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China's Domestic and Foreign Politics Lecture Evening of the Advisory Board for Foreign Studies of the University of Berlin (24 pages), according to Mande Krebs

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China's Domestic and Foreign Politics, by E. Krebs.

The news coming to us from East Asia has been reporting for years on such desolate and confused political conditions in China that it seems to the distant observer that there is no longer any prospect of the reunification of the great empire, which is at present torn into several pieces. Are the prospects really that desperate? Is not the pessimistic view prevailing in our country perhaps due to the fact that those who are far away apply the standard of European conditions and thought to Chinese affairs?

In judging the present political situation of China - in the following we are speaking only of China proper, including the three Manchurian provinces, and not also of foreigners such as Mongolia and Tibet, which in normal times were part of the Chinese empire, but administratively occupied a more or less independent special position - one must bear in mind a double one: First of all, the current state of affairs in China is by no means something new and unheard-of; rather, in the course of its several thousand years of history, the country has repeatedly gone through much worse periods of discord, sometimes of very long duration, and yet it has not perished as a result. In the same way, the patient Chinese of today sees in the tribulations of the present a phenomenon, albeit a deplorable one, but only temporary, which will one day give way to better conditions in the reunited fatherland.

In the second place, however, the struggles which have brought about the present situation are not the result of profound differences in political thought, such as the struggle between reaction and progress, but are merely based on pure questions of power on the part of the parties and groups involved, the antagonisms of which are partly of a purely personal nature, and this is especially true of the dispute between South and North. based on the diversity of temperament. Given the thoroughly apolitical character of the Chinese people, political antagonisms that could have led to the formation of political parties were unthinkable until the end of the imperial period. Formerly, there existed at most secret societies under the most diverse names, which generally had a tendency against the dynasty at the time in favor of the former one which had been expelled by it, and which the respective government naturally constantly pursued and strove to suppress. Sun Won, known as the intellectual originator of the revolution against the Manchu dynasty, can be regarded as the father of the political party system in China, who during his stay in Japan in 1901 founded the Tung mang hui, Federal Society, consisting almost exclusively of southern Chinese and with an almost socialist party program. It consisted mainly of the men who later played a part in the revolution of 1911 and the great mass of young people from southern China studying in Japan. The aim of this radical southern party was twofold: 1) to drive out the Manchu emperors, whom it regarded as racial conquerors, and 2) to limit as far as possible the influence of the North in imperial politics, which had hitherto been the only decisive one, and to secure the preponderance of the South's fate in the direction of China's fate. The livelier southern temperament is shown here

above all by the fact that the Covenant Society, which at first was only concerned with the elimination of the Manchus and the restoration of the descendants of the emperors of the Chinese Ming family who had been expelled by them, very soon went beyond this goal and decided to establish a republic.

In order to facilitate the achievement of its aims, after the formal establishment of the republic, the party attracted some smaller parties of similar tendencies, which had meanwhile been formed, and, with few formal changes to its programme, developed into the great democratic party Kuomintang, which still forms the backbone of southern Chinese politics today, and which caused difficulties upon difficulties for Yüan Shih kai in particular during his presidency. which is why, towards the end of 1913, he simply expelled the members of parliament who belonged to it from Peking and, because the rest of the parliament had now become unable to form a quorum, thus setting a goal for parliamentary activity at all.

In the Republic, the South claimed a privileged position over the North because the South had "made" the revolution, which was expressed not only in the Nanking Provisional Constitution of 1912, which it drew up (which, by the way, has not yet been definitively replaced), which, contrary to the view held by the North, granted the main powers to parliament and granted relatively few rights to the President of the Republic (which is why it was not possible to for Yuan Shih kai also preferred to get rid of the participation of parliament soon), but also in the desire to move the imperial capital from Peking to Nanking. To this end, Yüan Shih kai, who had been elected as provisional president, was asked to take the oath of allegiance to the provisional constitution in Nanking, a request which he was only able to evade by staging a great troop mutiny during the presence of the delegation from the South, which had come to Beijing to pick him up, so that it would be made clear to the whole world that that he must not move away from Beijing in the interests of the peace and security of the country.

