

## The Eighth Route Army's Administrative Offices in the Second KMT-CPC Cooperation

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### Abstract

In early Anti-Japanese War, with the realization of the second KMT-CPC cooperation, after the main force of the Chinese Worker' and Peasants' Red Army was adapted into the Eighth Route Army, the Kuomintang highest authorities agreed that, from August 1937 to June 1941, the CPC Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, in the name of the Eighth Route Army, could establish 18 offices in a number of cities and important areas in the Kuomintang areas. The main task of these offices is to represent the Eighth Route Army to contact the Kuomintang military and political authorities, negotiate related matters, consolidate and develop anti-Japanese national united front, promote the resistance against Japan position of the Communist Party of China, promote anti-Japanese movement and raise, receive, transport supplies and escort personnel to pass. They have made a significant contribution to the all round victory of Anti-Japanese War.

**Key words:** KMT-CPC cooperation; The eighth army administrative office; Main work; Experience

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### INTRODUCTION

In the context of the full outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, to fight the Japanese invaders, the Kuomintang

and the Communist Party achieved a second KMT-CPC cooperation. Communist forces were reorganized into the Eighth Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army. The Kuomintang authorities agreed that the Eighth Route Army could establish offices in Kuomintang areas. These offices on behalf of the Eighth Route Army contacted and negotiated with the Kuomintang military and political authorities, consolidated and developed the anti-Japanese national united front, promoted the anti-Japanese movement, and made a significant contribution to the overall victory in the Anti-Japanese War.

### 1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY'S OFFICES IN VARIOUS AREAS

Starting from Lugou Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937, China's Anti-Japanese War broke out comprehensively. Chinese nation came to the most perilous moment. In order to resist the invasion of Japanese imperialism, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party achieved the second collaboration. The Communist forces were reorganized into the Eighth Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army. The Eighth Route Army's offices throughout the country were set up and developed in the context of the KMT-CPC cooperation.

#### 1.1 The Catalyst of KMT-CPC Cooperation

On July 7, 1937, the Japanese imperialists launched the Lugou Bridge Incident with an attempt to use force to subjugate China in three months. Chinese troops of Song Zheyuan's 29<sup>th</sup> Corps 37<sup>th</sup> Division Ji Xingwen's regiment thrived to resist under the influence of the national people's anti-Japanese climax. On August 13, Japanese forces attacked Shanghai and Shanghai garrison carried out heroic resistance. Due to the outbreak of "August 13" Incident, the war was imminent to the ruling heart of Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek urgently needed the Red

Army to march to the anti-Japanese front to fight against Japan; therefore, on August 18, he agreed the Red Army was adapted into the National Revolutionary Army the Eighth Route Army and appointed Zhu De as commander and Peng Dehuai as deputy commander; on October 22, he formally announced that KMT-CPC cooperation first reached an agreement in the military aspect. Since military issues involved the overall negotiations on KMT-CPC cooperation, its solution was a major advance in the KMT-CPC cooperation. Then in middle and late September, the representatives of the Kuomintang and the CPC continued to negotiate and the struggle was still very intense. After tortuous and complicated negotiations, the two sides finally reached an agreement. CPC acknowledged the leadership of Kuomintang in the country, stopped the riot policy by using force to overthrow the national government in the country, changed the Soviet Republic of China into Special Administrative Region of the Republic of China, and stopped the policy to confiscate the land of landlords. KMT recognized the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China and other anti-Japanese parties and recognized the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region. On September 22, the KMT Central News Agency broadcast the *Declaration of the Communist Party of China on the Announcement of KMT-CPC Cooperation*. On September 23, Chiang Kai-shek announced a *Talk about the Declaration of the Communist Party of China* and admitted the legalization of the Communist Party. Thus, under the CPC's advocacy and promotion, through twists and turns and difficult negotiations, the second KMT-CPC cooperation was established and the anti-Japanese national united front was officially formed.

