The Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900

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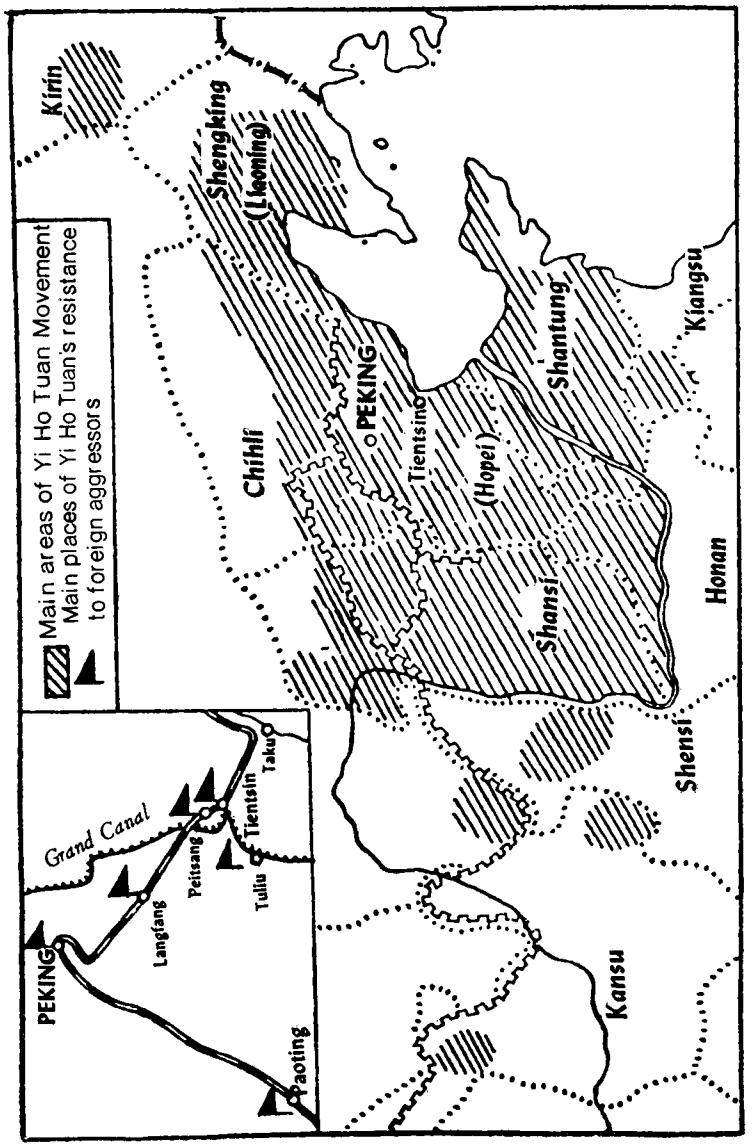
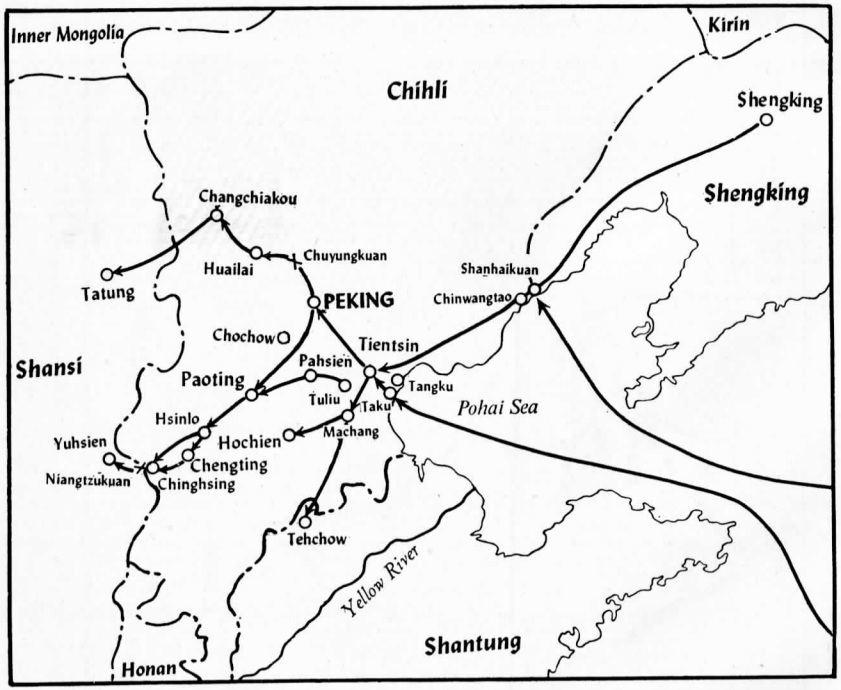
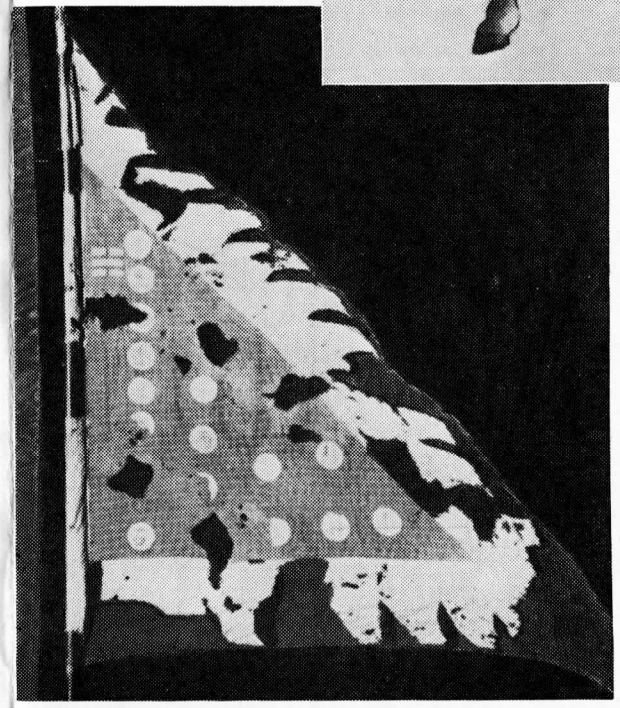


Major regions of Yi Ho Tuan's armed struggle

Routes of invasion of China by the eight imperialist powers.

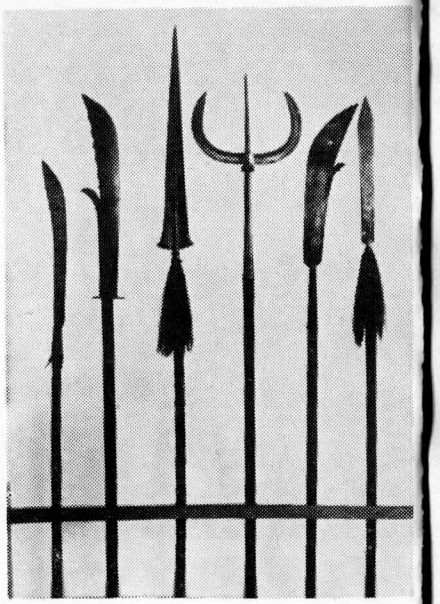


Tsao Fu-tien, a Yi Ho Tuan leader.



Yi Ho Tuan banner.

Drawing of Yi Ho Tuan fighters attacking the aggressors at Langfang.



Yi Ho Tuan weapons.

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1

Unprecedented National Crisis

The Yi Ho Tuan Movement, which broke out in China in 1900, shook the whole world. It was a patriotic anti-imperialist uprising, mainly of peasants. It was a product of deepening imperialist aggression, and of unprecedentedly aggravated national crisis. It was the climax of the Chinese people's struggle against aggression and partition following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894.

By the end of the 19th century world capitalism had entered its monopolistic stage — the stage of imperialism. Lenin defined its characteristics: **"The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance."* "The struggle for the territorial division**

* V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1973, p. 106.

of the world becomes extraordinarily keen."* Following China's defeat by Japan and the consequent conclusion in 1895 of the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki, tremendous changes occurred in Asia. The spearhead of the imperialist drive to export capital and divide the world was turned towards China, facing her with a crisis worse than any before.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki allowed Japanese capitalists to start factories in China's trading ports. This provision embodied the demand of imperialism for outlets for the export of capital. Under the most-favoured-nation clause in the unequal treaties imposed on China by various imperialists, when one country extorted any privilege, it was accorded to the rest. So when Japan seized the privilege of opening factories, all other imperialist countries secured it too.

In 1895-96 many imperialist factories were set up in China. Among them were textile mills such as the Ewo Cotton Spinning and Weaving Company and Laou Kung Mow Cotton Spinning and Weaving Company (both British), the Soy Chee Cotton Spinning Company (German) and the American International Cotton Manufacturing Company. Flour-milling, oil-pressing and other enterprises followed.

* Ibid., p. 92.

Besides directly and ruthlessly exploiting China's working class, they seriously inhibited the development of her national industry.

Between 1895 and 1898, to pay the war indemnity imposed by Japan, the Ching government borrowed much money abroad. Two monopoly-capitalist groups—the Russo-French and the Anglo-German — competed in the export of capital, making loans to the Ching government and contending for special privileges in China. The Ching government thrice negotiated with these groups for loans totalling 300 million taels* of silver. The interest was high, large deductions were made in advance and harsh political conditions were attached. The loans were secured by important items of Chinese government revenue, from the Customs duties and *likin* (inland transit tax). They were not to be repaid in a lump sum or before the due date (this was to prevent the Ching government from contracting any new loan to pay off an old one and thus deprive the original creditor country of its attendant privileges). And the agreement for an Anglo-German loan provided that the important post of Inspector-General of Customs should continue to go to an Englishman. So these were known as political loans.