Of course, the North tried to defend itself against the far-reaching claims of the South and opposed the Southern Party with the moderate Republican Party Kunghotang, formed shortly after the establishment of the Republic, which was soon overtaken in influence by the great Progressive Party Chinputang. The latter also included those southern Chinese who did not sympathize with the exaggerated demands of their closer compatriots, such as above all its co-founder, the Cantonese Liang Ki tschau (much mentioned since 1898, who, together with his compatriot Kang Yu Wei, advised Emperor Kuanghsü on his attempts to reform China), for a short time Minister of Justice during the presidency of Yüan Shih kai, then only active as a writer and as such of great influence in present-day China. In addition, over time, there are about a dozen smaller parties, some of them of subordinate importance, some of which are temporary, and there is no need to enumerate them. Only the Anfu Club (so named after the street in Beijing where the club's building was located) deserves to be highlighted, not only because of the influence of its founder and head, the long-time Prime Minister General Tuan Kijui, but also because of its importance in foreign policy. In fact, it brought together all those who relied on Japan to achieve their goals. For this reason the club was widely hated, and when General Wu Peifu, who had the reputation of being a patriotic and disinterested republican, succeeded in defeating the club by force of arms and rendering it harmless, he suddenly became the most popular man in northern China.

In modern foreign countries, where the people participate more or less in political life, political parties have a large base among broad sections of the population with the same political views. One does not think that it is the same in China. Here, rather, the party is confined to its actual members; it does not derive its power from a like-minded mass of

people behind it, nor from the strength of its representation in parliament, since the recent history of China shows how the parliament was dissolved if it did not want to submit to the will of the current rulers. Rather, the power of the party rests on the power of individual members in terms of money and troops. Money plays a major role in modern Chinese politics as elsewhere. There can be no question of a struggle with intellectual weapons alone, if only because, as has already been indicated and will be proved by a few examples, the struggles in China are not a struggle between ideas, but mere disputes of power. That is why we find so much corruption and improper use of public funds in the modern Chinese party system. As reprehensible as this is, of course, in China the circumstance is often to be credited to the persons concerned at least by the fact that the funds, which are often demanded in an imperfect manner, do not always serve exclusively for personal enrichment, but preferably for the strengthening of one's own party. Since, if necessary, the power struggles must be fought out with arms, the party which has the most and best troops is naturally the strongest, and so the troop commanders and the military governors of the provinces, who have a larger contingent of troops at their disposal, are the decisive factor in the party disputes that are swaying back and forth. For it has not yet come to the point where the Chinese army, which, by the way, is at present far too large for the needs of the country, is a tool of the central government, but rather the individual troop formations are in the hands of certain personalities. Which they use in their own or their party's interests in power, and which they strive to constantly increase for this purpose. All efforts on the part of sensible Chinese patriots to limit the number of troops to a reasonable level have hitherto failed, chiefly because of the resistance of the military governors, who are unwilling to give up their means of power, and so it has come about that the Imperial Army, once created by the central government as a means of protection and strengthening, has instead become a means of enrichment, and that the central government, when it is a question of disposing of at least parts of the Imperial Army, depending on the goodwill of the troop commanders.

The mass of the population takes no part in the interests of the parties and in the reasons for their mutual opposition; she doesn't care about politics at all, only longs for peace and quiet and the opportunity to pursue her trade or profession undisturbed. Therefore, in the present disputes, one cannot speak of a division of the Chinese people into different camps, much less of a civil war. Rather, the people are completely uninvolved, just as the disputants do not care about the interests of the people and the country.

The point that China's internal struggles are basically nothing more than the struggle for the power of individuals or troops cannot be overemphasized. Hence also the explanation that membership of any party does not necessarily imply the severance of all connections with others, but a way will always be left open for finding the way back to the former friends when circumstances have changed. For the same reason, for example, the fact that a province declares itself independent does not necessarily mean that it now breaks off all connection with the central government; it is even possible that the recalcitrant province will recognize the authority of the central government in certain matters, which will generally be the case when it comes to matters in which the foreign powers have a say, such as the delivery of customs revenues. This, by the way, is a phenomenon which we also perceive in the Chinese character in general: the aversion to rigid consistency and the manoeuvring out of considerations of expediency.