## 1.2 The Establishment of the Eighth Route Army's Offices in Various Areas

In the new situation of KMT-CPC cooperation, how to work to promote national resistance was the most critical issue placed in front of the Communists. According to the bargaining agreement with the national government, the Eighth Route Army established 18 offices in the Kuomintang-controlled areas (The Editorial Board of Series of Books, para.5, 2009, pp.451-453).

1) Shaanxi Office: also known as Xi'an Office. It was set up in Xi'an in August 1937. Lin Boqu and Dong Biwu served as the CPC Central Committee representative successively and Wu Yunfu and Zhou Zijian served as the director successively. On September 10, 1946, it was moved to Yan'an.

2) Shanxi Office: also known as Taiyuan Office. It was set up in Taiyuan in August 1937. Peng Xuefeng was the director. In late February 1938, it was dissolved.

3) Shanghai Office: In August 1937 it was set up in Shanghai. Li Kenong, Pan Hannian and Liu Shaowen were the responsible persons successively. It was dissolved in November 1939.

4) Gansu Office: also known as Lanzhou Office. In July 1937 it was established in Lanzhou. Xie Jue'ai served the CPC Central Committee representative; Peng Galen, Wu Xiuquan (with a pseudonym as Wu Shouquan) and Zhao Zhirui served as the director successively. On November 8, 1943 it was dissolved.

5) Nanjing Office: In August 1937 it was set up in Nanjing. Bo Gu served the CPC Central Committee representative; Ye Jianying was the representative of the Eighth Route Army; Li Kenong was the director. They evacuated to Wuhan successively in early December 1937.

6) Wuhan Office: In late October 1937, it was set up in Hankou. Dong Biwu was the representative of the CPC Central Committee; Li Tao and Qian Zhiguang served as the director successively. In January 1938, the office of the New Fourth Army and the CPC delegation office were established. Under the leadership of Zhou Enlai and Ye Jianying and other leaders, the three offices was actually one institution and it was the central liaison of the CPC in the south. On October 25, 1938 it was evacuated to Chongqing.

7) Xinjiang Office: It was set up in Dihua (modern Urumqi) in October 1937. Chen Yun was the representative of the CPC Central Committee; Teng Daiyuan, Deng Fa (with a pseudonym of Fang Lin) and Chen Tanqiu (with a pseudonym of Xu Jie) served as the person in charge successively. In September 1942 it was closed.

8) First Theater Liaison Office: also known as Xinxiang Liaison Office. In the end of September 1937, it was set up in Xinxiang Henan. Zhu Rui served as director. In May 1938 it was shut down.

9) Hunan Correspondence: It was established in Changsha on December 9, 1937. Xu Teli served as the representatives in Hunan. Wang Lingbo served as the director. On August 11, 1939 it stopped working.

10) Hong Kong Office: In January 1938 it was established in Hong Kong, the head of which was Liao Chengzhi. It was dissolved in February 1942.

11) Guangzhou and Shaoguan Office: Founded in January 1938; Yun Guangying, Zhang Yunyi and Liao Chengzhi served as the person in charge successively. In October, before Guangzhou fell, it was moved to Shaoguan and then renamed the Office of the Eighth Route Army in Shaoguan. It was dissolved in October 1940.

12) The Second Theater Commander Office: In October 1938 it was set up in the headquarters of the chief executive department in the second theater. Wang Shiyang served as the director. In August 1945, it was moved to Yan'an.

13) Luoyang Office: In October 1938 it was established in Luoyang; at the beginning it was called correspondence department. Liu Xiangsan served as the director. Mianchi depot was attached to it. In the beginning of 1939, it was replaced by the Office. Liu

Zilong and Yuan Xiaoxuan served as the person in charge successively. It was dissolved in February 1942.

14) Hengyang Office: It was established in Hengyang on November 14, 1938. Li Kenong, Li Tao and Zhang Yuanpei served as the person in charge successively. It was dissolved in July 1939.

15) Guilin Office: In November 1938 it was established in Guilin. Wu Xiru, Li Kenong and Li Tao served as the person in charge successively. On January 22, 1941 it was dissolved.