* Tael was formerly a Chinese monetary unit equal in value to approximately one ounce of silver.

Foreign banks in China were other important vehicles for the imperialist export of capital. During this period, the existing British, German and Japanese banks greatly expanded their business. The Russo-Chinese (later Russo-Asiatic) Bank and the French Banque de l'Indo-Chine hastened to open up branches. The British Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, together with Jardine, Matheson & Co., organized the British and Chinese Corporation. Such banks and their affiliates arranged loans to the Ching government, controlled its finances, invested in railways and mines, took in deposits, issued banknotes, manipulated the money market and monopolized foreign exchange operations. They were organs of foreign capitalist financial monopoly within China.

Another evil fruit of the Treaty of Shimonoseki was Japan's occupation of big slices of Chinese territory — the Liaotung Peninsula and Taiwan. To retain a preserve for its own aggression, Russia undertook joint diplomatic intervention with Germany and France, compelling Japan to return Liaotung to China — but only nominally and temporarily. Thus, at the end of the 19th century, the curtain was raised on the intensified inter-imperialist scramble for Chinese territory. More and more was demanded by one power after another, in an attempt to partition China.

Germany moved first. In 1896 she instructed her Minister to China, Edmund von Heyking, to "pay particular attention to creating the essential pretext for action."* In August 1897 Kaiser Wilhelm II, then visiting Russia, conspired with Tsar Nicholas II and secured his tacit consent to German occupation of China's Kiaochow Bay. In November came the "Chuyeh incident" in Shantung: two German missionaries who had done much evil in China were killed by the people. A German imperialist publication exulted, "Now we are provided with an ample pretext for using strong language with Messrs. the Chinese, and for utilizing these circumstances to demand cession of territory suitable for a coaling station and naval harbour."** In 1898, a year after occupying Kiaochow, Germany forced the Ching government into an agreement for the lease of Kiaochow Bay. With growing ambition, she sought to control all Shantung Province.

Russia backed Germany's occupation of Kiaochow, in return for the latter's support for her own seizure of Lushun and Talien in Liaoning Province. In December 1897, after the German grab, Russia

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* On November 26, 1896. See *Die Grosse Politik der Europaischer Kabinette*, Berlin, 1871-1914, Vol. XIV, No. 369.

** "A German Naval Station in China. Postscript," an article in *Alldeutsche Blatter*, November 14, 1897.

sent a fleet into Lushun and began to occupy the Lushun-Talien area. Germany at once voiced approval, reciprocating Russia's favour. She also declared that these events heralded the slow and gradual disintegration of the Chinese empire.

Taking a cue from Russia's occupation of Lushun-Talien, France in April 1898 occupied Kwangchow Bay in Kwangtung Province. She also demanded that the Ching government refrain from ceding the provinces of Yunnan, Kwangtung and Kwangsi to any other foreign power; France dreamed of incorporating these areas into one block with Viet Nam, then her colony.

Japan, having recently seized China's territory Taiwan as a base, watched enviously as other powers made ever bigger grabs on the mainland. With the support of Britain and tacit consent of Germany, in April 1898 she compelled the Ching government to agree not to cede or lease Fukien Province, which lies opposite Taiwan, to any other power, reserving it to be devoured in the future by herself.

Long-established British imperialism, which had hitherto taken the lion's share in the powers' aggression against China, of course would not be left behind. In June-July 1898, on the pretext of counter-balancing French and Russian influence, it extorted the lease of Kowloon Peninsula in south

China and Weihaiwei in the north. Not content with regarding the Yangtze valley as their exclusive sphere, the British imperialists stretched their tentacles to its northern and southern flanks.

Thus, in less than three years, 1896-98, most of China's vast territory had been marked out into spheres of influence of different imperialist powers: the areas north of the Great Wall for Russia; the Yangtze valley for Britain; Shantung for Germany; Fukien for Japan; the greater part of Yunnan, Kwangtung and Kwangsi for France.

To increase the export of capital and consolidate and extend their spheres, the imperialists seized the right to build railways and plunder the land and resources along them. In these same three years, Russia, France and Germany appropriated rights to build and operate railways respectively in northeast China, southwest China and Shantung Province. The rivalry became intense.

Belgium, backed by the Russo-French bloc, secured the right to build a railway from Lukouchiao near Peking to Hankow in Hupeh Province (later the Peking-Hankow Railway). Thereupon Britain, seeing the spread of Russo-French influence to the Yangtze valley, presented to the Ching government her own large-scale plan of railway construction, and acquired construction rights for a line between Tientsin and Chinkiang (later the

Tientsin-Pukow Railway) as a counter-balance. Since this line was to pass through Shantung, it was opposed by Germany which had her sphere of influence there. The result was an inter-imperialist deal: the Germans would build the northern section, between Tientsin and Yihsien (in Shantung), and the British the southern section, from Yihsien to Chinkiang.

The United States got the building rights for the Canton-Hankow Railway. But it soon became involved in the Spanish-American War for the control of the Philippines and the Caribbean, and could not undertake both efforts at the same time. The British took the chance to demand a readjustment of relations with the United States in the Far East, and joined the Americans in investing in the Canton-Hankow line.

To block the southward expansion of Russian influence, the British also tried to gain control of the branch of the Peking-Fengtien line (now the Peking-Shenyang Railway) running from Shanhaikuan to Niuchuang. Ambition-filled Russia naturally resisted this British penetration into her own sphere in northeast China. In 1898 these two imperialist powers also struck a deal, with Britain agreeing that the Shanhaikuan-Niuchuang line should be controlled by the Chinese government and not be mortgaged to any non-Chinese company. This set the evil precedent of "neutralizing" railways whenever foreign powers reached a deadlock in their scramble for the building rights. Britain still kept the right for making the loans for this line.

In April 1899 Britain and Russia agreed on a further division of spoils: Britain would not seek railway leases for herself, or obstruct Russia from obtaining privileges, in the regions north of the Yangtze valley, while Russia would similarly humour British expansion in the Yangtze valley. This, in fact, was a plot for partitioning China.

While many powers were engaged in an intense mutual scramble to cut China up into spheres of influence and seize railway rights, the United States then took only a limited part. It still lacked strength and, moreover, was busy warring with Spain. Once it planned to occupy Taku harbour but hesitated out of fear of obstruction by the other powers, as Taku was the outlet of Tientsin, the main trading port in north China. By the end of the Spanish-American War, the United States found no more Chinese bays or harbours left for it to lease or occupy, or any sphere of influence still unmarked. But predatory U.S. imperialism was not reconciled to being left out. Insidiously, it sought new ways of aggression. In September 1899 after much behind-the-scene planning, the Wash-

ington government, through Secretary of State John Hay, proposed the notorious "Open Door" policy. This policy recognized the spheres of influence of the different powers in China but specified that, within their spheres, they should not restrict the trade, navigation and other activities of other powers. It meant that all the spheres should be open to the United States, giving U.S. monopoly capital more opportunities to plunder all China. The U.S. policy was also designed to relax the acute contradictions between the imperialist countries, and maintain a temporary balance between them in their aggression. However, it did not mean that the United States had given up territorial designs in China. Up until 1900 it had a scheme to grab Sansha Bay north of Foochow, though this failed owing to objections by Japan which regarded Fukien Province as her own sphere.

Imperialism, puffed up with pride, blustered that China was "at her last gasp." It prepared to dismember her, turning each part into the colony of one or other of the powers. China was on the brink of partition. The question facing every class of her society was: Would the country be sliced up by foreigners or rise up in resistance? Each class had to make its choice.

The Ching rulers had all along followed a capitulationist line in foreign affairs, selling out

China's sovereign rights to the imperialists in exchange for the latter's support of their own rule and bloody suppression of the masses. True, there were some slave-master contradictions between the Ching regime and this or that imperialist power over methods of control. But to expect such a government to stand up to imperialism was pure illusion.

The bourgeois reformists, who had just moved over from the landlord class, were dissatisfied with imperialist aggression and shocked and frightened by the national crisis. Nonetheless, their attitude differed from that of the people. They did not dare rise in revolution. Rather, they preferred to yield to the pressure of the imperialists in the hope of getting support from among them for some reformist way of getting around the crisis. Facts proved this a blind alley. The Reform Movement of 1898* was a "flower that bloomed for a day" then faded.

The bourgeois revolutionaries had begun to collect strength for the overthrow of the Ching government, the lackey of imperialism. But their

* In the late 19th century a group of scholars represented by Kang Yu-wei started a movement for bourgeois political reform. They demanded that the Ching Dynasty change over from its system of absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, and hoped this reform would be carried out by the Kuang Hsu Emperor exercising his power. But in

strength was still small. Moreover, they held the masses in too little esteem and were blind to the great reserves of revolutionary might among the peasants. And they lacked understanding of the aggressive nature of imperialism, cherishing various illusions about it. Hence the bourgeois revolutionaries, too, were unable to shoulder the historic task of saving the nation from doom.