A particularly striking example of the fact that only power and influence are sought is the fact that the stock republican Sun Wen, when he was preparing his punitive expedition against Beijing in 1922 in order to overthrow the government there by force of arms, did not shy

away from entering into alliance negotiations with the military governor Chang Tsolin in Mukden, although he was so far removed from democratic-republican sentiments. that he even has the reputation of striving for the imperial throne himself. The purpose of the alliance was also to crush the northern general Wu Peifu, who was praised as a democratic republican, from the north and south, even though he was close to Sun Wen according to his political convictions and had questioned the Anfu party two years earlier in alliance with Chang Tsolin. Although the latter had every reason to be angry with the Japanese. He had not disdained to contact them secretly and to accept from them support (especially in the form of arms) against his own countrymen.

These examples may suffice to show that in the power struggles in modern China one cannot speak of the defense of higher goals and ideas, but rather of pure selfishness.

The power struggle between the North and the South began under the presidency of Yuan Shih kai, and has continued into recent times, with this difference, that while the South has always formed a more or less cohesive mass, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller, according as one or the other province thought it would find its advantage on one side or the other, or quite apart, the North itself soon disintegrated into groups feuding with each other. While the only central government recognized by the powers in Beijing itself lost more and more influence and prestige, the real rule in the north is always exercised by the one who has the strongest troops at his disposal.

The course of events, which, on the basis of the conditions described above, has gradually brought about the present conditions, was in a nutshell as follows:

After the death of Yüan Shih kai in the summer of 1916, the parliament, which he had dissolved in 1913, was restored, thus creating the precondition for the reunification of the individual parts of the empire that had broken away from the central government when Yüan Shih kai openly pursued the ascension to the imperial throne in violation of the oath taken to the provisional constitution of the republic. But the very next year brought a new serious quarrel: in 1917, when it came to the formal declaration of war against Germany, on which the generals insisted, the parliament, anxious for its authority, which did not want to submit to the dictates of the military rulers without further ado, had also become suspicious of rumours circulating about a secret agreement with Japan. Time for reflection and reassuring explanations from the government about these rumours. The answer to this was the dissolution of parliament decreed by President Li Yuan hung under pressure from the generals, so that the declaration of war in August 1917 was effected without parliamentary participation. The consequence of the dissolution of China's internal politics was that the South, under Canton's leadership, formally seceded from the North, and China henceforth had two governments: the government in Peking, which was recognized by the powers alone as the central government of the entire empire, and the Southern government in Canton, headed by Sun Wen and whose parliament was composed by the deputies of the dissolved Beijing parliament coming from the south.

After the failure of the attempt to restore the Manchu dynasty by the emperor-loyal general Chang Hsün, a new parliament was elected in the north, but it was not recognized by the south, nor was the president of the republic Hsü Shih chang, who had been elected by the northern parliament to replace Li Yüan hung, who had resigned at the time of the monarchist coup. There was almost constant fighting between the north and the south. At the request of the Chinese merchants, supported by the foreign powers, several peace conferences were held

in the former German club in Shanghai, but they were unsuccessful, chiefly because the South demanded that all members of the parliament, which had been dissolved in 1917, should be restored to their rights; but the North could not be persuaded to make this concession, because it feared that it would regain decisive Southern influence in Parliament, and because the rulers of the North only wanted a Parliament that was subservient to them.

In the north, the Anfu Club, under the leadership of General Tuan Kijui, had become increasingly unpopular, not only because of its association with the Japanese, who were widely hated, but also because it had complete control over President Hsu Shih Chang and thus completely dominated the central government. This led to a coalition against him, headed by the politically colorless military governor in Tientsin, Tsao Kun, the military governor Chang Tsolin in Mukden, and General Wu Peifu, a man who had distinguished himself by wise moderation in disputes with the South, had worked for reconciliation with the South, and had earned the reputation of a patriotic democrat. The defeat of the Anfu troops in 1920 was mainly due to him. His power and popularity reached its peak when, two years later, he succeeded in beating his former ally Chang Tsolin on the head, who, after the elimination of the Anfu Club, now dominated the president and the government in Beijing and assumed an attitude as boisterous as if he were the master of northern China. He was replaced as military governor of the three Manchurian provinces at the instigation of his conqueror, to which he replied by declaring them independent.