16) Guiyang Traffic Station: It was established in Guiyang on January 3, 1939. Yuan Chaojun served as the head of the station. It was closed down in January 1941 by the Kuomintang Guiyang army garrison headquarters.

17) Chongqing Office: also known as Hongyan office. In late August 1938, it was set up in Chongqing. In January 1939 it was renamed the office (also the New Fourth Army Office). Qian Zhiguang served as the director. It was dissolved in August 1946.

18) Yubei Office: In June 1941 it was set up in Linxian, Henan. Wang Baiping and Shen Bochun served as the director successively. On October 25, 1945 it was dissolved.

The above Eighth Route Army offices can be roughly divided into three types: The first one is the office set up at the location of the Kuomintang central government, responsible for liaison and negotiation with the highest KMT military and political authorities. It includes the Eighth Route Army Nanjing, Wuhan, Chongqing offices. These offices are under the leadership of the representatives of the CPC Central Committee and the Central Bureau, shoulder some of the functions of the CPC delegation or the CPC Central Bureau offices and bear the guidance and liaison responsibilities for other offices. The second type includes offices located in the capital or theater organs of the Kuomintang-controlled areas, responsible for liaison and negotiations with local KMT government and the theater commander department, such as the Eighth Route Army Shaanxi, Shanxi, Gansu, Xinjiang, Luoyang, Guangzhou, Guilin offices, the second theater commander office and the first theater liaison office. The third type includes offices located in the British Hong Kong and occupied Shanghai offices with the main job to promote the Communist Party's position of resistance against Japan, receive and transfer the anti-Japanese goods and transfer to and from personnel. Since the Eighth Route Army offices bear different tasks, the number of staff in each office is very different. In large offices, they generally have Director and below are sections and units and personnel division is finer; in small offices, there are fewer staffs. The Director is the responsible person and there is no section office. According to the existing historical statistics, over 1,000 people worked at the Eighth Route Army offices.

## 2. THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY'S OFFICE IN VARIOUS AREAS STARTED WORKING COMPREHENSIVELY

Offices around represent the CPC Central Committee to negotiate with the KMT, contact the KMT military departments, actively promote the Communist Party's position of resistance against Japan and mobilize the masses to participate in the anti-Japanese movement. They have played an important role in consolidating and expanding the anti-Japanese national united front.

### 2.1 To Coordinate Efforts to Ensure the Implementation of the Negotiation Protocol of the Second KMT-CPC Cooperation

An important task of the Eighth Route Army Nanjing and Wuhan Offices in early war is to ensure negotiation with the KMT on some major issues for the KMT-CPC cooperation such as *CPC Central Committee published the Declaration of Cooperation with KMT* (hereinafter referred to as the *Declaration*) and the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region issue and so on. On September 22, 1937 *Declaration* was published by the Central News Agency; on September 23, Chiang Kai-shek announced the talk about *Declaration* which actually recognized the legitimacy of the Communist Party. After the *Declaration* was published, according to the instruction of the central committee, they continued negotiations with the Kuomintang to resolve the border region problems. The KMT proposed Ding Huaifen at the border government officer. When Mao Zedong was informed of this, on August 30 he sent a telegram to Ye Jianying that "Ding Huaifen was an anti-communist leader in the past. Soviet people will never recognize him as chief. They must appoint Lin Boqu as chief executive and Zhang Guotao as the deputy chief executive."<sup>1</sup> After Qin Bangxian and Ye Jianying had several rounds of negotiations with the KMT, on October 12, the 333<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the National Government passed a resolution: Appoint Ding Huaifen as the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ning Chief Executive and Lin Boqu as Deputy Chief Executive; before the arrival of Ding, Lin would work as the Chief Executive. This makes the Kuomintang recognize the legitimacy of the border region. According to the agreement reached by the KMT-CPC cooperation, the Eighth Route Army would complete the adaptation and march to the anti-Japanese front; the national government Military Commission would provide salaries, weapons and ammunition, and other military supplies to the Eighth Route Army supplied. Nanjing office's regular task is to receive payment and ordnance from the national government quartermaster department and ordnance department and the procurement of urgently needed supplies to transport to Yan'an. The payment they