China's working class had not yet mounted the political stage. The masses of the people, with peasants as the main body, organized themselves to resist and fight crime-laden imperialism. It was they who felt most deeply, in their everyday life, the heavy weight of imperialism. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 the Ching government, in order to pay the huge war indemnities and foreign loans, heightened its exploitation of the people. Moreover, foreign missionaries who wore the cloak of religion but actually served imperialist aggression had for some time been penetrating China's cities and countryside, building churches, lording it over the people and committing many crimes. Driven beyond tolerance, the people had waged

September 1898 the die-hards among the Ching rulers headed by the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi staged a coup d'etat. They imprisoned the emperor and arrested and executed Tan Ssu-tung and five other reformists. Kang Yu-wei had to flee abroad. Thus the bourgeois reform movement ended in tragic failure.

struggles against the missionaries since the 1860s and 1870s, and this movement surged up everywhere in the 1890s. In 1896-97 there were large-scale anti-missionary struggles in Hunan, Hupeh, Szechuan, Kiangsi, Kiangsu and Shantung provinces. The year 1898 brought uprisings of the Tien Ti Hui (Heaven and Earth Society), a popular anti-Ching secret organization in Kwangsi Province, and of the peasants in Tatsu County, Szechuan. Both issued circulars condemning imperialist crimes and calling on the people to unite and expel the foreign aggressors. The rapid rise of anti-missionary struggles heralded the anti-imperialist revolutionary storm.

2 The Yi Ho Tuan Rises in Shantung

The Yi Ho Tuan (Society of Righteousness and Harmony) arose and grew in Shantung Province. A folk song praising this great revolutionary movement spread among the local people:

The Yi Ho Tuan
Stood up in Shantung
Heroes they are,
Protecting the nation.

The place of origin was no accident. Shantung, after 1895, bore the brunt of the imperialist conspiracy to partition China. When Japan unleashed war on China in 1894, her army of aggression attacked the Shantung Peninsula and for three years occupied Weihaiwei, threatening not to withdraw until the imposed indemnity had been paid in full. Then Germany occupied Kiaochow Bay and Britain Weihaiwei, establishing control over

those two important Shantung ports. And Germany marked off the whole of the province as her sphere.

Making use of the "Convention Respecting the Lease of Kiaochow" which she compelled the Ching government to sign in March 1898, Germany seized railway-building and mining rights in Shantung. That year she set up the Shantung Railway Company and Tsingtao Sino-German Mining Company, built the Kiaochow-Tsinan Railway and grabbed mineral deposits along it. In the process, she seized farmland, disrupted waterways, tore down houses and did other damage.

Britain, in Weihaiwei, unilaterally surveyed and "demarcated" the leased area to include certain places in the two counties of Wenteng and Jungcheng. She appointed bad elements among the local feudal gentry as collectors to extort grain tax from peasants in the occupied area, thus exercising colonial rule. The people, rising against these outrages, were suppressed by both the savage imperialists and the Ching rulers. A great many peasants were driven from their homes and forced to roam destitute.

In the last years of the 19th century, with imperialism exporting capital to China on a large scale, foreign factories sprang up and foreign commodities flooded the markets. This hastened the

disintegration of China's natural economy, in which agriculture and home handicrafts had been combined. The rural economy was bankrupted and handicraftsmen were thrown out of work. Particularly hard-hit were the coastal provinces. In Shantung, the people on both sides of the Grand Canal had lived by transporting goods and traders along it. When the imperialists forcibly introduced coastal navigation and built railways, transport along the canal dwindled. Its once flourishing banks became a depressed area. Innumerable boatmen, porters, small traders and pedlars lost their livelihood and formed a mass of unemployed.

The Ching government, in the meantime, had to pay huge indemnities to Japan while increasing military and administrative expenditure to maintain its own rule. To meet these needs, besides negotiating loans from the imperialists it stepped up extortion from the people. By 1896 the land tax in Shantung (in terms of taels of silver converted into copper cash) was more than double that in the reign of the Tung Chih Emperor (1862-74). Miscellaneous levies, exorbitant surtaxes and official corruption kept adding to the crushing burdens on the peasants. For instance, the Ching government's "Trust Bonds" issued in 1898 amounted to a total of 20 million taels of silver. However, swindling by officials and gentry at

every level made them an intolerable weight on the people. In Anchiu County in Shantung, the magistrate ordered people to subscribe for bonds in proportion to the amount of land owned by each household, and forced them to pay the assessments to the last copper. This produced general unrest. Moreover, through the incompetence and corruption of the Ching government, the dykes were long left unrepaired, so that the Yellow River burst its banks every year, causing flood and famine in north China. In 1898 most of Shantung was flooded, while some 50 sub-prefectures and counties were hit by drought. The loss of life and property was incalculable. Millions faced death from hunger and cold.

The imperialists used religion as a tool of aggression against China. The missionaries served as a vanguard, the churches as bases. By the end of the 19th century, the network of imperialist churches had spread everywhere, from the capital and big cities to the remote villages. Shantung alone had over 1,000 churches as well as 80,000 missionaries and converts. Among missionaries who committed many crimes of aggression under the cloak of religion were Timothy Richard of Britain, Gilbert Reid of the United States, Alphonse Favier of France and Anzer of Germany. Long-time residents of China, they were both major agents of

imperialism and honoured guests of the Ching government, playing a role in aggression broader and deeper than even that of imperialism's diplomats. Anzer, for example, was a German bishop in Shantung, enjoyed the favour and direct support of Kaiser Wilhelm II, and had also been awarded the Second-rank Mandarin Button by the Ching government. His pomp and arrogance threw those of the viceroy and provincial governor into the shade. When the Chuyeh missionary incident occurred, he rushed back to Germany to report to the Kaiser, whom he urged to send troops to occupy Kiaochow Bay in the following terms: "This is the last chance for the German Empire to seize any kind of possession in Asia. . . . At whatever cost, we must not renounce Kiaochow, which economically and industrially has a future much greater than today's Shanghai."*

Many of the missionaries — directed by their archbishops, bishops or other higher-ups — collected intelligence, forcibly seized farmland, put pressure on law-courts, extorted money from the people, bought over gangsters and other bad elements to become converts, created incidents, bullied China's common folk, and committed crimes including murder. Like a plague, they brought

* *Die Grosse Politik*, XIV, No. 3694, Nov. 9, 1897.

limitless distress upon the Chinese people. The Ching officials, high and low, cowered before imperialist tyranny. They invariably reacted to disputes between the people and the missionaries by shielding the latter and oppressing the former, leaving them without recourse. This explains the frequency of anti-missionary incidents. In each case the imperialists demanded punishment (the execution of Chinese "guilty" of resisting oppression), extorted compensation, and thus expanded the sway of the church. What could the Chinese people do but take up arms against the imperialists and their lackeys!

Hence, by the end of the 19th century, Chinese popular struggles against the foreign churches multiplied and spread in Shantung. In 1896 such struggles, led by the Ta Tao Hui (Big Sword Society), a secret people's organization, broke out in Tsaohsien and Tanhsien counties; in 1897 in Chuyeh, Shouchang, Tsining, Hotse, Chengwu and other sub-prefectures and counties; in 1899 in Yichow, Pingyuan and Feicheng. It was with this background that the flames of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement arose in Shantung, and spread elsewhere.

The Yi Ho Tuan was originally called the Yi Ho Chuan (Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists). It was a people's organization, heavily

tinged with mysticism, whose members were known for their skill in boxing and fighting with staves. Yi Ho Tuan activities against Ching rule in Shantung, Chihli (now Hopei) and Honan provinces dated from the early 19th century, and bloody suppression by the Ching regime had failed to stop them. At the end of the century when the forces of imperialist aggression penetrated deep into China and the national contradiction sharpened as never before, the organization became increasingly active. Directing its spearhead against the imperialists whom it described as "ferocious tigers and wolves," it changed from a secret to an open body, which was renamed the Yi Ho Tuan (Society of Righteousness and Harmony).

The basic masses of this movement were firstly the peasants and secondly the handicraftsmen, urban poor, water and land transport workers and pedlars. It never set up a central and unified leading organ. Its grass-roots unit was generally the *tan* ("shrine"), consisting mostly of young men, teen-age boys, and not a few girls and women. Young women joined the Hung Teng Chao ("Red Lanterns") and middle-aged women the Lan Teng Chao ("Blue Lanterns"). Members of the former, carrying red lanterns, formed shock teams which always strove to be in the van of the fight.

Both the leaders and the rank-and-file observed strict discipline. They were closely united and obeyed orders. In battle 10 fighters formed a *pan* (squad), headed by a *shih chang* (head of ten). Ten *pan* made a *ta tui* (brigade), headed by a *pai chang* (head of a hundred).

In March 1899, after all efforts to stamp out the rising revolutionary flame in Shantung had failed, the exasperated Ching rulers dismissed Chang Ju-mei, the governor. Yu Hsien, appointed in his stead, was a notorious butcher. While prefect of Tsaochow he had massacred more than 2,000 followers of the Ta Tao Hui and other secret organizations in a single year. Afterwards, he had been repeatedly promoted in recognition of his mass-murder "merit." In naming him governor, the Ching court expected him to slaughter the Yi Ho Tuan.

Chairman Mao Tsetung has said, **"All reactionaries try to stamp out revolution by mass murder, thinking that the greater their massacres, the weaker the revolution. But contrary to this reactionary wishful thinking, the fact is that the more the reactionaries resort to massacre, the greater the strength of the revolution."*** Yu Hsien, upon

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* *Comrade Mao Tsetung on "Imperialism and All Reactionaries Are Paper Tigers,"* FLP, Peking, 1966, p. 5.

assuming his post, proceeded to carry out the counter-revolutionary Ching policy. But instead of wiping out the Yi Ho Tuan, he stirred the revolutionary flames to leap even higher. The single spark at last became a prairie fire.