In the meantime, Sun Wen had himself proclaimed president of the entire republic in May 1922 and then undertook his "punitive expedition" against Beijing. However, this came to a halt in central China and had to be abandoned. He himself returned to Canton, but even with the help of the fleet that had remained loyal to him, he could not hold on there; for his former Minister of War, Chen Kiung ming, who had been reluctant to accept the punitive expedition against the North, partly because he did not believe in its success, and partly because he had sympathy for General Wu Peifu, had finally fallen out with Sun Wen to such an extent that, having hastened ahead to Canton, he forcibly refused him entry into the city. He made himself lord of Canton, and succeeded in such a way that Sun Wen finally retired to Shanghai, where he worked with his still very numerous followers to pursue his goals. Some time later, one of the generals loyal to Sun Wen conquered the neighboring province of Fukian with the apparent intention of reclaiming Canton from there.

Thus, for the time being, China proper is divided into the following separate parts:

1. The North, with the provinces adhering to it, and the seat of the central government in Peking, which alone is recognized by the Powers. The dominant figure here is Wu Peifu, the popular conqueror of the Anfu Party and Chang Tsolin, who also enjoys the sympathies of England and America. He declared the reunification of the South with the North to be his main goal, which is why, in order to accommodate the South, he first arranged for the abdication of President Hsü Shihchang and persuaded Li Yüan hung to re-ascend the presidential chair. Because of his honest character and his undoubted republican attitude, he also enjoys a great reputation among the southerners, who even forgive him for things like the dissolution of parliament in 1917, because it took place under the excessive pressure of the generals.
2. The three Manchurian provinces declared independent by Chang Tsolin.
3. The area of the former Canton government, which collapsed with Sun Wen's escape. Canton itself is ruled by General Chen Kiung ming. It is currently impossible to say from here how far his domain extends, not even whether the neighboring province of

Kwangsi belongs to it. The only thing that is certain is that Fukien, under his current rulers, stands by Sun Wen ^[1]. So far, there are no indications that Chen Kiungming is seeking reunification with the North, although he has occasionally said that he is not averse to such reunification under certain conditions, which include the form of government of a federation of autonomous provinces, a form of government which the South in general has for some time included in its programme.

Thus, the hopes that Wu Peifu would succeed in restoring the unity of the empire have not yet been fulfilled, indeed the division has increased through the secession of Manchuria, and thus the work of unification has been considerably more difficult, for if it is not possible to persuade Chang TsoLin to voluntarily renounce his independence, which at present has little prospect of this, then it will be difficult, if not impossible, to deal with him by force of arms, especially if he continues to assure himself of the secret support of Japan. Incidentally, with regard to Wu Peifu, a strong disappointment is also perceptible in other circles of the North, which greatly undermines his previous popularity, mainly because he himself has not even begun to reduce his troops, but even increases them, and because he has kept his original promise not to interfere in the affairs of the central government. has not complied with. The suspicion that his earlier democratic convictions were either not entirely genuine or had been suffocated by the intoxication of power is becoming more and more widespread. The military governors in the north have no intention of fulfilling the condition of abolishing these posts and reducing the number of troops to which Li Yuan hung had attached the acceptance of the presidency. Both the president and the central government are powerless, and their influence does not extend far beyond the perimeter of the capital. She lacks money for her most urgent needs. Cabinet changes are the order of the day.

The Chinese people remain unaffected by all these unpleasant phenomena unless the individual national comrade is directly affected in any way. In general, the Chinese people have always been free from the influences of their government or their rulers in their professional and business life to a much greater degree than any other people in the world, and so even now in this confused trade and change of the times it goes on as usual, as long as there are no fights and that, as a result of the uncertain political conditions in some provinces, terribly rampant robbers actually prevent the traffic.

It is self-evident that, in view of the conditions described, it is not possible to think of a fruitful administrative activity and the government's promotion of the material and spiritual welfare of the people. If there were otherwise good will, this would already be countered by the empty government coffers. Domestic politics

China, therefore, can reasonably be described as something that does not exist at all at the present time. Because the power struggles have nothing to do with actual politics.

In foreign policy, China, by virtue of its weakness, has naturally played only a passive role in the main. In its recent history, it has been more or less merely an object of foreign policy as a field of activity for the competition between the individual powers, each of which jealously watches over the fact that no other permits itself to encroach upon its sphere of interest. In particular, it is the policy of foreign railway concessions that spreads an almost inextricable web of foreign interests over the country and hinders the free resolution of the Chinese government even in normal times. In passing, it should be remembered that in the summer of 1911 this railway policy led to the great unrest in the province of Szetschwan, which was the forerunner of the revolution in October of the same year.

