

SUN YAT-SEN AND GERMANY IN 1921-1924

Josef Fass, Praha

In October 1920, Ch'en Chiung-ming [1], a local Kuang-tung [2] warlord and, at the same time, a member of the Kuomintang, succeeded in overthrowing the long-lasting supremacy of the Kuang-hsi [3] clique (Kuei hsi [4]) in Kuang-tung. This political shift in the area of southern China enabled Sun Yat-sen to leave his asylum in Shanghai and to resume his function as the head of the oppositional Cantonese government which he lost in May 1918. On April 7, 1921, the so-called Extraordinary Parliament in Canton elected Sun Yat-sen President of the Republic of China. On May 5, 1921, in a proclamation made on the occasion of taking up this post, Sun solemnly expressed his determination to unite the country by all means at his disposal.¹ This implied, as a matter of fact, also the possibility of using military force, if necessary, for achieving this aim, and under the political circumstances of that time this alternative appeared soon as the only effective way. From the autumn of 1921, therefore, Sun Yat-sen started in Kuei-lin [7] preparing the military expedition against the Peking government which had been from July 1920 under the control of the Chih-li [8] warlords' clique (Chih hsi [9]). For this purpose, as well as for carrying out the programme of political and economic reforms on the territory under the Cantonese government, considerable means were necessary, which, however, Sun and his régime lacked.

Generally speaking, Sun Yat-sen needed in his complicated and often very difficult situation of those years great political, and perhaps still more financial support, which he could get only, or almost only from abroad. After 1916, however, when his collaboration with the Japanese had ended and when later on he lost much of the other former foreign aid, mostly because of his growing radicalism and anti-imperialism, he became very isolated. At that time, however, his plans were steadily more and more ambitious. In such a situation Sun Yat-sen was obliged to look for new sources of foreign help, for new partners of international cooperation. In the period when the Powers, particularly Great Britain, became continually more hostile to his policy and personality, there appeared, as a matter of fact, only two possible candidates, namely,

¹ See *Chiu ta tsung-t'ung chih hsüan-yen* [5] (Manifesto on the occasion of taking up the post of President), *Kuo-fu ch'üan-shu* [6] (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen), T'ai-pei 1961, p. 750.

Soviet Russia and Germany. But in 1921 it was still extremely difficult for Sun to establish relations which the Soviet government, moreover, the inner situation in Russia was at that time rather unstable, not to mention the backward state of the then Russian economy. Sun Yat-sen himself, too, seemed probably not yet fully convinced of the possibility and usefulness of mutual cooperation with Soviet Russia. Thus, the most favourable object of Sun's attention in this respect was necessarily Germany, at least so for the time being.

There existed several reasons leading to this points of view. First, Germany was, in contradistinction to Soviet Russia, economically a high developed country and its large industry, particularly its large armament industry could, as Sun believed, be employed for developing China's economy in general and supporting Sun's government in particular.² Second, Germany of that time (again in contradistinction to Soviet Russia) had its diplomatic representation in China (soon after even in Canton), so that Sun Yat-sen could contact the Germans much easier than the Russians isolated then from the outer world by a barrier of international political and military blockade. Third, Sun Yat-sen has had already good experience in cooperation with the Germans from 1917 when he received from them a large subsidy for his fight against China's participation in the World War.³ Probably the most important reason, however, was the specific post-war position of Germany in China, where the Germans lost all their former privileges as a result of their defeat in the World War I. In the Sino-German treaty of May 20, 1921, concluded with the Peking government as the official representative of the Republic of China, Germany was obliged to recognize China's full sovereignty and equality.⁴ This special situation of Germany in China made it possible for Sun to use not only promises but also to put some pressure on the Germans in his attempts to gain their cooperation and support.

The ambiguous approach in Sun Yat-sen's policy towards Germany was manifested by his concrete activities, as well as of his government in 1921. In July of that year, the Cantonese government believing to be the only legal government of the Republic of China issued a semi-official proclamation that it denied the validity of the above-mentioned treaty

² As to Sun Yat-sen's conception of making use of the armament industry of the Powers in the post-war period in order both to help in the development of China's economy and to avoid an economic crisis in the western industrial states, see his book *Shih-yeh chi-hua* [10] (The Plan of Industrialization) alias *Wu-chih chien-she* [11] (The Material Reconstruction), which is the second part of his fundamental work *Chien kuo fang-lüeh* [12] (The Strategy of National Reconstruction), *Kuo-fu ch'uan-shu* (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen), T'ai-pei 1961, e. g. pp. 40–41.