In 1899 in Shantung's Pingyuan County, the crops failed. The people went cold and hungry while local landlords and merchant-speculators, in collusion with the missionaries, hoarded grain, and profiteered by pushing up prices. Mass anger sharpened the already acute contradictions between the people and the missionaries. In September a Christian convert, the landlord Li Chin-pang of Kangtzuli Village, maltreated the blameless poor peasant Li Chang-shui. The villagers, infuriated by this injustice, rose to fight. Banking on the influence of the foreign mission, Li Chin-pang faked a charge of "robbery" against six Yi Ho Tuan members, who were thrown in jail. To rescue them the people went to Chihping for help from Chu Hung-teng (Chu the Red Lantern).

Chu was a native of Szushui County in Shantung who had fled to Changching County from a flood in 1898. Starting as a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, he later joined the Yi Ho Chuan and learned boxing and the martial arts. He won popular support by his courage and resolution in the struggle against the imperialists and

corrupt officials and became one of the Yi Ho Tuan's top leaders. Then he led his fighters from Changching to spread over the Chihping, Kaotang and Pingyuan areas, joining with those of the Monk Pen Ming, Wang Li-yen and other Yi Ho Tuan leaders. The insurgent forces grew rapidly.

On October 9 Chu Hung-teng came to Kangtzuli Village with a group of the Yi Ho Tuan in response to the call for help. In November the magistrate, Chiang Kai, with 100 Ching soldiers, attempted to capture him. The Yi Ho Tuan routed them. Then Yu Hsien sent troops to Pingyuan to attack the Yi Ho Tuan, which beat them badly again at Shenlotien.

Armed suppression having failed, the ruthless and crafty old fox Yu Hsien resorted to another counter-revolutionary tactic. He pretended to recognize the Yi Ho Tuan, in order to gain control of it through deception.

The Chinese people then had only a superficial understanding of imperialism and the feudal forces. In particular, they did not yet understand the nature of the Ching government as an imperialist lackey. Amid sharp national contradictions between the Chinese people and the imperialists, Chu Hung-teng had raised the slogan: "Uphold the Ching Dynasty, exterminate the foreigners." This did not, however, affect the general orientation of

the Yi Ho Tuan — opposition to imperialism and its lackeys. Spearheading its attack mainly at imperialism, it also hit hard at the Ching rulers. Its fighters killed a number of big pro-foreign officials, confiscated their property and planned an attack on Peking. Thus the iron fist of the uprising, falling on imperialism, also hit hard at its appendages, the feudal forces.

After the battle of Shenlotien, Chu Hung-teng led his forces back to the Chihping-Kaotang area where he expanded them. In late November, due to lack of vigilance against the Ching government, both he and the Monk Pen Ming were perfidiously trapped and killed by Yu Hsien. The rank-and-file, however, did not lose heart. Under another leader, Wang Li-yen, they continued their struggle around Chihping, Enhsien and Pingyuan.

In 1899-1900, besides the major contingent of the Yi Ho Tuan led by Chu Hung-teng, people in other counties and sub-prefectures of Shantung rallied to its banner. Though lacking unified organization and command, its actions fired the masses, who watched and responded to its every move against foreign religion and imperialism. A powerful anti-imperialist force thus assumed shape.

The imperialists took fright at the vigorous rise of this movement. Foreign plenipotentiaries in

Peking kept pressing the Ching government to crush it. Late in 1899 Edwin H. Conger, U.S. Minister to China, began to shout that Americans in Shantung were threatened. He expressly demanded the dismissal of Governor Yu Hsien, whom he charged with failure to control the Yi Ho Tuan and protect the missionaries. A man capable of doing these things should replace Yu Hsien, Conger said, and if the troops in Shantung proved inadequate, the crack units then training in Tientsin could be sent. Conger's meaning was that the Ching government should appoint Yuan Shih-kai, who was drilling these new troops at Hsiaochan in Tientsin. This was evidence that Yuan was a lackey favoured by the imperialists. Promptly truckling to them, the Ching government removed Yu Hsien and promoted Yuan Shih-kai to Governor of Shantung with orders to crush the Yi Ho Tuan.

On December 26 Yuan Shih-kai with his "New Army" arrived in the province. The very next day, to protect landlord-class rule and reciprocate the favour done him by the imperialists, he enacted a "proclamation banning the Yi Ho Chuan." It declared menacingly that he was "in command of a big army to carry out a suppression and pacification campaign. . . . If lawlessness [by the Yi Ho

Tuan] continues and if the masses are used to oppose the officials, they will all be wiped out indiscriminately once the big army comes." Yuan also issued a ferocious order to his troops: "You will not be held to blame if you open fire immediately when the bandits come. But if you do not hit them hard when they appear, all of you, from the commanders down, will be executed." While the proclamation was being posted, he began to deploy his troops for suppression.

However, Yuan's frenzy did not cow the Yi Ho Tuan. While continuing to struggle against the imperialist aggressors, it fought his troops with courage and astuteness. Frequently it took the initiative to attack at many points at once, and so tire the enemy. Yuan could not but moan that the Yi Ho Tuan was "hard to handle."

Seeing that his troops were inadequate, Yuan recruited and formed 20 new battalions in Shantung, assembling a large counter-revolutionary force of 20,000, including the original 7,000 men of the "New Army." He also colluded with the troops of the German aggressors in Tsingtao, and the armed forces formed by the foreign churches, in massacres of the Yi Ho Tuan. The latter, attacked by both domestic and foreign reactionary forces, suffered serious setbacks.

In the spring of 1900, leaving part of its force in Shantung to continue the struggle there, the Yi Ho Tuan shifted its main force to Chihli. There, reinforced by members from that province, it pushed the anti-imperialist movement to new heights.

3

Sweeping into Peking and Tientsin

Chihli Province (now Hopei) was the centre of Ching government rule. Here popular secret organizations like the Yi Ho Tuan had long since begun to operate and their anti-dynastic activities won wide influence among the masses. In 1899, after the Yi Ho Tuan raised its "exterminate the foreigners" banner in Shantung, the peasants in the bordering counties of southern Chihli (Kucheng, Chingchow, Tungkuang and Fucheng) set up *chuan chang* (boxing grounds) for drill in the traditional martial arts. Simultaneously, they started struggles against the foreign churches. The big cities of Peking and Tientsin began to stir.

In the spring of 1900 the Yi Ho Tuan sent members from Shantung into Chihli to make contact with local units. After regrouping, they pushed forward along two routes, one following the Grand

Canal towards Tientsin and the other moving towards the Lukouchiao-Hankow Railway with Peking as its objective. The first column was intercepted by the Ching forces in the Wuchiao-Tsangchow area and suffered heavy losses. So the main task of anti-imperialist struggle in Peking and Tientsin was left to the second.

Proceeding from Chingchow in the direction of the Lukouchiao-Hankow Railway and Peking, this force, too, was intercepted and encircled by the Ching troops and reactionary armed forces of the foreign churches. Nonetheless, with a powerful thrust it broke through to Paiyangtien Lake. A detachment branched off to occupy Hsiunghsien, Wenan and Pachow. The main force continued to push northward. With Tinghsing as the centre it fanned out in all directions, turning Hsincheng, Chochow, Laishui and Kaopitien into Yi Ho Tuan bases. With the support and co-operation of the local people, these patriots unfolded a widespread armed struggle, suppressing the reactionary forces of the foreign churches and hitting hard at the Ching troops.

The expansion of Yi Ho Tuan influence in Chihli panicked the reactionaries, both domestic and foreign. The imperialists kept urging the Ching government to promptly wipe out the organization in this province, threatening otherwise to send in their

own soldiers. In May 1900 Yulu, Viceroy of Chihli Province, ordered one of his generals, Yang Fu-tung, to lead troops to put down the Yi Ho Tuan at Laishui. Upon arrival, they began massacring the local people. Their atrocities infuriated the Yi Ho Tuan fighters. Ascertaining that Yang planned to attack them at Tinghsing on May 22, they prepared to exterminate his force by laying an ambush of some 3,000 men in ditches at Shihting, a half-way point.

Early that morning Yang Fu-tung rode out at the head of a Ching cavalry unit towards Shihting. The concealed Yi Ho Tuan force rose up and trapped them. Yang's mounted troops were foiled by the criss-cross ditches. All he could do was to order them to return fire. Dashing in among the immobilized horsemen, the insurgents killed Yang and many others. On May 27 the main body of the Yi Ho Tuan, numbering over 10,000, went on to capture the strategic city of Chochow, south of Peking. There their ranks swelled several-fold. The revolutionary tide spread rapidly over Chihli.

The Shihting victory confused and frightened the Ching rulers. Viceroy Yulu ordered his "crack" troops, the "Frontal Division of the Guards Army" commanded by Nieh Shih-cheng, into a suppression drive against Chochow. Moving to smash Nieh's attack, the Yi Ho Tuan destroyed the section

of the Lukouchiao-Paoting line between Kaopitien, south of Chochow, and Liuliho to the north. It burned down the railway stations at Kaopitien, Chochow, Liuliho, Changhsintien and Lukouchiao, attacked the railway station at Fengtai on the Peking-Tientsin line and even set fire to the imperial "dragon coach" reserved for the Empress Dowager and the Kuang Hsu Emperor. The disruption of the railway cut off Ching reinforcements from the north and the south. In early June the Yi Ho Tuan successfully drove Nieh Shih-cheng's troops back to Tientsin. By then its forces had penetrated Peking itself.