<sup>1</sup> On August 30, 1937, *Mao Zedong Telegraphed Ye Jianying on Disagreeing Ding Huaifen Serving the Chief of the Border Region*

receive every month includes regular payment, war service fees, medical subsidies, and military depot with a total amount about 0.5 million yuan of legal tender. The total funding and equipment received count legal tender 1.975 million Yuan (The Editorial Board of Series of Books, para.5, 2009, p.471). After the fall of Nanjing, Wuhan Office continued to represent the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army to liaise with the Kuomintang for receiving military supplies and salaries. "From September 1937 to October 1938, the Wuhan office collected 6.55 million Yuan from the national government, more than 730 guns, more than 1,300 boxes of ammunition, 46,000 sets of clothing and 35,000 boxes of medicines and some medical instruments." (Ibid., p.40)

## **2.2 To Hold the Anti-War Banner High and Absorb Progressive Young People**

From August 22 to 25, 1937 the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau held an enlarged meeting in Luochuan. Through *On the Current Situation and Decision on the Party's Tasks and Ten Anti-Japanese Guiding Principles of Chinese Communist Party*, it determined the comprehensive anti-Japanese route to mobilize people throughout the country and the masses and to arm masses as well as to mobilize the people in the Kuomintang-controlled areas to fight against the common enemy and to face the national crisis. In November and December 1937, Shanghai and Nanjing fell successively and Wuhan became the center of the national war. Workers, peasants, youth, women, cultural circles and religious communities in Wuhan were organized to establish over 200 groups (Ibid., p.32). July 7, 1938 was the national anniversary of the anti-Japanese war. With the support of Zhou Enlai and the organization and implementation of the Ministry of Politics of the national government, masses in Wuhan set off an upsurge of gold donations. With the iron heel of the Japanese imperialists' invasion of China continuing, more and more young people and patriots overcame numerous obstacles to go to Yan'an. Only from May to August 1938, Shaanxi office transferred 2,280 young students to Yan'an (Ibid., pp.40-41).

## **2.3 To Promote the Communist Party's Position, Consolidate and Develop the Anti-Japanese National United Front**

After the baptism of anti-Japanese war, the Communists' firmly insistence of the anti-Japanese revolutionary integrity and the will has been recognized by the whole nation. In order to further expand the influence of ideology to fight against Japan unitedly to the diehards in the KMT and patriotic and democrats groups, the CPC Central Committee clearly stated the strategies and guidelines of "developing the progressive forces, winning over the middle forces and combating the die-hard forces" (Ibid., p.40, 52) and the strategic principles to fight against the die-hards "rationally, beneficially and moderately". For Chiang Kai-shek's attempt to try

to win over smaller parties and isolate the CPC, Zhou Enlai put forward to support progressive groups, to take care of the interests of small parties and to conduct democratic movements. Later, Zhou Enlai proposed the guidelines to "work hard, learn hard and make friends hard" and required office staff to unite people at all levels to consolidate and expand the anti-Japanese national united front. Around January and February 1941, after Yu Youren learned from Qu Wu about the Wannan Incident Chiang planned, he angrily banged the table and exclaimed: "They did this to damage bipartisan cooperation. It simply undermines the fight against Japan." (Ibid., p.40, 53) Yu especially admired Zhou Enlai and he said: "Mr. Enlai's personality is really great." On August 11, 1941, Zhang Chong, the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee and the KMT representative in the KMT-CPC negotiations, who did a lot of things which were not conducive to bipartisan unity and the resistance of Japan, unfortunately passed away in Chongqing. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Ye Jianying presented elegiac couplets. Zhou Enlai also attended the memorial assembly and gave a speech. Under the situation that the anti-Communist Kuomintang diehards continued to create frictions and the KMT-CPC relationship was intense, these Communist leaders' memorial activities of Zhang Chong touched many famous people with great shock in the KMT government. November 14, 1941 was the sixtieth birthday of General Feng Yuxiang, Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao wrote articles and birthday couplets together to congratulate Feng's birthday. Director of the Office Qian Zhiguang also wrote congratulation letter to Feng. *Xinhua Daily News* arranged a whole page to reflect the grand birthday and at a time in Chongqing it was a good story. Du Bincheng who served in Shaanxi provincial government used his position conditions and actively advocated Communist party's position of resisting the war, having done a lot of things in favor of unity between the two parties to fight against Japan. Mao Zedong considered him as "a loyal friend of the communists".