³ See Josef Fass, *Sun Yat-sen and the World War I*, Archiv Orientální, Vol. 35 (1967), № 1, pp. 111–120.

⁴ See *Jōyaku shū dai-ni gō* [13], *Collection des traités* № 2, Tokyo 1922, pp. 203–204 (the Chinese version) or pp. 177–178 (the German version).

of May 20.⁵ In harmony with this attitude the southern government also refused to give back German property confiscated during the war on the territory under its jurisdiction.⁶

Of particularly great importance are in this connection the reports of the German vice-consul Wagner who arrived at Canton in September 1921 in order to take over the management of local German affairs from the existing Dutch representation. At the occasion of Wagner's first visit of Sun Yat-sen, Sun made a first open but as yet rather general offer concerning cooperation between the Cantonese government and Germany. At the same time, he quite surprisingly announced that the formal recognition of his government by Germany was not a condition for establishing closer mutual relations.⁷ Sun Yat-sen also informed Wagner that he had already sent to Germany his emissary, General Chu Ho-chung [14], in order to study on the spot the situation in this country, and he expressed the hope that Chu Ho-chung would have the chance to get in touch with the respective authorities and elaborate with them on the basis of Sun Yat-sen's general instructions a workable plan of mutual cooperation.⁸

In sharp contrast with the atmosphere of Wagner's reception by Sun Yat-sen and particularly with the Sun's words regarding unnecessary character of formal recognition of the Cantonese government by Germany, the southern authorities caused constantly troubles to Wagner from the very beginning of his activities in Canton. Insisting on the refusal of the Sino-German treaty concluded with the Peking government, the Cantonese declined to accept the fact that Wagner had taken over German representation in the Kuang-tung area.⁹ During Wagner's negotiations with the Commissioner of Foreign Affairs in the Cantonese government, Li Chin-lun [15], with the Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. C. C. Wu [Wu Ch'ao-ch'u [16]] and also with the Foreign Minister Wu T'ing-fang [17], pressure was put on Wagner that Germany should recognize the Cantonese government and conclude with it a treaty as with the only legal Chinese government, otherwise the German consulate in Canton would not be allowed to enter into any negotiations with the Cantonese authorities. Finally, this strict attitude was modified by a decision, according to which the German consulate could negotiate with the southern authorities only about "questions of a local significance".¹⁰

⁵ See the *Canton Times* of July 25, 1921, Deutsches Zentralarchiv Potsdam, Deutsche Botschaft in China (see further as DZP), Nr. 2232, Bl. 341.

⁶ See letter of the Dutch consul in Canton (who represented at that time still German interests in this region) sent to the then German chargé d'affaires in Peking Borche on September 7, 1921, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 334.

⁷ See Wagner's report of September 26, 1921, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 324.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Bl. 325.

⁹ See Wagner's report of October 1, 1921, despatched to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 330.

¹⁰ See Wagner's report of October 14, 1921, despatched to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 312–315.

Likewise, Sun Yat-sen during Wagner's second visit to him, began to urge, in contradistinction to his former attitude, the immediate official recognition of his government by Germany and demanded that the Germans should start negotiations concerning the conclusion of a bilateral treaty. Only by doing so could the Germans, according to Sun's own words, secure preferential treatment in China, as compared with other countries.¹¹

The fact that the Cantonese government continued to be formally in a state of war with Germany, which could be terminated only by concluding a treaty mentioned above, brought permanent difficulties for the position and activities of the German consulate. Wagner often mentioned this situation in his reports, not giving, however, any suggestion on how to solve this problem.¹²

Part of Sun Yat-sen's pressure put upon the Germans was undoubtedly also his assertion to Wagner that the British recently tried to approach him.¹³ The substantiation of this assertion was proved by the Hongkong press itself, which instead of its former sharp attacks began to use a more friendly tone toward Sun Yat-sen and his government.¹⁴ What the real motives of this temporary British change of attitude were, is not quite clear. It seems, however, that by softening their policy the British attempted to prevent any rapprochement between Sun Yat-sen and another Power in an area which traditionally was one of the important spheres of British influence in China.

