

Nr. 2.5.2.12

William Hoggan, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China (Chartered Bank), Head Office London, an F. Bennett, Vertretung der Chartered Bank in New York, betr. die Firma Arnhold, Karberg & Co., 1. Oktober 1910

Geschäftsbrief

Bearbeitet von: Friederike Sattler

Fundort: London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), CLC/B/207/CH07/06/001

Formalia: 1 Blatt, maschinenschriftlich einseitig beschrieben, Durchschrift, mit Unterschrift, mit zwei Anlagen im Umfang von 2 bzw. 3 Blättern.

Regest:

Die Zentrale der Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China (Chartered Bank) in London informiert mit diesem Schreiben ihre Vertretung in New York über die finanzielle Situation der Firma Arnhold, Karberg & Co. in Hongkong, mit der sie in Europa, den USA und Ostasien an vielen Standorten in geschäftlicher Verbindung steht und die sich immer wieder auch um Aufträge für die Umsetzung großer Bauprojekte etwa im Eisenbahn- und Hafenausbau anbietet. Besondere Sorge bereitet die Frage, ob es Arnhold, Karberg & Co. in Tianjin (China) gelingen wird, ihre beträchtlichen offenen Forderungen gegenüber chinesischen Kaufleuten einzutreiben. Arnhold, Karberg & Co. haben zur Überbrückung um einen zusätzlichen Kredit der Chartered Bank gebeten, den sie als Einlage bei der erst kürzlich gegründeten Commercial Guarantee Bank der Provinz Zhili hinterlegen wollen, damit diese in ihrem Namen die Forderungen eintreiben kann. Doch wie der dem Schreiben beigefügte Schriftwechsel zwischen der Zentrale und der Niederlassung Tianjin der Chartered Bank zeigt, bestehen erhebliche Zweifel, dass es Arnhold, Karberg & Co. überhaupt jemals gelingen wird, diese offenen Forderungen gegenüber chinesischen Kaufleuten in Nordchina einzutreiben. Der hier nicht genannte Grund für diese Skepsis liegt darin, dass die Beziehungen des Handelshauses zu vielen ihrer chinesischen Geschäftspartner schon seit längerem angespannt ist, weil 1904 ein Komprador des Unternehmens in Hankou in Bankrott gegangen war und dadurch zahlreiche chinesische Kaufleute, die über ihn Waren an Arnhold, Karberg & Co. geliefert hatten, nur mit einem Boykott gegen das deutsche Unternehmen durchsetzen konnten, dass diese für den ihnen entstandenen Schaden aufkamen. Vgl. Dokument Nr. 2.5.2.07.

[1. Blatt, Vorderseite]

[Gedruckter Briefkopf mit ergänztem Datum:]

Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China,
32 Bishopsgate Street Within,
London, 1st October. 1910.

All Letters to be addressed to the

CHARTERED BANK OF INDIA, AUSTRALIA & CHINA

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS_PIGTAIL

TELEPHON No.

10548 CENTRAL

10549 CENTRAL

No. 73a.

[Eingangsstempel:]

Received

Oct 7 1910

Answered

9 Oct

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL.

F. Bennett Esq.,

Agency of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China,

New York.

Dear Sir,

Arnhold Karberg & Co. For your information and guidance we enclose copy of our Private and Confidential letter to the Tientsin Agent, dated 26th August and of his reply. We have received a copy of the firm's Balance Sheet for year ending 31st December 1909, and will probably refer to the matter by a later opportunity.

We may briefly explain that the Commercial Guarantee Bank is an Institution started under the auspices of the Viceroy of Chihli with the object of taking over the liabilities to Foreign firms by the Chinese traders of Tientsin.¹ So far the Bank has not got much beyond the preliminary stages and you will notice Mr. MacGregor doubts it getting beyond that point.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant.

ppa Hoggan

Secretary.[1. Anlage, 1. Blatt, Vorderseite]

COPY FOR NEW YORK.

H. O. to Tientsin P & C. No. 523a. 26th August 1910.

Arnhold Karberg & Co. We give every attention to the contents of your No. 743a replying to our No. 458a of 15th ultimo in connection [nachträglich ergänzt: with] this Firm's request for assistance to the extent of Tael 800,000, to enable them to deposit Tls 6 lacs with the Commercial Guarantee Bank of Chihli and to pay off the loan they have from you. As we then informed you the proposed business did not meet with our approval and we note that the result of your enquiries regarding the present position and future outlook of the above Bank leads you to take the same view, and you state that unless other approved securities can be hypothecated by the Firm, you cannot recommend advances against the Deposit Receipts and Bonds of the said Bank.

Please keep us fully advised of all that transpires in the above connection.