In the period in which we have been concerned, China has only acted independently in two cases in foreign policy, once against Germany and the other time against Russia.

After America broke off relations with Germany in the spring of 1917 and called on the Chinese government to do the same, there was no inclination among the Chinese to go over to Germany's enemies, nor among the generals, many of whom had received their military training in Germany, and who were all full of admiration for Germany's tremendous achievements in the war. nor among the merchants who esteem the German merchant and prefer him in every respect to his English competitor. Initially, Japan also did not want China to step out of its neutrality, which might have given it the right to sit next to Japan at the peace conference table and defend its claims to the former German leased territory in Shantung, which had been taken possession of by Japan. Japan was also unwelcome by the Entente China's prospect of an increase in the customs tariff (page 125) in exchange for its accession. Nevertheless, the Entente, by raising enormous funds and by enticing promises, such as the deferral of Boxer indemnities for a number of years, an increase in the customs tariff, the amendment of the Final Protocol of 1901, etc., succeeded in bringing about a change of mood in its favour, at least in official China, which was further facilitated by the fact that China was deprived of the hope of regaining possession of the former German leased territory in Shantung. Incidentally, the agitation of the above-mentioned head of the Progressive Party, Liang Kitschau, probably the most brilliant mind among the modern Chinese, had a great influence on the decision finally directed against Germany. He pointed out that now had come a never-to-be-repeated opportunity for China to step out of its feeble restraint in world politics and to secure its position among the peoples by taking an active part in the greatest event in world history. That he believed in the correctness of the policy he recommended, and was not prompted to do so by ill will against Germany, may be inferred from the fact that he had always shown himself to be an admirer of Germany, and not long after the outbreak of the war had written a widely read book in which he considered the eventual victory of Germany probable. Japan was won over by the Entente by a secret promise to preserve its possessions in Shantung at the peace conference. This was followed by the severance of relations with Germany in March 1917. The declaration of war against Germany in August 1917 was not joined by the Southern Government, now constituted in Canton, mainly because it feared that the declaration of war would place even greater power in the hands of the North. In fact, with the help of a major loan concluded by the Prime Minister General Tuan Kijui with the Japanese (the later often mentioned Nishihara loan, about which rumours had been circulating for a long time and about which, as mentioned above, the parliament had demanded explanations from the government), a special Chinese army was equipped and trained by Japanese instructors destined for the European theatre of war. The armistice concluded in Europe in 1918 prevented this army from participating in the European theatre of war; instead, it was used for the reconquest of outer Mongolia. For Germany, the war had the consequences of the abrogation of all treaties existing between it and China, the confiscation and partial liquidation of German property located in China, the dismissal of all Germans from the Chinese civil service, and the expulsion of almost all Germans from China. China itself experienced the great disappointment that the (page 126) former German rights in Shantung were awarded to Japan at the peace congress, thus saw itself betrayed in its greatest hope, betrayed, as it were, by America, on whose influence it had relied in a way that was conducive to China's claims, and withdrew resentfully from Versailles without having signed the peace treaty. The disappointment gave rise to a tremendous uproar, which manifested itself in physical attacks on some of the higher officials, whom the population accused of treasonous collusion with Japan, and in a general boycott of Japanese goods. China only came to its right in Shantung by way of the conference in

Washington, but received expenditures and improvements made by Japan during the period of its occupation in Shantung.

The German agreement of 1921 restored regular relations. The most important provision in it is the German renunciation of the law of extraterritoriality and consular jurisdiction. The Southern Government did not recognize this agreement concluded with Peking, and in spite of all the ostentatious and doubtless sincere sympathy for Germany, Sun Wen took the view that a special treaty between the two was necessary for the restoration of regular relations between his government and Germany, since the Canton Parliament, whose members had still belonged to the Peking Parliament in the spring of 1917, had been involved in the breakdown of relations with Germany at that time.

As a political factor, of course, Germany is completely eliminated in China at the moment. In spite of all the difficulties and obstacles, however, the spirit of enterprise and industry on the part of German merchants and industry has succeeded in giving business relations with China such an extent that voices of envy have long since been heard again in the enemy camp, and it can be seen that the former friendly feelings of the Chinese population towards the Germans have not been significantly diminished by the events of the war and post-war have. The same was confirmed to me by the former minister Chou Tze chie, a friend of mine from Beijing, who has now been in Berlin for a few days, and who, during a long conversation the other day, expressed to me the wish that the Germans would be encouraged at every opportunity to enter into business relations with China, that they would be welcomed with open arms by his countrymen.