As to Sun Yat-sen's diplomatic activities at that time it seems likewise that he intended not only to get foreign (i. e. primarily German) support for his political and economic plans, but also to exercise influence on Germany to become the first foreign state to recognize his government and in such a way to gain gradually the recognition also of the other Powers. Post-war Germany could, however, hardly afford to make such a daring and independent step, both with regard to its relations with the official Peking government and particularly with regard to the attitude of the principal Powers. Moreover, the yet unstable position of Sun Yat-sen in Canton, not promising any special profit from the possible close relations with him, played, no doubt, also a certain role in the considerations of the then German diplomacy. Therefore, the respective German authorities continued in their cautious attitude and were steadily delaying a definite decision in this respect.¹⁵

¹¹ See Wagner's report of October 15, 1921, despatched to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 308—311.

¹² See e. g. supplement to Wagner's report of October 15, 1921, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 300.

¹³ See Wagner's report of October 31, 1921, despatched to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 294.

¹⁴ Typical of this change of attitude was e. g. the article *To Canton* by Robert Macwhirter published in *The Hongkong Telegraph* on October 25, 1921. This article was enclosed in Wagner's report of October 31, 1921, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 294.

¹⁵ See e. g. memorandum by the then German chargé d'affaires in Peking Borche of October 1921, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 316—318.

The preparation of a military expedition against the Peking government started by Sun Yat-sen in autumn 1921 and the following internal disagreements in the southern régime, primarily the discord between Sun and Ch'en Chiung-ming which culminated in June 1922 in an open conflict and in August of the same year in the forced departure of Sun Yat-sen to Shanghai, was a temporary obstacle for Sun's further personal and active engagement in negotiating with the Germans. Nevertheless, even in that period mutual contacts between Canton and Berlin continued to exist. This fact was witnessed partly by the alarming news of the official Chinese press as well as of the foreign language press in China referring to the attempts of the German consulate-general in Canton to negotiate with the Cantonese government a commercial agreement,¹⁶ and particularly by the mission of Sun's emissary Chu Ho-chung who was active in Germany from the end of 1921 until July 1922. During his stay in Germany, Chu Ho-chung, according to his own statement made in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, primarily submitted proposals for an economic agreement with several industrial concerns (e.g. with Hugo Stinnes in Hamburg), and also endeavoured, with an alternate success, to gain some German personalities to become advisers of the Cantonese government.¹⁷ Later on, Chu Ho-chung invited the former German Minister in China, Admiral P. von Hintze, to visit Canton, in order to discuss with Sun Yat-sen the principles of a possible Sino-German-Russian cooperation.¹⁸

Sun Yat-sen's plans concerning the conclusion of a Sino-German-Russian triple-alliance and the respective secret negotiations which started at the beginning of 1922 were disclosed in the summer of the same year, when after Ch'en Chiung-ming's coup in Canton Sun Yat-sen together with his closest followers was compelled to flee from this city. On that occasion, in the safe of Sun's Vice-minister of Finance, Liao Chung-k'ai [22], three important documents left behind by Liao were allegedly discovered, which proved that negotiations have been carried on to bring about the above-mentioned triple-alliance. This affair became soon a centre of interest especially of the French and English press in the Far East, which began to alarm against the danger of a Bolshevik conspiracy in China. The first brief information about the discovery of these secret documents was published in the French newspaper *L'avenir de Tonkin* on July 24, 1922.¹⁹ Later on, an English newspaper

¹⁶ See *Pei-ching jih-pao* [18] (Peking Daily) of April 14 and 22, 1922, *Shun-t'ien shih-pao* [19] (Metropolitan News) of April 14, 1922, *Ta-t'ung t'ung-hsin-she* [20] (Great Harmony News Agency) of April 17, 1922, *North China Daily Mail* of April 18, 1922, *Novosti žizni* of April 19, 1922, *Ta-lu jih-pao* [21] (Continental Daily) of April 21, 1922, *Peking Leader* of April 22, 1922, DZP. Nr. 2232, Bl. 212, 208, 212, 211, 205, 207, 209, 206.