Yi Ho Tuan fighters had found their way into the capital as early as the preceding spring. They operated in very small numbers, not openly but by putting up anonymous posters to create atmosphere for an "exterminate the foreigners" campaign. From late April, more and more fighters gathered around Huangtsun, Pangkochuang and other villages in the southwestern outskirts, whence they infiltrated into the city. Many of Peking's working people joined the Yi Ho Tuan. Large numbers of its posters appeared on the principal streets, particularly around the churches. The most popular read: "Most bitterly do we hate the treaties which harm the country and bring calamities on the people. High officials betray the nation. Lower ranks

follow suit. The people find no redress for their grievances." Reflecting the mass hatred for the unequal treaties, it charged the traitorous officials with "collaborating with the foreigners, currying their favour, bowing low to the powerful and tyrannizing over the plain people." By such popular propaganda, the Yi Ho Tuan exposed the heinous crimes of the imperialists and their lackeys and inspired mass struggle. One poster was a warning to the *Kuo Wen Pao* (*National News*), a newspaper published in Tientsin, which was then slandering the Yi Ho Tuan. It said, "What the *Kuo Wen Pao* prints is trash. It dares malign us because it is under Japanese protection. Now we warn you: Be careful with your pens. If you slander us again, we'll raze your building without mercy!" This paper had been an organ of the bourgeois reformists. Closed down after the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898, it reappeared under Japanese sponsorship, becoming an imperialist mouthpiece. The Yi Ho Tuan's exposure struck hard at it.

In early June, "exterminate the foreigners" posters and slogans filled Peking. Then the Yi Ho Tuan began to enter in groups of 30 or 50, both by day and by night. Influenced by the patriotic anti-imperialist propaganda, the guards at the city gates did not stop them. Instead they saluted and cleared

the way. The Yi Ho Tuan fighters, red turbans on their heads, red girdles round their waists, their shoes and socks decorated with red borders, paraded on the streets in groups, armed with broad swords or long spears. By mid-June, large contingents from different counties came into Peking. Inspired by the bold display of strength, thousands and tens of thousands of handicraftsmen and the city poor in and around Peking joined their ranks. More than 800 "shrines" were set up in the city.

Soon all Peking was dominated by the Yi Ho Tuan, which stationed fighters in the imperial palaces, government offices and the residences of the royalty and nobility. At street crossings and city gates, they interrogated passers-by of dubious identity day and night. The foreign aggressors were the principal objects. They could do nothing but huddle in the "legation quarter" and the Pehtang Cathedral. The Yi Ho Tuan held frequent demonstrations at night. The roar of their slogans made the imperialists tremble. They also persuaded the people not to buy "imported goods," and to throw kerosene lamps out into the streets, spilling the "foreign oil." They issued warnings to shopkeepers specializing in "foreign articles" and, to show their determination, set fire to the Laotehchi Western Drug Store near Chienmen Gate. All this displayed the Yi Ho Tuan's deep hatred and

contempt for the aggressors. It also reflected the upsurge of anti-imperialist feeling among the people of Peking.

Simultaneously the Yi Ho Tuan ignited struggles in and around Tientsin.

Tientsin, the largest trade port in north China, had been forced open to foreign commerce quite early. Invaders from several countries had established "concessions" around the Tzechulin area southeast of the old walled city. The banks of the Haiho River where they built docks, business firms, banks, factories and churches became their base for penetration into north China. Imperialist consuls, businessmen, missionaries and adventurers in other guises clustered there, lording it over the people and kindling their fury. When the Yi Ho Tuan rose in Shantung, the people of Tientsin organized a similar movement, distributing posters, spreading propaganda in the form of folk sayings, and issuing calls to join the anti-imperialist struggle. Peasants, handicraftsmen and transport workers responded. "Shrines" were set up in various places and military training for battle against imperialism began.

As in Peking these activities were a prelude to the Yi Ho Tuan's own entry in large numbers. But in Tientsin this was less successful. A contingent advancing northward from Chingchow along the Grand Canal sustained heavy casualties under

Ching army attack at Wuchiao and Tsangchow. Another contingent, moving along the Peking-Tientsin Railway, was intercepted and assailed by Nieh Shih-cheng's troops. Only after reorganization in June did the Yi Ho Tuan come into Tientsin from Wenan and Pachow — somewhat later than into Peking.

Joining forces with the members already active in Tientsin, the entering contingent, a large one, spread its influence far and wide. It grew further by recruitment and launched a stormy anti-imperialist struggle.

In those days Yi Ho Tuan demonstrators often appeared in the streets and alleyways. Armed with swords and spears and shouting anti-imperialist slogans, they stood erect before the imperialists and their lackeys. Bold, dignified and without a trace of sycophancy, they made the foreign aggressors shake in their boots and demolished the arrogance of the Ching officials, high and low. When the Yi Ho Tuan met dynastic officials in the street, they would order those riding in sedan-chairs to step down and those on horseback to dismount and stand obediently to one side with bared heads. Thus, they stripped the last shreds of prestige from those who had ridden roughshod over the people. Especially intense was their hatred for the heads of the Ching army trying to suppress them. "We

must kill Nieh Shih-cheng, Yang Fu-tung and their like along with the foreign invaders," they vowed. Hearing that Yang had met death in battle at Laishui, they all the more determined not to let Nieh get away.

One day, when riding along Hsinglung Street in the Hotung District of Tientsin, Nieh ran into 100 marching Yi Ho Tuan fighters. Infuriated, they chased him, knives in hand. Nieh scrambled down in terror from his saddle and dodged down another street. Tientsin's people had the satisfaction of seeing the "honourable commander" Nieh scurrying off before the Yi Ho Tuan. The story was told everywhere.

In Tientsin, the Yi Ho Tuan manufactured their own swords and spears. Taking imperialism as their direct target, they burned down churches, felled electricity poles and wrecked the office of the Intendant of Customs. Great numbers of urban and rural working people were attracted to their ranks. Thus, in co-ordination with their comrades in Peking, they built up a powerful force which shook the reactionaries, both domestic and foreign.

That was how, in two or three months, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement engulfed the entire Peking-Tientsin area and grew to immense power, with millions joining. Its actions were clearly revolu-

tionary. But the landlord and bourgeois classes have slandered it as "bandit rebellion." To do so is to take the imperialist stand, attacking the peasants' anti-imperialist struggle; it is counter-revolutionary. By contrast, the masses were elated as never before by the revolutionary actions of the Yi Ho Tuan, in which thousands of the enslaved were overthrowing their man-eating enemies. The Yi Ho Tuan's general orientation — against imperialism and its lackeys — was completely correct, and its actions were indeed fine. But as Chairman Mao has said of the Chinese people's knowledge of imperialism, **"The first stage was one of superficial, perceptual knowledge."*** They could not yet see the aggressive nature of imperialism, but only the detriment to them of the churches, railways, electric wires, steamships and imported goods. There was a popular saying: "Foreigners, foreigners, they do us harm! They build railways and remove our wealth!" It is perfectly understandable that when the people first rose to fight, they took the churches, railways, power lines, steamers and foreign goods as the immediate targets of their pent-up hatred.

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* "On Practice," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung,* FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. I, p. 301.

In the summer of 1900 Peking and Tientsin were virtually under Yi Ho Tuan control. Revolutionary flames raged. The storm of struggle surged over wide areas of China.

4 Countrywide Anti-Imperialist Upsurge

The spread of the movement from Shantung to Chihli, and particularly the Yi Ho Tuan's entry into Peking and Tientsin, brought repercussions throughout the country. China's three northeastern provinces, as well as Shansi, Inner Mongolia and Honan, border on the Shantung-Chihli area. In all, the Yi Ho Tuan quickly organized and struck at the same main target — imperialism and its lackeys.

It was tsarist Russia that had made the first move in the imperialist conspiracy to partition China, by her encroachment on China's northeastern provinces. There she seized the privileges of building railways, of administration and mining along the railway line, and of exemption from or reduction of Customs duties and inland transit taxes for her trade. There, too, she forcibly oc-

cupied the naval base of Lushun and the adjacent port of Talien. Russia's aggression was fiercely opposed by the people of the Northeast. In 1898, they launched struggles against her land-grabbing and railway-building in Tiehling and Liaoyang in Liaoning Province and in Changchun, Kirin Province. In Heilungkiang Province they rose against Russian seizures of gold mines, forests and other resources. As soon as news of the Yi Ho Tuan's fight in Shantung and Chihli reached the Northeast, the anti-imperialist movement there blazed up.

In February 1900 Yi Ho Tuan members were seen openly at boxing practice near Yingkow port. The following month, boxing and sword drills started around Chinchow. Soon, "shrines" appeared in many places. The Yi Ho Tuan flourished in the city of Fengtien (now Shenyang), political and economic centre of the Northeast, where posters assailing imperialism could be seen all over. Contemporary accounts quoted them as denouncing the many crimes of the foreign invaders in China, from the import of opium to the seizure of seaports, from the poisoning of wells to the maiming of children. They called on the people to rise and drive the aggressors from Chinese territory. Tsengchi, General of Shengking Province (now Liaoning), attempted to strangle the people's anti-

imperialist struggle by ordering that Yi Ho Tuan members be ferreted out and arrested. But the sub-prefectural and county officials dared not carry out these commands, so awed were they by the power of the movement. The struggle in the Northeast went on spreading.