After the fall of the Russian tsarist government, the relationship between the Russian legation in Beijing and the government there initially remained completely unchanged. The latter willingly placed the Russian share of the Boxer's compensation at the disposal of the Russian envoy, who used it to pay for the Russian representations in China and Japan, and moreover continued to negotiate with the Chinese government as if there were still a government behind him, whereas in reality this was not the case. Then, in September 1920, a presidential decree hit like a bomb, breaking off relations with the Russian legation, abolishing Russian consular jurisdiction and placing Russians living in China under Chinese jurisdiction. An inconsequential incident had been taken as an external occasion. What China wanted was to make the first breach in the wall of the extraterritoriality of foreigners, hence the anger of the foreign, especially the English press. However, the Chinese government was not fooled, and the Russian envoy left.

Official relations with the Russian Soviet government do not yet exist, but rapprochements have already taken place. In the first place, the Republic of the Far East in Chita, which was in close relations with the Moscow Government (and which has recently been united with the latter), sought to establish contact with the Chinese Government by sending Yurin to Peking for negotiations, but he had not yet achieved anything and returned to Chita, having been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs there. China itself sent a military mission to Moscow to make contact with the Russians, because the Chinese government was interested in a dispute over the conditions in outer Mongolia, where the Bolsheviks had made themselves at home.

A few months ago, the Moscow government sent Joffe, who is known from Berlin, to Beijing. There he developed such a lively activity that he has already won over the majority of the students at Peking University to his ideas, which in turn has resulted in the head of the university, Tsai Yüan pei (a scholar who studied in Germany for a long time in his younger

years, but lived for a time in France during the war, where he became completely open to French influences). outwardly at least displays Bolshevik sympathies. Joffe's efforts are primarily aimed at persuading China to recognize the Russian Soviet government. It has already had some success in that members of the Beijing parliament submitted a request for recognition of the Soviet government some time ago, and the Chinese government subsequently set up a commission to study the issue. Lately it has been reported that Joffe has declared in a note to the Chinese Government that Russia is willing to return to China, without compensation, all that the former Tsarist Government had appropriated (page 128), on condition that China expels all former Russian consuls, and that Russia revokes all privileges whose Russian firms had formerly enjoyed in China. All the news suggests that he is skilfully at work and may not be far from his goal.

On the whole, as I have said, China's foreign policy role could only be a passive one, if only because, despite the country's great wealth, it is still financially dependent on the goodwill of foreign countries because of the forced abandonment of its customs autonomy. The only one in question here is the Northern Government in Peking, which has always been recognized by foreign countries as the central government of the entire empire, while Sun Wen's demand for recognition of his own government has never been heeded. This has particularly angered him against England in such a way that the allegation that he had a hand in the seamen's strike in Hong Kong, which seriously damaged English shipping interests, may be based on truth. His resentment against the English was all the greater because he had enjoyed their sympathies at the time of the revolution of 1911. England had at first been willing to support the monarchy, and it was not until a report by the English Consul-General in Shanghai, who explained to his government that England's interests in China had greater prospects of development under a republic than under the monarchy, that the mood in England changed in favour of the republic, with the result that the foreign loan required by the Chinese government to combat the revolution was refused. and thus the cause of the monarchy was lost. If, at the beginning of the Republic, England had been on Sun Wen's side with her sympathies for these reasons, as soon as Yuan Shihkai was elected president, she took his party, and especially at the time of her rivalry with Sun Wen, she stood by that, which, by the way, quite apart from the personal relations of the English ambassador to the president dating back to the time of her official activity in Korea. This is understandable, if only because Yuan Shih kai had acquired the reputation of a clever and energetic statesman among foreigners, while Sun Wen was often judged to be an impractical fantasist, whether rightly or wrongly remains to be seen. He never forgot the English for pushing him aside, and the derogatory manner in which the English press in China had lately been in the habit of speaking of him irritated him to the extreme. Although he has temporarily retired from the official stage, he still has a large following among the Chinese and is by no means giving up his cause, so that it can be assumed with certainty (page 129) that his political role is far from being played out[2].

