

# Russians and Sun Yat-sen

by Ah Xiang

*Excerpts from "Tragedy of Chinese Revolution" at <http://www.republicanchina.org/tragedy.html> For updates and related articles, check <http://www.republicanchina.org/RepublicanChina-pdf.htm>*

Sun Yat-sen was very much ignored by USSR in the beginning. Sun Yat-sen had congratulated USSR on the victory of the revolution on the New Year Day of 1918, and Lenin asked Chicherin relay a reply to Sun Yat-sen which was never received per Xin Haonian. Sun Yat-sen sent another wire to USSR in late 1918 for a united revolution front. Comintern probed the possibility of cooperation with Sun Yat-sen few times, and in the autumn of 1920, Voitinsky met Sun Yat-sen in Shanghai. Sun Yat-sen had high hope for cooperation with USSR. However, M. I. Yurin kind of despised Sun Yat-sen's political influences in Canton. More Russian agents wrote reports on Sun Yat-sen. Maring came to China in the spring of 1921 and met Sun Yat-sen in Guangxi Prov. On Oct 31st of 1921, Chicherin wired to Chita Republic's foreign affairs ministry to inquire about the possibility of establishing relations with Canton Government without antagonizing the Peking Government. Chicherin, further, wrote to Lenin with an attachment of a letter from Sun Yat-sen. With Lenin's approval, Chicherin instructed USSR emissary to China, A. K. Paikes, to have secretive contacts with Sun Yat-sen in Canton. Maring observed the January 1922 Seaman's Strike in Canton/HK and appreciated the Chinese nationalism under Sun Yat-sen's KMT leadership.

Sun Yat-sen, expelled from Canton by the warlord or militarist Chen Jiongming [Ch'en Chtiung-ming], arrived in Shanghai in August 1922. Maring met Sun Yat-sen again. Per Harold Isaacs, Sun Yat-sen, "dismayed by the outcome of the Washington Conference, had begun to think in terms of seeking Soviet assistance". As we already mentioned, Sun Yat-sen had always had high hope for USSR since 1918. Maring returned to Moscow the next month and proposed to reverse the "Irkutsk line" of the Comintern by cooperating with KMT. Adolph Joffe, a top Soviet diplomat, was empowered with furthering formal contacts with Sun Yat-sen.

To break the impasse of talks between Yurin/Paikes and Wu Peifu, USSR, in July 1922, dispatched Joffe to China as plenipotentiary for negotiations on Outer Mongolia and China Eastern Railroad. On Aug 19th of 1922, Joffe wrote to Wu Peifu about the importance of concluding a Russo-Chinese treaty before USSR reached a settlement with Japan and emphasized the possibility that Zhang Zuolin of Feng-xi [Manchurian faction] would fill in the gap in Outer Mongolia should USSR withdraw its red army. Joffe sent several experts, diplomats and professors to Wu Peifu for reaching mutual understanding. Joffe wrote to Wu Peifu again on Nov 18th, emphasizing the need to have Mongolian rep attend

the Russo-Chinese negotiation and hinting that USSR would like to maintain the control over China Eastern Railroad's board of directors. Joffe complained about the inflexibility of Chinese rep Gu Weijun and cabinet member Yan Huiqing. Meantime, Joffe wrote letters to Sun Yat-sen for reaching agreements on the solution to the two diplomatic issues: Mongolia and China Eastern RR. Wu Peifu replied that he could prep a division for taking over Mongolia in substitution of the Russian Red Army and that USSR should hand over the railroad to China once China possessed the capability for managing the railroad. Sun Yat-sen were more conciliatory in his opinions. Chinese rep Gu Weijun took the advice of Wu Peifu in backing down from the demand that Red Army withdraw from Mongolia immediately, and cabinet member Yan Huiqing was replaced by Wu Peifu to appease Joffe.