On June 26, 1900 the Yi Ho Tuan began destroying railway bridges near Liaoyang. On June 30, in a large-scale action in Fengtien city, they burned down British churches outside Neichihmen Gate and at Hsiaohoyen in the southeastern section. On July 1 all foreign churches in Fengtien except the French cathedral outside Tehshengmen Gate were destroyed, as was the (Russian) Chinese Eastern Railway Company building. Relying on the cathedral's strong structure, the French bishop Guillou sought to resist. The masses, angered and determined, captured the building and killed the bishop.

By the end of July all Russian-controlled railway bridges in Liaoning, along the 250 kilometres of line from Kaiyuan in the north to Haicheng in the south (with the exception of the railway station at Anshan), had been torn up. All the British, French and U.S. missionary churches in the province except two had been burned to the ground.

The Yi Ho Tuan also attacked the aggressors in Kirin and Heilungkiang provinces. In mid-July its members in Changchun burned down the Catholic

cathedral there, the Protestant churches in the outskirts and the Russian railway station at Erhtaokou. In Aigun in Heilungkiang, thousands of railway builders attacked the Russian overseers, putting the entire Russian railway staff to flight.

These blows struck by the Yi Ho Tuan at the aggressors in the Northeast resulted in virtually total destruction of the imperialist churches, railway lines, bridges, stations, office buildings and mines there. Some of the missionaries, vanguards of imperialist penetration, were brought to justice. Others took refuge in Talien, Harbin or other places.

Elsewhere, Shansi Province was an important area of Yi Ho Tuan activity. Though it was well inland, imperialism had long stretched its tentacles there. In the 1870s Britain, Germany and other countries had sent agents to spy out its resources of coal and iron ore. In 1898 Britain, Germany and Russia seized railway-building and mining rights in Shansi. Its people rose to resist, with particular hatred for the missionaries who cloaked aggression with religion.

The Yi Ho Tuan entered Shansi soon after it spread from Shantung to Chihli and began its anti-imperialist struggle in Peking and Tientsin. The provincial capital, Taiyuan, became a centre for its action. In May 1900 Yi Ho Tuan posters appeared

in every part of the city. By June "boxing grounds" were found even in front of the governor's office (yamen).

The upsurge of the Yi Ho Tuan in Shansi roused the bitter enmity of the imperialists. On June 27, when its members demonstrated against a church in Tungchia Street in Taiyuan city, four were killed by shots from the building. The angry demonstrators burned the church. On July 10 the Catholic cathedral at Tapeimen Gate went up in flames. On July 11, Yi Ho Tuan fighters from the town of Shihtieh in Yutzu County came into Taiyuan. Governor Yu Hsien, who had been transferred from Shantung Province, was so awed by the power of the masses that he invited them to his yamen. The Yi Ho Tuan's influence grew apace. "Shrines" sprang up in every street and alley, and its young women members, the "Red Lanterns," were active everywhere. Like Peking and Tientsin, Taiyuan came under Yi Ho Tuan control. And so, soon after, did every sub-prefecture, county and many villages of Shansi.

The grasslands of Inner Mongolia were also enveloped by anti-imperialist struggles. These, by July 1900, extended from the four western Chahar banners and Hsingho in the east to Alashan Banner and Sanshengkung in the west and from the Szutzuwang Banner of the Ulan Chap League in

the north to Chengchuan in the Ikh Chao League in the south. Wherever imperialist aggression reached, the struggle raged.

In Honan Province the Yi Ho Tuan joined forces with the Ta Tao Hui (Big Sword Society) and other mass organizations, bringing the anti-imperialist struggle there to a high pitch as well.

By means of its poster propaganda and through the close contacts between its members in different places, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, which began from Shantung, took only a few months to raise its banners on both sides of the Great Wall and along the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. It brought millions of people together into an unprecedentedly great anti-imperialist force which threw the semi-colonial order imposed on China by imperialism into complete disarray. To block the Yi Ho Tuan from moving south, the imperialists and certain warlords and bureaucrats colluded in a scheme of "mutual guarantee for protection of south and east China" and for "tranquillization" of the Yangtze valley (more will be written of this later). But there, too, these enemies failed to prevent its influence from reverberating. All the more did they fail to prevent the Chinese people from universally demanding the expulsion of imperialism from the whole country. In the latter half of 1900 anti-imperialist mass

struggles continued to flare up from the lower Yangtze to the remote Southwest, as well as in northwest China and in semi-tropical Kwangtung and Kwangsi in the south.

The fight in all these regions was closely linked with that in north China. In July and August 1900 the Yi Ho Tuan's anti-imperialist posters appeared in many places in Kiangsu, Anhwei, Hupeh, Kiangsi, Fukien, Kwangsi, Shensi and Kansu provinces. Records show that members travelled as far as Liangchow in Kansu to put them up. They were also seen in Amoy on the southeast coast, indicating how far the Yi Ho Tuan reached out. People began to practise boxing on the public recreation grounds in Hanyang, Hupeh Province, on the middle Yangtze. A boxing class was set up in Kweihsien, Kwangsi Province. In all these areas the people frequently set fire to churches and drove away missionaries, and members of various secret societies rose in revolt against imperialism and its lackeys.

Such was the anti-imperialist revolutionary situation throughout China in 1900.

5 Invasion by the Eight Powers

The militant Yi Ho Tuan Movement in north China reverberated throughout the country and struck blows at the imperialist aggressors. To suppress the people's revolution, eight imperialist powers — Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria-Hungary — joined in a war of aggression against China.

Relations among imperialist countries always comprise both collusion and contention. When the people in colonial or semi-colonial countries rise in revolution, the ruling classes of the imperialist countries may temporarily bury the hatchet in their own endless mutual disputes and act together to put the revolutionary people down. The "allied forces of the eight powers" which invaded China to suppress the Yi Ho Tuan were rigged up because the imperialist powers had this interest in common.

First, as they saw it, if the Yi Ho Tuan were not promptly suppressed, the privileges seized by the powers in China, and their hopes for future expansion there, would turn out to be mere soap-bubbles.

Secondly, they were all worried lest this movement be victorious, arouse great repercussions in their colonies, and shake the foundations of their own colonial rule. The American politician Henry Adams wailed in a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, John Hay, that "the Chinese rising may react on Persia and Central Asia, and start off a general Mahometan outbreak"* and that all colonialism might thus be undermined.

Thirdly, by launching this new war, the imperialist countries tried to tighten their grip on their lackey, the Ching government, in order to wring more privileges out of it.

The imperialist powers started hatching their joint action at the very start of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement. Their envoys in Peking clamoured that they should stand as one in dealing with the Chinese. For unity of action, they maintained constant contact on the specific question of how to suppress the Yi Ho Tuan. In January and March

* *Letters of Henry Adams, (1892-1918)*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1938, p. 290.

1900 the British, American, German, French and Italian ministers to China sent several identical notes to the Ching government demanding that the Yi Ho Tuan and some other societies be outlawed and crushed. In early April, imperialist warships began steaming into Taku and the five ministers again demanded, in identical notes to the Ching government, the "complete suppression" of the Yi Ho Tuan within two months. This was a threat of war to the Ching government. Just the same, the Yi Ho Tuan, far from being "completely suppressed," grew stronger, and more rapidly than the aggressors could have imagined. Seeing that the Ching government was losing control, on May 28 the imperialist envoys urged their governments to send armed forces to crush the patriots. On May 30 more imperialist warships converged on Taku and unleashed a new war of aggression for the long-plotted partition of China.

U.S. imperialism showed particular zeal in this aggressive war. In the frenzied scramble for spheres of influence it had failed to get all it wanted, and was waiting for a chance to grab more. U.S. President William McKinley asked his Secretary of State, John Hay, "May we not want a slice if it [China] is to be divided?"* American agents

* John W. Foster, *Diplomatic Memoirs,* Constable, London, 1910, Vol. II, p. 257.

within China set up a clamour. The missionary Gilbert Reid declared that the United States should act, and, if partition occurred, be "given an equal share in the distribution of new opportunities."* W. A. P. Martin, another American missionary and an old hand at U.S. aggression against China (he was President of the Imperial University of Peking), blustered even more arrogantly, "It is by natural growth that we have expanded our territory to the Pacific, and extended our influence to Japan and China. . . . Now a great opportunity presents itself, and God forbid that it should pass unimproved."**

The conspiracy began with a telegram from U.S. Secretary of State John Hay proposing joint action to the British government. Agreement was immediately reached between these two old cronies in aggression against China. But Britain, then engaged in her colonial South African War (the "Boer War" of 1899-1902), could not contribute a substantial force. She therefore suggested that Japan play the main role in the suppression of the Yi Ho Tuan, incidentally intending to use the Japanese army as a force within Peking itself to coun-

* Gilbert Reid, *The Crisis in China,* Harpers, London, 1900, p. 47.

** W. A. P. Martin, *The Siege of Peking,* Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1900, pp. 156-57.

ter the designs of Russia. Japan, on her part, was already planning to dispatch troops, and use this chance to expand her own power in China. In Tokyo, her Foreign Minister Viscount Shuzo Aoki hinted to the British envoy that Japan would be ready to send more men to China if Britain agreed. He also called foreign diplomats in Tokyo to a conference, announcing Japan's wish to act jointly with the other imperialists. It was a windfall for Japan when Britain made the proposal, of her own accord.