¹⁷ See secret memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of July 22, 1922, addressed to the German Legation in Peking, DZP. Nr. 2232, Bl. 168.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Bl. 168.

¹⁹ See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 156.

The Hongkong Telegraph of September 22, 1922, devoted its whole first page to a detailed article (in rather sensational form) under the headline "Sun Yat-sen Exposed — Secret Documents Discovered in Canton — Proposed Triple Bolshevik Alliance — Admiral Von Hintze to Come to China" which contained photocopies of the three incriminating documents together with their translation into English.

The first of the documents, being in Sun's own handwriting, was his top secret letter despatched to Liao Chung-k'ai and Ts'ao Ya-po [23] from Kuei-lin (where Sun Yat-sen stayed at that time), and contained important instructions to these two close collaborators of Sun Yat-sen. In the first section of the letter Sun ordered Liao Chung-k'ai to effect the remittances on Peking and Berlin, as requested by his emissary in Berlin Chu Ho-chung, amounting to a total of \$ 4200. In the second section Sun gave order to Ts'ao Ya-po to meet von Hintze after his arrival in Hongkong and to escort him to Sun's headquarters in Canton.²⁰

The second document was Chu Ho-chung's communication of January 1, 1922, sent to Sun Yat-sen from Berlin. Chu asked in it the sum (already mentioned above) of \$ 4200, which he needed both for his maintenance in Berlin and of his family in Peking, and, at the same time, informed Sun about the progress he achieved in his cooperation with von Hintze for bringing about the plans of the Sino-German-Russian alliance.²¹

Sun Yat-sen enclosed this communication in his letter to Liao Chung-k'ai and Ts'ao Ya-po, as well as the third document, namely a telegram despatched by Chu Ho-chung to Sun from Berlin also on January 1, 1922, which was discovered in a decoded form. In this telegram Chu pointed out that already before his arrival to Berlin, von Hintze had advocated the idea of concluding an alliance between China, Germany and Russia, further that when negotiating with Chu, von Hintze decided to put aside all other political questions, in order to devote full attention to this matter and, finally, that von Hintze intended, after being given the authorization by the German Prime Minister, to visit China and cooperate with Sun Yat-sen in the capacity of an adviser, for achieving the aim, i. e. the realization of the Triple-Alliance plan.²²

The disclosure and, particularly, the publication of these documents by *The Hongkong Telegraph* and consequently also by other Hongkong newspapers naturally caused great excitement in the diplomatic circles. The German government in an official démenti made known through the Wolf's News Agency on September 26, 1922, denied having any knowledge of the alleged negotiations between an emissary of the South China government and the former German Minister to Peking von Hintze concerning the conclusion of a Sino-German-Russian alliance, nor having

²⁰ See *The Hongkong Telegraph* of September 22, 1922, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 156.

²¹ Ibid., Bl. 156.

²² Ibid., Bl. 156.

any knowledge about von Hintze's foreign mission under preparation. This démenti was concluded by an announcement that von Hintze also denied his participation in such negotiations.²³

Sun Yat-sen issued on September 29, 1922, a proclamation in which he characterized the secret documents published in the Hongkong press as forgeries made by Ch'en Chiung-ming, and, at the same time, he promised to publish the genuine letters in translation. As to his relations with Russia and Germany, Sun Yat-sen declared that, provided these countries would not carry out an aggressive policy towards China, he was prepared to establish normal relations with them on the basis of mutual equality.²⁴