Our reference to Mr. E. M. Hillier C. M. G. as Agent of the Hongkong Bank at Tientsin was an obvious slip, we should of course have said Peking.²

You no doubt keep before you the fact that should the scheme under which Messrs Arnhold Karberg & Co. hope to obtain negotiable Bonds in respect to debts due to them by Chinese in North China fall through it will mean that a very large portion of their Capital will in all probability remain for an indefinite period locked up. Further liberal provision will have to be[1. Anlage, 2. Blatt, Vorderseite] made for these debts as failing Government help it is but reasonable to assume many of them will never be collected. Please favour us with your views and send a copy of your letter in strict confidence to our Managers at Hongkong, Shanghai and Hankow.

1 Die Commercial Guarantee Bank sollte sicherstellen, dass ausländische Firmen durch Zahlungsverzögerungen oder -ausfälle von Seiten chinesischer Kaufleute nicht in eine bedrohliche Lage gerieten. Als abschreckendes Beispiel galt die Oriental Bank Corporation, die 1884 in eine schwere Krise geraten war. Dass diese Krise tatsächlich maßgeblich dem vorausgegangenen Bankrott chinesischer Kaufleute zu verdanken war, ist allerdings inzwischen weitgehend widerlegt worden. Vgl. *Sheehan*, Bankruptcy of Hu Kwang-Yung.

2 Gemeint war offenkundig Edward Guy Hillier.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your most obedient servant

[Unterschrift fehlt]

Secretary.[2. Anlage, 1. Blatt, Vorderseite]

Tientsin 817a. P. & C. Sept. 14th. 1910.

Arnhold Karberg & Co. Referring to your letter No. 523a of 26th ultimo, we are still of the opinion that the Commercial Guarantee Bank of Chihli will not reach further than its present stage, and therefore we consider it would be advisable, when considering the position of Arnhold Karberg & Co. to assume that a large proportion of the outstandings due to them from native dealers in Tientsin is irrecoverable.

Mr. H. Arnhold informed Head Office verbally (vide H. O. letter 458a of 15th July last) that Messrs Arnhold Karberg & Co., would receive bonds of the Commercial Guarantee Bank of Chihli to the extent of Tls. 3,000,000, and Head Office understands that provision for outstandings has been made by Arnhold Karberg & Co., to the extent of Tls. 1,000,000 of the total of Ts. 3,000,000 due to them by Chinese dealers.

We have been unable to ascertain what goods are still held here by Arnhold Karberg & Co., or to what extent clean credit was granted by them to Chinese.

The position of most of the dealers is extremely unsatisfactory and very little can be recovered beyond what the goods now under the firm's control will realise.

We consider that it would be prudent to estimate an ultimate loss of not less than Tls. 1,000,000 (Tael one million) being 50 % of the amount for which no provision has been made.

In our letter No. 191a of 7th March 1908 we forwarded to Head Office and extract of Messrs Arnhold Karberg & Co.'s Balance Sheet[2. Anlage, 2. Blatt, Vorderseite] for the year ended 31st December 1906, which gave the amount outstanding as Ts. 3,488,880. 56.

The firm's representative informed us [nachträglich ergänzt: at] that time that they held goods in their own godowns for Ts. 1,900,000, and in addition House Property valued at Ts. 900,000 was held by them against goods delivered.

Arnhold Karberg & Co. have been realising their goods under lien to us at a loss of 25 % and we do not think they were able to dispose of their holdings, outside our security, to better advantage.³

House Property in Tientsin is almost unsaleable at present and 25 % at least should be written off the valuation given by the firm, probably 50 % would be nearer the mark.

From the foregoing particulars we arrive at the following result:

3 Die HSBC Niederlassung Tianjin hatte also ein Pfandrecht am Warenlager eingeräumt bekommen.

Outstandings.		Ts. 3,488,880.
Deduct		
Goods held by the firm	Ts. 1,900,000.	
House Property	<u>900,000</u>	
		<u>2,800,000.</u>
Due from Native dealers		Ts. 688.880.
To which must be added 25 % loss		
on Ts. 2,800,000. say.		<u>700,000.</u>
	<u>Ts. 1,388,880.</u>	

In the extract of the Balance Sheet at 31st December 1906 it was shown that they held Ts. 100,000 in cash from their[2. Anlage, 3. Blatt, Vorderseite] Compradore as a Guarantee and in insurance fund against risk of giving goods on credit of Ts. 317,000, and these two amounts should be deducted from the shortage shown above.

We are sending copies of this letter to Hongkong, Shanghai and Hankow in accordance with your instructions.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your most obedient servant.
J MacGregor.
Agent.