Joffe followed through Paikes' efforts in mediating between Wu Peifu and Sun Yat-sen for sake of a joint south-north government. Joffe advised both Wu Peifu and Sun Yat-sen to have tolerance for Zhang Zuolin so that a united China could be formed and no foreign imperialists could intervene in China's politics. Joffe sent personal adviser to both Wu Peifu and Sun Yat-sen in regards to the joint government, and Joffe also instructed Comintern rep Maring to pass on his wish to Sun Yat-sen. Sun Yat-sen had already sent representatives to Wu Peifu directly and indirectly. Sun Yat-sen replied to Joffe on Nov 2nd of 1922 that Wu Peifu was hardlined on dealing with his southern government and mentioned that Wu Peifu intended to have Sun Yat-sen renounce relations with Zhang Zuolin before they could talk about joint government. Sun Yat-sen also had suspicion in regards to the contacts between Wu Peifu and Chen Jiongming, while Wu Peifu had suspicions in regards to the close relations between Sun Yat-sen and Zhang Zuolin/Anfu Clique members. On Nov 18th, Joffe wrote to Wu Peifu trying to dispel Wu's concerns. After failing to get Wu Peifu agree on a joint south-north government and failing to achieve any breakthrough in negotiations on Mongolia/China Eastern RR, Joffe began to pay more and more attention to taking on Sun Yat-sen as a partner.

After Wu Peifu's defeat, USSR abandoned Wu Peifu in preference for Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolution movements in Southern China. USSR's national interests certainly outweighed its internationalism as shown by their attempt to have Wu Peifu acknowledge the puppet Mongolian government. In addition to supporting Sun Yat-sen, USSR supported and implanted the Chinese communist agents who were required to have allegiance to Comintern under a slogan that the 'proletarian have no motherland'.

In Peking, inside of Zhi-xi Cabinet, two factions were in conflicts, i.e., Cao Kun's Baoding faction and Wu Peifu's Luoyang faction. Wu Peifu's Wang Chonghui cabinet collapsed and Cao Kun's Zhang Shaozeng cabinet was formed. Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen had taken the advice of Maring in re-organizing KMT and allowing CCP members to enroll in KMT individually. In Oct of 1922, Sun Yat-sen went to Fujian for organizing anti-Chen Jiongming forces. On Dec 12th, Joffe reported to Moscow that Sun Yat-sen's KMT should

be utilized as a strong force for moving the agenda of nationalist revolution inside of China.

On Jan 4th of 1923, Soviet politburo endorsed Joffe's policy of full support for KMT. On Jan 16th of 1923, Sun Yat-sen defeated Chen Jiongming and recovered Canton. Trotsky endorsed Joffe's decision and emphasized the need to assist CCP in the USSR-Canton cooperation. Trotsky asked USSR red army commander to analyze how much military aid would suffice to support Sun Yat-sen's revolution. Joffe's five-member team left for Shanghai on the same day and they met Sun Yat-sen in Shanghai. On January 26, 1923, Joffe and Sun issued a 'Joffe-Sun Joint Statement' in which Joffe agreed, per Harold Isaacs, that "conditions do not exist here for the successful establishment of Communism or Socialism," that "the chief and immediate aim of China is the achievement of national union and national independence." Joffe assured Sun Yat-sen that, in seeking these aims, the nationalist movement "could depend on the aid of Russia." Trotsky again expressed the intent to aid Sun Yat-sen financially. On March 8th, Soviet politburo decided to deliver an aid package of 2,000,000 Mexican dollars to Sun Yat-sen in addition to dispatching military and political advisers.

USSR, at the same time, made gains in negotiations in Peking. Leo Karakhan concluded the Sino-Soviet Treaty of May 1924 with Cao Kun Government in Peking. On May 31st 1924, Gu Weijun, on basis of Chicherin July 4th 1918 and Karakhan July 25th 1919 statements, signed a Sino-Soviet Treaty in regards to rescinding unequal treaties. Gu Weijun's treaty was betrayed by both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung's so-called "friendship" treaty with USSR in 1945 and 1950, respectively. Gu Weijun, renowned for his attitudes on new treaties with Germany & Austria, later in Oct 1926, announced that Sino-Belgian Treaty of 1865 would expire on Nov 2nd 1926 without regard for the protest and threats from a declining European power like Belgium.