From this event some conclusions or hypotheses can be deduced. First, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to prove nowadays the authenticity of the documents published in *The Hongkong Telegraph* on September 22, 1922. On the one hand, the fact that Liao Chung-k'ai forgot in his safe just a top secret correspondence of this kind (a correspondence which, by the way, according to Sun Yat-sen's order should have been burnt after the addressee had read it) raises somewhat a suspicion. But, on the other hand, this fact could not be entirely excluded, particularly when considering the chaotic situation during which Liao Chung-k'ai together with Sun Yat-sen and others left Canton after the coup of Ch'en Chiung-ming. And, what is even more important, the reliable documents of the German diplomatic service quoted above in this article furnish undisputable evidence that Sun Yat-sen really started in the second half of 1921 endeavours to establish very close cooperation with Germany and that this plan could together with his growing interest and sympathy to Soviet Russia (and considering also the then relatively good German-Russian relations) quite naturally develop into an idea of alliance with these two countries, the foreign policy of which toward China differed at that time so markedly from that of the other Powers. Besides, Sun Yat-sen himself in his démenti of September 29, 1922, did not in any way deny the negotiations concerning a Sino-German-Russian cooperation. He rejected only the genuine character of the published letters. Moreover, the fact that he did not keep his promise, not having published the so-called original letters, considerably weakened the cogency of his denial.

Besides, even in his public addresses at that time, Sun Yat-sen did not conceal his new orientation in foreign policy. For instance, in a speech he gave on the board of the gun-boat Mo-han [25] on August 9, 1922, Sun emphasized that in that situation China was obliged to pay special attention to the development of friendly relations with Russia and Ger-

²³ See text of an official démenti of the German government in a telegram received by the German Legation in Peking on September 30, 1922, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 161.

²⁴ See *I shih pao* [24] (Social Welfare). of October 2, 1922, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 151.

many. As to Germany, he stated distinctly that this country had common interest with China, did not cherish any aggressive plans against the Chinese and was prepared to exchange mutual help on a bilateral basis.²⁵

Although, or rather because of Sun Yat-sen's plans of Sino-German-Russian alliance and cooperation failed (and as far as is known, at that stage no negotiations had as yet taken place with the Russian authorities, and even the negotiations with the German representatives were obviously merely on a tentative level), Sun Yat-sen insisted henceforth on a bilateral form to achieve cooperation with Germany and later on particularly with the Soviet Union. Equally, the Germans also continued to be interested in Sun Yat-sen's personality and in certain cooperation with his régime, particularly when Sun returned again to Canton after Ch'en Chiung-ming's defeat at the beginning of 1923 and established there his new government. An example of this German interest was among others the instruction of the then German Minister to Peking A. Boyé, despatched on February 24, 1923, to the German Consul-General in Canton Büsing. In this instruction Boyé proposed to make best use of the contemporary favourable "psychological" situation, in order to put on a more solid basis Germany's relations with Sun Yat-sen who would play, according to Boyé's opinion, always an important role in the future development of China.²⁶

Otherwise, it was, of course, typical of the then cautious policy of Germany (and perhaps still more of the policy of German diplomats in China) that Minister Boyé drew attention to the fact that there are no prospects of Germany's financial aid to Sun Yat-sen, but that Germany could give all possible moral support to him.²⁷ In conclusion of his letter, Boyé demanded the German Consul-General in Canton to find out whether Sun Yat-sen had at that time a person in Peking with whom Boyé could enter into negotiations.²⁸

At the beginning of the second half of 1922 another Sun Yat-sen's emissary, a certain Teng Chia-yen [27] left for Germany, partly for educational purposes and partly to get into touch with the German industrial circles which interested Sun Yat-sen most. At the end of August or at the beginning of September 1922, Teng visited also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. According to his own statement, he was not, as a matter of fact, a successor of Chu Ho-chung, having no official mission as had been the case of his predecessor, nevertheless, his task was to hand over to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sun Yat-sen's communication sent personally to him, and to ask for

²⁵ See *Wai-chiao shang ying ch'ü ti t'ai-tu* [26] [The necessary attitude in foreign policy], *Kuo-fu ch'üan-shu* [Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen], T'ai-pei 1961, p. 1030.

²⁶ See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 106.

²⁷ Ibid., Bl. 107.

