efficient work on unifying front. Southern Bureau has broad objects to unify which includes left part of KMT like Song Qinlin, He Xianglin, as well as members of democratic parties and nonparty personages like Ma Yinchu, Hong Shen, Zhang Xiruo, Ouyang Yuqian, Zhou Gucheng, and regional capable personages in Yunan, Sichuan and Guilin like Hui Liuwen, Oan Wenhua, Den Xihou, Long Yun, Li Zongren, and Li Jishen, enterprisers like Fan Xudong, Liu Hongsheng, Gu Gengyu, and Hu Ziang, and literate personages like Guo Ruomo, Zhou Taofen, Ba Jin, Bing Xin, and Yang Hansheng. It has united domestic personages and foreigners like U.S. president Roosevelt. It has united upper class and general public. When facing broad objects of unifying front, CPC has successfully used fundamental principles of Marxist Philosophy on main contradictions and main aspects of contradictions to understand importance of middle forces that “usually they will be key factor of victory when we are fighting against diehards” (CPC Central Committee Document Editing, 1986, p.405). It has focused on main aspect of contradiction among numerous objects, highlighted persuasion on middle forces (Literature Research Center, 1998, p.583) and treated it as “an extremely important mission in period of unifying front against Japan” (CPC Central Committee Document Editing, 1986, p.405). The middle forces include middle parties, political organizations, national bourgeoisies, armed regional capable groups. To find objects and focus on the key point is an important precondition of successful process on united front.

## 3. VARIOUS METHOD OF UNIFYING FRONT

Aiming at different objects, Southern Bureau has applied to different working strategies.

To KMT members, Southern Bureau has insisted on correct strategies like “unifying and fighting”, “fighting for united”. Facing two anti-communist upsurges in winter, 1939 to 1941 among KMT, Southern Bureau has repelled the first one by military fighting, the second one by flexible strategies of “offensive policy, armed self-

defense, evacuated cadres (separated working)”<sup>1</sup> which has maintained united front of anti-Japan strongly.

To those middle forces, Southern Bureau persuaded them inwardly, guided them actively, respected their personality, made friend with them, supported them on finance, took care of benefit of alliance, concerned their life, and solved their problems. Leaders of Southern Bureau, Zhou Enlai and Dong Biwu, unified upper classes of national bourgeoisies in person, encouraged them to provide military and civil supplies, guided them to think about future construction of the nation (Zheng & Wang, 200). Southern Bureau respected personality of literate personages. It took tolerant attitude to their “literate habits that retained” (Anonymous, 1990, p.4), made friend with them, got to know lots of private enterprisers by helping them establish “Social Organization of Military Cloth”, “Chinese Economic Career Council” (Pan, 2001).. Southern Bureau still provided financial support to private enterprisers under extremely difficult economic condition. It used part of operation fund to support Fan Xudong, who met problem in establishing “Jianye Bank”, and “support progressive groups, take small parties’ profit” (Chinese Communist Party Literature Research Center, 1998, p.471), help middle parties and democratic personages establish alliance of Chinese democratic political groups, help them develop regional organizations, improve their political influence. Many writers were poor and ill at that time. Southern Bureau actively supported them and initiated raising donations for fund to help poor and ill writers. Also, Southern Bureau concerned about private enterprisers who were devastated by KMT governance and provided suggestions to them.

To masses of workers, farmers, youth and women, Southern Bureau used progressive drama, history drama to hint KMT and educate people about national consciousness and integrity, and taught them to fight for their self-profit. Lots of active members were developed among them which enlarged outside organization of the Party.

To foreigners who were in Chongqing or on the way to Chongqing, leaders of the Southern Bureau and members of the foreign affairs section tried their best to contact and association with them. Zhou Enlai associated numerous of international friends, discussed Chinese Counter-Japan War and international united front of the counter-fascist, and made people understand (Peng, 1996), sympathize and support the Chinese Counter-Japan War.

<sup>1</sup>September and October 1940 Southern Bureau Standing Committee Meeting record. The original one is deposited in the Central Archives, and the transcripts are in Chongqing Hangman Revolutionary Memorial Hall.

#### 4. POLITICAL SITUATION RELATED UNIFYING WORK

Southern Bureau, led by Central Committee of the Party, has processed unifying work according to the political situation at that time and reached extraordinary accomplishment which has made a wide range of middle forces between CPC and KMT give up neutrality and move to CPC. Zhou Enlai said that: "In 1941, only people in culture and education fields came to us. However, in 1945, those who are national bourgeoisie came to us also" (Chinese History Museum, 1997, p.88).

When Counter-Japan War was at a stalemate and Japan has changed its invasion strategy, Central Committee of the Party has keenly perceived that KMT has also changed its resistance policy. To counter negative behavior of KMT that passively resisting Japan and actively opposing CPC, CPC has put Counter-Japan first and promoted work of unifying front to a critical level that is related to overall situation of revolution after it has considered the situation carefully.

When KMT started to conflict with CPC, Southern Bureau fought back for unite decidedly. At the critical moment when KMT triggered Wannan Incident, Southern Bureau, which is led by Zhou Enlai directly, has fought KMT with both wits and fists and defeated it by political assault, been insisted on KMT-CPC cooperation, guaranteed national united front against Japan, and resisted Japan together.

When literates were facing persecution and risk, Southern Bureau has done its best to get close to, help, guide and protect them. After Wannan Incident, KMT has persecuted literates intensively. Southern Bureau has prepared travelling expenses for more than 900 literates timely and helped them retreat to Hong Kong safely. In December 1941, when Japanese arm was attacking Hong Kong, Southern Bureau has evacuated more than 800 patriots, democratic personages and literates that left in Hong Kong by all manner of means.

When bureaucratic capital was expanding malignantly and private industry and business were being destroyed, Southern Bureau has done all one can to help, guide and support them. Southern Bureau has not only helped and supported private enterprisers like Fan Xudong and Wu Weijin in aspect of fund and manpower, but also advertised financial policy via *Xinhua Daily*, *Qunzhong Weekly* and *Business Daily*, as well as published series of editorials like *Democracy is the Green House of Development and Production* (Anonymous, 1944) to expose how does bureaucratic capita plunder private business, which lead them to pursue both economic and political democracy and be opposed to autarchy of KMT.

#### 5. PERSONALITY OF LEADER

Southern Bureau was led by Zhou Enlai directly. Xu (1980) recalled that: "Comrade Zhou Enlai gives

enemies tit for tat but a caring heart to friends". Tong (1994, p.314) recalled that "his speech is simple however inspiring and attractive...let people admire him unconsciously". Of Zhou Enlai's beloved personality, almost every person that has contacted him is full of praise for him. As national bourgeoisie, Ziang Hu and Jue Hu recalled that: "In MKT-ruled Chongqing, people in different fields admired him once contacted him... When he was contacting industry and business people, every meeting, every speech was moving and touching" (Hu, 1990, p.291). Gu Gengyu, who is Chinese bristles magnate and famous national capitalist recalled that "That a monopolistic capitalist, like me, accepts leadership of CPC, walks on promising road of socialism and serves new socialistic China is strongly related to Premier Zhou's instruction" (Liao, 1990, p.307). Jin Ba wrote that "we all consider Enlai as our family member, ask him for help...within one night, he transfers his firm faith to us. He has the power...You will feel safe when you are close to him even you are in dangerous." (Ba, 1977, p.158). Ding Zhicun, Bing Xin, Zhou Qinyue and many others have also mentioned great influence on Zhou Enlai in their memoirs.

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