## **3. THE WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY'S OFFICES**

The Eighth Route Army offices throughout the country were established and developed in the context of the second KMT-CPC cooperation. Their establishment was an important proof of the KMT-CPC cooperation to meet the national crisis together. Staff of the various agencies worked hard, positively, resourcefully and courageously to complete the extremely dangerous, heavy work and they provide a strong guarantee for the complete victory of the patriotic anti-Japanese cause.

In the complex political environment, they outstandingly completed tasks conferred by the CPC

Central Committee and accumulated very valuable experience in the work, including:

### **3.1 To Strengthen Organizational Leadership Is the Guarantee of the Successful Completion of the Work**

Each office was mostly located in the Kuomintang-controlled areas, far away from the central committee and the CPC base. The struggle was very complex and the environment was very bad. In order to strengthen the leadership of the organization, the central committee sent experienced, highly respected leading cadres such as Zhou Enlai, Qin Bangxian, Dong Biwu, Lin Boqu and Ye Jianying to a number of important offices. They long stuck to the office and presided over the work. At the same time they sent cadres who was engaged in united front work for a long time and of high military and political quality such as Li Kenong, Peng Xuefeng, Liao Chengzhi, Pan Hannian and Qian Zhiguang as the leaders. Under the strong leadership, they unwaveringly implemented the central policies and instructions, maintained a firm political stance and sober mind and successfully completed the tasks.

### **3.2 Earnestly Safeguard the Overall Situation of KMT-CPC Joint Resistance Against Japan**

After the KMT-CPC cooperation, because the two sides did not form a common guiding principle or a fixed organizational form, the Eighth Route Army offices become an important channel of the coordination between the two parties for related matters. The benefit of the Chinese nation, safeguard of the KMT-CPC cooperation and the promotion of the anti-Japanese fight of the Kuomintang authorities would be the center of the work carried out in these offices, such as information exchange. Faced with friction produced by anti-Communist diehards in Kuomintang, such as Pingjiang Massacre, Zhugou Massacre, Wannan Incident and etc., these offices took anti-Japanese war as the most important task and made representations to the authorities to achieve understanding and support of the KMT democrats and democratic parties as well patriotic personages. Faced with adverse current of compromising, splitting and reversing, these offices adhered to the policy of resistance, unity and progress

and maintained the overall situation of the KMT-CPC cooperation to fight against Japan.

### **3.3 Always Pay Attention to Self-Cultivation**

Most of these offices were located in big or medium cities in the Kuomintang-controlled areas. They were faced with complex environment and various temptations. How to keep the true nature of communist revolutionary spirit needs communists to improve their cultivation. For example, Chongqing office staff, under the leadership of Zhou Enlai and Dong Biwu, developed a firm stand, sincere attitude, the spirit of learning, diligent work, hard life and high degree of alertness together with other agencies of the Communist Party in Chongqing. They stressed the Party members to implement the “three-hard” (work hard, study hard and make friends hard) and “three-lization” (professionalization, socialization and legalization) (Zhuo, 2009). These thoughts are known as Hongyan Spirit, which represents the spirit of these offices. That spirit is the source of strength for these offices to adhere to long-term struggle to overcome various difficulties and excellently complete the arduous tasks. People call these offices as “command of combats” and “small revolutionary Yan’an”.

In short, these offices in Kuomintang-controlled areas, enemy territory and the British Hong Kong under the complex and dangerous environment continued to tackle tough difficulties and completed tasks that were impossible to complete, making them become not only a strong group which fight unitedly together, but also a school to cultivate and train cadres. The Eighth Route Army offices in the country have written a glorious page in the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War history and the achievements they created will go down in history.

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