²⁸ Ibid., Bl. 107.

the opinion of the respective authorities in Germany concerning the plans contained in the letter.²⁹

In this letter, which was Sun's reply to Teng's report informing him about the question of the engagement of some German advisors, Sun wrote among others: "Although we have planned to engage some German officers it seems to me that it makes only a little effect if we simply try it bit by bit. It must be taken to view in a general way with the material resources as well as the capable men of both China and Germany in order to work out a big plan of collaboration applying the German (?) to the Chinese products. Because we are at present in a state of poor learning while the Germans are quite short of products. To remedy these difficulties of both a mutual help is necessary. I am sure, within a few years the conditions of China and Germany will be improved if the proposed plan is practically carried out. I have sent Mr. Chu Ho-chung to go to Germany last year with the same purpose, he has spoken with Dr. Hintze, late ambassador at Peking, and with Stinnes Company, more or less about my plan. If the German Government is interested, let me know by return mail."³⁰

The answer Teng received during his visit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin was rather cautious, but it nevertheless did not exclude the prospects of further negotiations. The German authorities pointed out the impossibility of fulfilling Sun Yat-sen's demands concerning military affairs, with regard to the decisions of the Versailles Treaty, but they did not simultaneously decline the possibility of Teng Chia-yen's private negotiations in this respect with the German industrial circles. In the economic sphere, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed their willingness to offer their assistance, but even in this respect they recommended to Teng to proceed rather on a non-official basis and not to depend upon official capital participation on the German side in possible economic projects of the South China government. In any case, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that it expected from Sun Yat-sen, first of all, a concrete formulation of his demands. Teng Chia-yen then promised to ask Sun Yat-sen to deliver a draft plan.³¹

The attempts at establishing Sino-German cooperation initiated by

²⁹ See memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs despatched on September 8, 1923, to the German Legation in Peking and to the Consulate-General in Canton, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 63.

³⁰ See extract of the English translation of Sun Yat-sen's letter enveloped with the communication of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of September 8, 1923, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 64. The original text of this letter has been published in *Kuo-fu ch'üan-shu* (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen), T'ai-pei 1961, under the title *Chih Teng Chia-yen chu yu shuo Te kuo chih-shih tsu-ch'eng Chung-Te ho-tso han* [28] (A letter charging Teng Chia-yen to urge the determined men in Germany to promote Sino-German cooperation), p. 839. The translator into English (perhaps Teng himself) obviously took some liberties with it.

³¹ See memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of September 8, 1923, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 63.

Sun Yat-sen continued parallelly both in Berlin and Canton. As to the negotiations in Canton, evidence was borne e. g. by the *Ta Chung-hua shang-pao* [29] (Chinese Commercial News) publishing on September 19, 1923, a note of protest of the Peking Ministry of Foreign Affairs directed to the German Legation in China against the violation of the official Sino-German Treaty by the German Consul-General in Canton negotiating with the Cantonese government about mutual commercial relations.³²

Further evidence of this incriminating fact was a report of *The Evening News* of January 30, 1924, according to which the Peking Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced to the German Envoy that based on reliable information from Canton there existed negotiations between Sun Yat-sen and the German Consul-General in Canton concerning the conclusion of a treaty of communication.³³

It is difficult to find out to what extent this information of the Peking government was reliable or better, exact, at least, as far as real German initiative was concerned. These news probably related to the meeting between Sun Yat-sen and the new German Consul-General in Canton Remy which took place at the occasion of Remy's first official visit to Sun. According to Remy's report, Sun Yat-sen during their conversation passed on very quickly to the question whether there existed, either directly or indirectly, any possibility of getting arms from Germany for the Cantonese government. When Remy drew his attention to the respective regulations of the Versailles Treaty, Sun made another suggestion, namely, whether the large German armament industry could not work outside Germany, for instance, in China. In this context Sun literally stated as follows: "You (i. e. the Germans) are disarmed, now you must arm China. That is most likely your only salvation."³⁴ And Sun Yat-sen displayed further his ideas, namely that if it would be possible to organise and arm the masses of the Chinese people which in his opinion could be done within three years, it would be also possible to abolish all treaties which tied up Germany after World War I and to launch together an attack against France in Annam and against Great Britain in other parts of the Far East.³⁵

Meanwhile, the negotiations between Sun Yat-sen's régime and Germany went on also in Berlin where at the beginning of 1924 Teng Chia-yen handed over to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sun Yat-sen's concrete proposals concerning future cooperation between his government and Germany.³⁶ The basis for these proposals was Sun's letter of

³² See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 65.