Tsarist Russia naturally agreed fully with the other imperialists on suppressing the Yi Ho Tuan. But she was afraid Japan might get the upper hand in the scramble, to the disadvantage of Russian aggressive schemes in China. So she objected to Japan's playing a principal part. After some bargaining, the powers agreed that all would send contingents to China. That was how modern history's most despicable and atrocious joint war of aggression, engineered by British and American imperialism, was unleashed against China.

On May 30, 1900 the British, U.S., Russian and French ministers to China called at the Tsungli Yamen (the Ching government's Foreign Ministry). They announced there, as reported by the British envoy Claude MacDonald to the London Foreign Office, that "the Corps Diplomatique had decided

to bring up guards irrespective of the attitude of the Chinese government, and we advised compliance in order to avoid ulterior consequences."* In other words, the Ching government was required to line up wholly with imperialism, and, together with it, crush the Chinese people's resistance. At the same time as they moved troops from Tientsin towards Peking, supposedly to protect the legations, the imperialist powers assembled many warships off Taku in readiness for a major offensive. On May 31, with the consent of the Ching government, several hundred British, U.S., Russian, French, Japanese, German and Italian soldiers arrived at Peking by special train from Tientsin. On June 2 more than 20 imperialist warships were anchored off Taku; four days later the Russian and French warships alone had grown to 17, and 600 more armed invaders were landed. On June 10 the British Admiral E. H. Seymour started by rail towards Peking at the head of an invasion force of 2,000 men. Vigorously attacked by the Yi Ho Tuan, it had to retreat pell-mell to Tientsin.

On June 16, with the aim of seizing the coastal defence forts at Taku as a beachhead for their major offensive, the invaders, on the initiative of the

* Sir Claude MacDonald to Marquess of Salisbury, "Reports from Her Majesty's Minister to China Respecting Events at Peking," *China*, No. 4 (1900).

commander of the Russian forces, delivered a joint ultimatum to Lo Jung-kuang, commander of the forts. They demanded that he hand over and evacuate the forts before 2 a.m. the next morning. The pretext was that, without occupying them, it would be inconvenient for the invaders to suppress the "bandit insurrection" on behalf of the Ching government. The ultimatum threatened that if the demand was not met, troops would be used to enforce it. Lo Jung-kuang and his men refused to evacuate. On the morning of June 17 the imperialist warships, under Russian command, opened fire. The defenders returned it, sinking or damaging six enemy ships and inflicting over 200 casualties, dead and wounded, in a five-hour battle. However, their main ammunition store was hit by enemy shells and blew up. The forts then fell. Thereafter, the forces of the eight powers kept landing at Taku, whence they pushed on to Tientsin and finally Peking in an orgy of unprecedented massacre and plunder of the Chinese people.

While the Yi Ho Tuan was unfolding a fierce struggle to expel imperialist forces from China, the Ching rulers, headed by the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi, busied themselves with preserving their own reactionary sway.

The feudal Ching Dynasty rulers were at all times hostile to the people. Prior to May 1900

they had again and again decreed the suppression of the Yi Ho Tuan, but their strength fell short of their desire, so their troops were repeatedly beaten. In the battle of Laishui, the Ching force was practically wiped out and its commander killed. The triumphant growth of the Yi Ho Tuan in Chihli and its spread to Peking and Tientsin drew from the rulers the anxious cry: "The Yi Ho Tuan is spreading its influence far and wide; tens of thousands have joined its creed; they are well informed; multitudes respond to their every call; all this shows they harbour no small ambitions." These few sentences are enough to show the apprehension and confusion of the rulers.

Early in June the imperialists' continuous build-up of forces at Taku and their military manoeuvres in the area between Peking and Tientsin began to arouse grave suspicions within the Ching ruling circles. The central power, ever since the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898, had been monopolized by the die-hards headed by the Empress Dowager. The Kuang Hsu Emperor was kept under house arrest in the palace, the die-hards spread rumours that he was critically ill, and intended to murder him secretly. The British and French ministers warned the Tsungli Yamen against these die-hard plots. In December 1899 the Empress Dowager prepared to elevate the son of Tsaiyi (Prince

Tuan) to heir-apparent, and to compel the Kuang Hsu Emperor to go through the rite of abdication. Though the new heir was indeed named, the foreign envoys refused to attend and offer congratulations, signifying that they would not recognize the deposition of the emperor. Consequently, the Empress Dowager had to drop her plan. During the Reform Movement Britain, the United States and Japan had tried to curry favour with the Kuang Hsu Emperor and the reformists, in opposition to tsarist Russia which supported the Empress Dowager. Now, with the imperialist invaders at the gates of Peking, the die-hards became fearful that the powers might surreptitiously come to the aid of the emperor. Those close to the Empress Dowager — Tsaiyi, Kangyi and others — were for making use of the Yi Ho Tuan to thwart such a possibility and stabilize their own dominance.

While the Empress Dowager carried on this now open now covert struggle with the imperialists, her entourage fed her stories about the Yi Ho Tuan's alleged mystic powers. She decided on a change of tactics towards the Yi Ho Tuan — from suppression to deceit and inducement. On June 6 she sent her favourite minister, Kangyi, and others to Chochow and Paoting to look into the movement's actual strength before determining her policy.

On the night of June 8 the Yi Ho Tuan paraded and demonstrated in Peking and great masses of people joined its ranks. The city rang with their shouted slogans. The rapid development threatened the Ching Dynasty with total collapse. The rulers were in utter panic. On June 9 the Empress Dowager secretly ordered Tung Fu-hsiang, commander of troops from Kansu Province, to bring them into Peking to massacre the Yi Ho Tuan. Her order was not carried out because Yi Ho Tuan members had infiltrated the Kansu ranks, worked among them and won many over. On June 15 the Empress Dowager ordered Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and Yuan Shih-kai, Governor of Shantung, to come to Peking, and Kangyi to hurry back from his tour of investigation.

The Empress Dowager's intentions were clear. She sent for Li Hung-chang because this old traitor was adept at collaborating with the imperialists. She transferred Yuan Shih-kai because she wanted this butcher to apply in Chihli the skill he had shown in massacring the Yi Ho Tuan in Shantung. She urged Kangyi's return because she wanted to know how strong the Yi Ho Tuan really was outside Peking.

But notwithstanding her instruction, Li Hung-chang was still far away in Kwangtung and Yuan

Shih-kai was not certain of being able to leave Shantung. So she urgently ordered Ma Yu-kun, the military commander along the Peking-Shanhaikuan Railway line, to bring his troops into Peking to suppress the Yi Ho Tuan. She also sent the most urgent orders to the viceroys and governors of the provinces to "dispatch, so far as militarily and logistically possible, battalions of selected infantry and cavalry commanded by capable officers post haste to serve in Peking." She stressed that the capital was "the pivotal place in most pressing situation, which brooks no delay." Clearly she felt herself in a leaky boat on a stormy sea, hence her SOS signals to her subordinates.

With the seizure of Taku by the invading imperialists on June 17, the situation changed drastically. It was rumoured that they would demand, among other things, that "the Empress Dowager should restore the power to the emperor." This was what she had most dreaded ever since the Reform Movement of 1898. In 1899, in her draft edict on the emperor's deposition, she had written that "if the powers compel me to do the impermissible, we should fight them with common hatred for the enemy," regardless of consequences. By "the impermissible" she meant the restoration of power to the emperor. Hearing of just such "bad tidings," she raged, "How dare these aliens

interfere with my affairs! If this can be tolerated, then what can be called intolerable?" She immediately called a throne conference and asked those present to consider a "declaration of war." Some members of the imperial house, on hearing the words "restoration of power," wept and shouted, "No alternative but war!" Other high officials, like Hsu Ching-cheng and Yuan Chang, were frightened out of their wits when they heard about "fighting the foreigners." They urged, "To make war on all the foreign powers is impossible, now that their warships are assembled off our coast. We failed to win the war with one country, Japan. How can we win if we fight many?" The Empress Dowager, though enraged by the reported insolence of the foreigners towards her own person, still feared her foreign masters. Hence the throne conference took no decision and fruitless wrangling rent the highest ruling clique for two more days.

On June 20 Kangyi returned from Chochow and reported that the Yi Ho Tuan's influence was very strong indeed. From Tientsin came news that the joint forces of the imperialists had occupied Taku and were marching on Tientsin, and that the Yi Ho Tuan had started to attack the foreign concessions in order to protect Tientsin, which was in a state of war. On that day close-

quarter fighting already raged in Peking. The German envoy, Klemens von Ketteler, was killed after provoking the Chinese people. Foreign troops in the "legation quarter" were engaging in continuous provocations. The Yi Ho Tuan had begun to attack the foreign legations to strike at the isolent aggressors.