It is not surprising that England's political standing in China should be diminished by the feeble attitude she takes towards French imperialist pretensions in the rest of the world. In China itself, the French have never played a prominent role. When they do give a special occasion to make a name for themselves, the occasion was usually a most unfavorable one for them. The Chinese have always reproached the French missionaries in the first place for behaving in China as if they were agents of their government with the task of undermining the prestige of the Chinese authorities in the eyes of the Chinese people in the selfish interests of the homeland. During the war at the beginning of 1917, the Laohsikai incident in Tientsin caused an embarrassing sensation even among the allies of the French. There, on the orders of the French representation, the French consulate had occupied land belonging to China and

arrested the Chinese policemen stationed there, allegedly because the building in question had once been promised to the French on the Chinese side in order to enlarge the French branch. The incident led to the complete boycott of the French branch and caused a tremendous uproar. It took him a very long time to find a peaceful settlement. The collapse of the Banque industrielle de Chine, which resulted in the loss of large sums of Chinese capital and took place under suspicious circumstances, has not helped to raise French prestige either, while France's recent ostentatious rapprochement with Japan has done little to arouse French sympathy in China.

England's most dangerous competitor in China at the moment is undoubtedly North America. Not only does it have the inestimable advantage in the eyes of the Chinese that, unlike the other powers, it has never demanded or occupied an inch of Chinese soil, and that there is no significant American foreign settlement in China, but it also took the wise step in 1908 to give China the considerable sum of over 10,000,000,000 millions. To remit the dollars of the Boxer's compensation awarded to America in the Final Protocol of 1901, on condition that this money be used for the study of young Chinese in America. To this end, in 1911 the large school complex known as Chinghua College was built outside Peking as a preparatory institution for the Chinese students to be sent to America (page 130), where they are trained by American teachers to attend American universities. In this way, America has secured great political influence, since almost all of the Chinese thus educated later become Chinese officials and come back from there full of sympathy for America. Already, a large percentage of the younger Chinese intelligentsia in official positions are educated at American universities, thus contributing to the predominance of American sympathy in government circles. In other ways, too, the Americans have managed to gain a reputation among the Chinese as unselfish philanthropists. Thus, in 1918, the petroleum king Rockefeller provided a large sum of money, from which the Peking Medical College was founded, a large hospital equipped with all modern facilities, connected with chairs of medicine. A multitude of missionaries scattered throughout the country are not so much engaged in recruiting new Christians as in instructing them in the elementary subjects of general knowledge and useful skills for a very small fee, even in the most remote villages. After all, America maintains an effective means of propaganda in the state-of-the-art palaces of the Young Men's Christian Association, in which, among other things, slide shows are intended to give the Chinese a vivid idea of America and its advantages. As long as the republic has existed, there has never been serious friction between China and America. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that modern China has become accustomed to seeing America as its unselfish friend and protector, forgetting the disappointments it has experienced on the part of America, especially at Versailles with regard to the Shantung question and also in the absence of American financial support, and sometimes overlooking other things. which might cast doubt on America's altruism. In any case, America's present position in China is such that, in all likelihood, no nation will be able to surpass it in the foreseeable future.

The relationship between Japan and China is quite different. Ever since Japan defeated China so thoroughly and rapidly in the war of 1894-95, all her actions towards China have shown that she is striving for supremacy in East Asia and that she wishes to keep China constantly weak in order to achieve her goal without difficulty. The climax is the notorious 21 demands presented by Japan to the government of Yuan Shih kai in 1915, which contained encroachments on China's independence that had never been expected of an independent country until then.

Of course, some of the many challenges to China (page 131) may have been made against the better understanding of the Japanese government and only under the pressure of an all-powerful military party, but the government has always defended the unjust demands of China, as it was when it handed over the demands of the Chinese government, which undoubtedly sprang from military minds. Japan, to which, soon after the Sino-Japanese war, the Chinese, in spite of the bitter lesson given to them by Japan, turned in recognition of their weakness as the supposedly racially related brother people, and to which thousands of young Chinese flocked every year in order to appropriate, in the most convenient and cheap way, through Japanese mediation, the achievements of Western skill to which Japan owed its victory, It would undoubtedly have been possible in time to secure by peaceful means the influence in China to which it was striving, had not the fist of an innocent military policy, which wanted to come into play quickly and saw in the Chinese only defenseless weaklings, rudely disturbed this peaceful development and at once turned the majority of the Chinese from trusting friends into bitter enemies. At times, the excitement in China was so great that it led to extensive boycotts of Japanese goods, which severely damaged Japanese trade and prompted diplomatic ideas on the part of the Japanese government. In parenthesis and as an example of Chinese humor and ingenuity, it should be noted here that when, at Japanese's request, a ban was issued against the inscription "boycott Japanese goods!" on the flags carried in the hands of the participants in large demonstrations, it was replaced by the words "boycott inferior goods!", to which there was no formal objection.