³³ See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 132.

³⁴ See Remy's report of January 19, 1924, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 50—51.

³⁵ Ibid., Bl. 51.

³⁶ See memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of February 14, 1924, despatched to the German Legation in Peking and to the Consulate-General in Canton, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 30.

November 26, 1923, sent to Teng Chia-yen. In the introduction Sun Yat-sen wrote among others: "To get rid of the yoke of the treaty of Versailles there is no way better than the assistance of establishing a great, **strong modern army in China, and then let China speak for you.** You should prepare beforehand a sort of invisible force in the Far East in case it may be called to your aid."³⁷ This was the same idea he communicated later on personally to Consul-General Remy.

In order to carry out this programme it was necessary to create some inevitable prerequisites of an economic and financial character and this was probably the very substance of Sun Yat-sen's plan. His letter continued, therefore, by enumerating several spheres of future mutual collaboration, which included the following: 1. Cooperation on the basis of equal interest for both parties in exploiting the coal mines (as well as tin and iron mines) in the Fu-Ho [30] region (i.e. the districts Fuch'uan [31] and Ho-hsien [32]) in the eastern part of Kuang-hsi, 2. Help of German agricultural experts in planning and carrying out the cultivation of lands in Kuang-hsi, 3. Help of German experts in realization of the plan of state control of trade (including prices, export, import etc.), 4. The possible offer of capital by the German government (or its cooperation in this respect with German businessmen) in building up a big and modern Chinese industry according to German example.³⁸

After having enumerated these various spheres of possible cooperation, Sun Yat-sen summed up: "If we could have the German government and capitalists join us, devoting and collaborating, to proceed with the investigation, preparation and realization of the four respects mentioned above, everything will be fairly succeeded within four or five years."³⁹ Obviously in order to increase the importance of his proposals and make them more attractive for the German partners, Sun Yat-sen stated that the Cantonese government controlled at that time six provinces in southern China (namely Kuang-tung, Kuang-hsi, Yün-nan [33], Ssueh'uan [34], Kuei-chou [35], Hu-nan [36]) with a total population amounting to 150 million people.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, the Cantonese government at that time did not control even the whole territory of Kuang-tung,⁴¹ and as to the other five provinces mentioned by Sun, his government controlled them or parts of them more or less merely indirectly.

³⁷ See copy of the English written text enveloped, under the title "Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Proposals", in the memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of February 14, 1924, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 31.

³⁸ Ibid., Bl. 31–32.

³⁹ Ibid., Bl. 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Bl. 32.

⁴¹ According to a report by Remy of December 19, 1924, the Cantonese government dominated only some twenty of the total of ninety districts in this province. See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 60.

In concluding his letter Sun Yat-sen pointed out that the Sino-German cooperation could be started in the sphere of transport, primarily air transport, e. g. by establishing air connection between Canton and Ssueh'uan by a German airline company which would function on the basis of equal interest for both parties. Finally, Sun uttered his hope that the German government would encourage German businessmen to accomplish this point, in order to win the confidence of the Chinese population toward further common projects.⁴²

The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted in its response to Teng Chia-yen very cautiously to Sun's proposals (particularly to their political aspect), but expressed its interest in possible cooperation in the sphere of the exploitation of mines and in transport. In this respect, the Ministry immediately informed about the whole affair the Union of German Industries (der Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie), nevertheless, it drew simultaneously the attention of German industrialists to the fifth paragraph of the Sino-French Supplementary Convention of June 20, 1895, according to which French objections might be expected against German participation in the exploitation of mines in the province Kuang-hsi, one of the French spheres of influence in China.⁴³ The Union of German Industries replied that it is interested to enter into contact with Teng Chia-yen. In the meantime, this emissary of Sun Yat-sen, however, already got in touch with the Hugo Stinnes Company, in order to start direct negotiations concerning the mine industry and air transport in southern China.⁴⁴

At the time when not only the industrial but also governmental circles in Germany were willing to accept Sun Yat-sen's offers of economic cooperation, the attitude of German representatives in China was much more cautious, particularly that of the Consul-General in Canton Remy, who, based on his personal knowledge and experience, took up a negative attitude toward Sun Yat-sen's plans of Sino-German collaboration. In his memorandum of June 10, 1924, addressed to the German Legation in Peking, Remy pointed out, among others, that most of the concessions promised by Sun Yat-sen were in the territory not under the control of the Cantonese government. This fact was, according to his opinion, sufficient to disqualify Sun's proposals as a basis for any further serious negotiations. Referring to his conversation with Sun Yat-sen on January 16, 1924, and especially to his negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Cantonese Government Eugène Chen (Ch'en Yu-jen [37]) which had taken place recently, Remy came to the conclusion that Sun's proposals revealed his attempts to get immediately big sums of money

⁴² See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 32.

⁴³ See memorandum of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of February 14, 1924, DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Bl. 30.

in exchange for promises of enormous concessions to the German industry.⁴⁵

We, unfortunately, lack any evidence as to the outcome of this last stage of negotiations between Teng Chia-yen and the respective German authorities, and as to the possible further progress of relations between Sun Yat-sen and the Germans, if they, of course, continued to exist at all. It is, however, possible to suppose that the turbulent development of political events in China in the second half of 1924 and at the beginning of 1925, which occupied Sun wholly, put an end to these activities on both sides already several months before Sun Yat-sen's death in March 12, 1925. In any case, the historical sources, both Chinese and German, at least those accessible to the author of this article, give no answer in this respect.

From the fact comprised in the documents of the former German diplomatic representation in China in the period between 1921–1924, the following conclusions may be derived. First, since 1921, Sun Yat-sen, based on some relevant factors in the then Chinese and German policy made a series of repeated far-reaching attempts at establishing comparatively close relations between his revolutionary régime in southern China, on the one side, and Germany, on the other, with the aim of obtaining in this way German economic and financial support and, possibly even a political alliance with all consequences resulting from it. All these attempts of Sun Yat-sen, however, failed because of his unstable internal position in China and the weak international situation of post-war Germany, which both determined Germany's policy in this respect.

On the German side, there existed, without any doubt, also some endeavours not only of private character but also in official circles to avail themselves of Sun Yat-sen, in order to attain new influence in China, but various political considerations and hesitations played always an important and growing role on the German side. A gradual cooling in the German attitude toward Sun Yat-sen was, undoubtedly, also connected with the fact that the Germans were obliged to bring their foreign policy, in the course of time, again nearer to that of the other Powers, which made it impossible to establish closer relations with such a radical figure as Sun Yat-sen was. It was, nevertheless, typical for almost every stage of the development of relations with Sun that the headquarters of the German foreign policy in Berlin cherished often more hope about the results of a possible cooperation with Sun Yat-sen than did the local German diplomatic representatives in China, particularly in Canton, who having been more acquainted with the real state of affairs could better appreciate the prospects and advantage expected from the policy of alliance offered by Sun Yat-sen.

⁴⁵ See DZP, Nr. 2232, Bl. 25–29.

As to Sun Yat-sen, perhaps the most interesting is the fact that he continued in his efforts to cooperate with Germany even in the years 1923 and 1924, i.e. in a period when he oriented his political strategy and whole revolutionary cause seemingly exclusively at an alliance with the U. S. S. R. This reality, probably not generally known, may serve as further evidence of the specific features of Sun Yat-sen's personality and as a small contribution for getting to know better the complex character of his political thinking.

1) 陳炯明 2) 廣東 3) 廣西 4) 桂系 5) 就大
總統職宣言 6) 國父全書 7) 桂林 8) 直隸
9) 直系 10) 實業計劃 11) 物質建設 12) 建
國方略 13) 條約集第二號 14) 朱和中 15)
李錦綸 16) 伍朝樞 17) 伍廷芳 18) 北京
日報 19) 順天時報 20) 大同通信社 21) 大
陸日報 22) 廖仲愷 23) 曹亞伯 24) 益世報
25) 摩漢 26) 外交上應取的態度 27) 鄧家彥
28) 致鄧家彥囑游說德國志士促成中德
合作函 29) 大中華商報 30) 富賀 31) 富川
32) 賀縣 33) 雲南 34) 四川 35) 貴州 36) 湖
南 37) 陳友仁