In the party struggles in China, Japan has always supported some party, not in order to help one or the other cause to victory, but only so that China could not come to rest and strengthen itself internally and make itself resilient. So far, Japan has actually been one of the obstacles that stand in the way of a calming of Chinese conditions for the time being. It seems questionable whether, if it does not itself deviate from its previous policy of intentionally weakening China, it can be forced to do so by force by the trading peoples interested in China's peaceful development. It is probable, however, that the recent annexation of the Republic of the Far East and Vladivostok to the Moscow Government, which extends the latter's sphere of influence to the Pacific Ocean, will not be without influence on Japan's attitude towards China. There are also other signs that Japan is giving in. If it really adopts a more peaceful policy against its neighbor, will it regain lost Chinese confidence?

(page 132) Be that as it may, its friends need not despair of China's future. It has been through worse times and has survived all the disasters that usually ended after years of struggle with victory reuniting the whole country under its rule. In the past, however, China was in a more favourable position in that it was free and unhindered from the outside, whereas today it can no longer operate quite so freely in its own house, its freedom of movement is restricted by a network of treaties, and it is heavily dependent on foreign countries for its current needs. However, this disadvantage is offset by the advantage that foreign countries have a considerable interest in China's peaceful development. The idea of a partition of China by foreigners, which could still be ventilated towards the end of the last century, is probably no longer seriously entertained by anyone today. The danger that China will disintegrate of its own accord in the long run is vanishingly small in view of the undoubted similarity of the Chinese national body, the common ancient culture and writing, despite many local differences. Rather, it is to be assumed that the parts that are still politically separated without ideal and ethical reasons will come together again in time and a new united China will arise, especially since, as we have seen, the party struggles surging in China have no resonance among the Chinese people and none of the combatants can count on support from the population. Until the end of the last century, there was no political question of a common

Chinese feeling; even then, the individual provinces of the empire felt themselves to be self-contained units with their own interests that had nothing in common with the interests of the neighboring provinces. Thus, at that time, the war against Japan was perceived not as a war by China, but by Chihli Province and its Governor-General Li Hungchang, which did not concern the rest of China. Characteristic of this is the well-known story of the commander of a Chinese gunboat of the Canton fleet, who happened to be in Weihaiwei with his boat when the Chinese fleet had to surrender to the Japanese, and who in all seriousness demanded the release of his and his gunboat from the Japanese, as he had nothing to do with the war of the North. And yet, at that time, China was a united empire under one emperor. In the meantime, a tremendous change has taken place in this respect. Today, in spite of the political discord presented to the observer, there is a sense of togetherness among the entire Chinese people. This was most evident in the outrage over the Versailles decision and the subsequent great boycott of Japan. In spite of the division of the Reich, the wave of indignation and (page 133) boycott went through the whole country with equal strength. But those who point to China's distressed financial situation may consider that the country still holds immeasurable natural riches which are only waiting to be raised, that the necessary extension of its railway network will bring enormous revenues and a tremendous economic boom of large land areas, that a reform of property taxes alone would almost enable China to get rid of its foreign liabilities at one stroke. that to this day China knows almost no taxes at all, and finally that China's debt is about 3 mex. dollars on the head of the population. No other country in the world has such favourable conditions for the future.

Transcript by Eckhard Hoffmann in January 2016

[↑](#)

[1] [↑](#) Since the treaty was kept, the situation in Canton has changed to the extent that Sun Wen's followers have attacked Canton from Knangsi and driven Chash Hiung ming out of there, so that Canton is once again subject to Sun Wen's influence. He therefore intends to return there. It was said recently that he had already left there, but the message was soon revoked.

[2] [↑](#) In fact, he has since regained possession of Canton, where he will presumably re-establish his southern government, which had collapsed last year.