In this touch-and-go situation the Empress Dowager, who decided the policies of the Ching ruling clique, had to choose quickly between war and peace. She said, "The Yi Ho Tuan's power is now widespread. It is difficult to suppress or to pacify. The foreigners have converged on Tientsin and Taku; hostilities between China and foreign countries have begun. The consequences are unpredictable." The first part of her statement meant that the Yi Ho Tuan could no longer be crushed, and the second that she was trying to shirk responsibility for the unpredictable result of the war. Aside from her own fear of imperialism, which she could not express publicly, she knew very well that open surrender to imperialism would require compliance with its demand for the suppression of the Yi Ho Tuan. But Peking was then controlled by the Yi Ho Tuan contingents 200,000 strong, which would at once topple her rule if provoked. On this point, she was franker in a later reminiscence, "At that time they [the

Yi Ho Tuan] had become more powerful with a larger following. In and out of the palaces there was great confusion with groups of men, hair tied up in red cloth, entering and leaving. Nobody could tell who was a 'bandit' and who not, and nobody bothered to ask. But the eunuchs and guards on duty were actually mixing with them." And further: "At that time I could not make a decision on my own, which was why things came to such a pass. If I had not compromised on many matters, on the one hand humouring them somewhat so as to steady the popular mind and on the other restraining them to a considerable degree so they would have some respect for me, nobody can tell what catastrophe would have resulted once the paper tiger was punctured; then the emperor would have been in danger too. At one time they even said that there were foreigners' agents in the palaces and they would make a search." So it was after weighing the gains and losses that the Empress Dowager decided to declare war on the powers to divert the spearhead of the people's revolution from herself.

On June 21, 1900 the Ching government delivered to the imperialist legations in Peking its so-called "declaration of war." Feigning boldness, it announced demagogically that the Ching government would fight a "decisive war" with the

powers. But only four days later, a decree issued in reply to a memorial by Li Hung-chang and other viceroys and governors had this to say: "The current crisis has arisen out of a complicated situation. We had clearly foreseen it. The court has always been cautious in dealing with other countries and has never lightly resorted to hostilities."

On June 29 cablegrams by the Ching government to its envoys abroad revealed even more nakedly the two-faced tactics of that hardened counter-revolutionary, the Empress Dowager. She directed her diplomats to explain to the foreign governments that the rioting "mobs" in Chihli and Shantung provinces were very powerful, that she had been planning to exterminate them but was afraid hasty action might invite disaster, and that even if she were muddle-headed in the extreme, she would not dare to declare war against the powers — how could anyone think she would be so bold as to rely on these "mobs" and offend the powers? She further instructed her envoys to reassure the imperialists that the Ching government would thenceforth earnestly protect their legations and most surely find a way to exterminate the "mobs." At about the same time the British Minister to China, Claude MacDonald, who commanded all imperialist armed forces in the besieged legations, received from the Tsungli Yamen four cartloads of vegetables and four of fruit, accompanied by the visiting cards of 13 members of the imperial house and high ministers. They were said to have been delivered by personal order of the Empress Dowager.

All this shows that the "declaration of war" was a mere expedient on the part of the Ching government. Its ultimate and real intention was to "wipe out" the Yi Ho Tuan by conniving with imperialism.

6 "Mutual Guarantee for Protection of South and East China" —an Imperialist Scheme

While the Ching court was "declaring war" against the imperialist powers, a political monstrosity took shape in the southern part of the country. Local officials there, openly colluding with the imperialist enemy, rigged up the farce known as "mutual guarantee for protection of south and east China."

The rapid growth of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement in the north hit hard at the imperialists and their lackeys, economically as well as politically. Imports of foreign goods into Tientsin, a major base of imperialist aggression in north China, were sharply cut by a revolutionary boycott imposed by the Yi Ho Tuan after it moved into the Peking-Tientsin region. The impact was at once felt in Shanghai, the port of entry for foreign goods before transshipment to Tientsin. Its warehouses were swollen

with undelivered cargoes, as a result not only of the Peking-Tientsin boycott but also of the great risks of overland transport in the wide areas swept by the anti-imperialist storm. Overstocked Shanghai traders had to make cut-rate sales, which in turn produced a chain reaction. Most of the traders had borrowed capital from the money houses (traditional banks), and their heavy losses also endangered these creditors, who had to curtail operations. This shrank the market for foreign goods even further. Besides hurting imperialism it dealt a hammer-blow to the commercial interests of the Chinese landlord and comprador classes. It was an unmistakable warning signal to all three.

Britain was the first imperialist power to take alarm, as the Yangtze valley was her "sphere of influence" where she was the heaviest investor and biggest supplier of imports. Nor were economic interests her sole concern. Even more she feared that, should the Yi Ho Tuan spread to the Yangtze valley, rival powers might invade there on the pretext of protecting their nationals. Seeking to prevent such damage to her interests, and consolidate her own regional predominance, Britain insidiously plotted to split China. She enticed local warlords and officials into the deal known as "mutual guarantee for protection of south and east China," for the twofold purpose of jointly suppressing the

Chinese people's anti-imperialist movement and preventing other powers from penetrating to the Yangtze valley.

At that time Liu Kun-yi, Viceroy of the Liang-kiang Provinces (Kiangsu, Anhwei and Kiangsi) and a warlord of Hunan faction, held sway over the lower Yangtze. The middle reaches were controlled by the Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh, the "westernizing" bureaucrat Chang Chih-tung. These were the two most powerful viceroys in China, and both had a deep comprador tinge. In a cable to the London Foreign Office dated June 14, 1900, the Acting British Consul-General in Shanghai, Pelham Warren, urged Britain "at once to come to an understanding with the Hankow and Nanking Viceroys." He was confident, he declared, that Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung "will do all they can to keep peace in their districts if they can rely on Her Majesty's Government for effective support."* The British Foreign Secretary, replying the very next day, authorized Warren to inform Liu and Chang that they "will be supported by Her Majesty's ships if measures are taken for the maintenance of order."**

* Acting Consul-General Warren to the Marquess of Salisbury, Shanghai, June 14, 1900, British Blue Book, *China. No. 3 (1900): Correspondence Respecting the Insurrectionary Movement in China*, No. 128.

** Salisbury to Warren, June 15, 1900, ibid., No. 135.

To demonstrate its "effective support," on June 16 the British Admiralty ordered its senior naval officer in Shanghai to dispatch two warships — the *Hermione* to Nanking and the *Linnet* to Hankow — thus substantiating to the two viceroys Britain's guarantee that her military forces would back them in "keeping peace in the Yangtze valley." In reality, the move was meant to strengthen the British hold on the Yangtze through these officials.

From the start of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung had been urging the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi to "exterminate" it. On June 15, they went further by jointly insisting that she "make clear by imperial edict that the Boxer bandits must be suppressed." She, however, still hesitated, and the suggestion was shelved. Just then the British imperialists gave open support to the viceroys, who accepted this windfall with joy. On June 17, Chang Chih-tung, taking the opportunity of a conference with the British consul in Hankow about "keeping peace" in the Yangtze valley, declared that he and Liu Kun-yi were most willing to co-operate. The following day, Chang Chih-tung consulted telegraphically with Liu Kun-yi, then cabled the Chinese envoy in London to reassure the British government of the two viceroys' confidence in suppressing the people's anti-

imperialist struggle along the Yangtze and keeping the foreign interests there secure.

These British manoeuvres, however, drew a jaundiced reaction from the other imperialists. The United States put pressure on Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung, declaring that the Yangtze valley should not be "protected" by Britain alone. Germany wanted the region "open" for all foreign powers. France threatened that if Britain "protected" south and east China, she would do the same for Yunnan, Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces. These strong pressures forced Britain into concessions. Consequently, her scheme of "mutual guarantee for protection of south and east China" was modified from an undertaking by one power into a common one by several.

Sheng Hsuan-huai, a big comprador whom the Ching government had made Director-General of the Lukouchiao-Hankow Railway, was then in Shanghai. He had close links with the Anglo-American imperialists and extensive connections and intimate ties with the "Westernizing" warlords and bureaucrats. From mid-June, when the "mutual guarantee" scheme began to brew, he had shuttled up and down the Shanghai-Nanking-Hankow route as go-between for the British and U.S. consuls on one side, and Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung on the other. The June 21 "imperial

edict of declaration of war" speeded these parleys. Sheng telegraphed Liu and Chang suggesting that they delay publication of the edict, to win time for clinching the "mutual guarantee" deal with the foreign consuls. In this way, he urged, the viceroys could both ingratiate themselves with the imperialists and lay a basis for defending their dealings to the Empress Dowager afterwards. On June 26, the two viceroys empowered Sheng Hsuan-huai and Yu Lien-yuan, Intendant of the Circuit of Shanghai, to enter into formal consultation with the foreign consuls on a nine-article agreement for "mutual guarantee for protection of south and east China" and a 10-article agreement "for protection of Shanghai and its vicinity." Such was the first step in the collusion between the Chinese and foreign reactionaries under this scheme.

The proposed agreement stipulated that "the duty of protecting Shanghai shall be confided to the Treaty Powers," and "in the region of the Yangtze valley, including the towns of Soochow and Hangchow, the responsibility for the maintenance of order shall pertain to the Viceroys of the Liangkiang and Lianghu (Hunan and Hupeh) provinces."* Who was to be protected? The text specified —

* Chinese Minister to Britain to British Foreign Secretary, June 29, 1900 (*Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in China*), British Blue Book.

"foreign life and property, merchant and missionary," in other words, the imperialist forces of aggression in China. These reactionaries, domestic and foreign, were terrified lest the anti-imperialist patriotic Yi Ho Tuan Movement spread to the south. So the document also laid down that the viceroys "do further undertake to issue stringent and imperative orders to all officials subordinate to them to suppress all inflammatory placards and punish all instigators of animosity between foreigners and the people."* A grave move had been made in the imperialist effort to perpetuate the semi-colonial status of China and split her apart.

Seemingly the whole intrigue was out of harmony with the Ching court's "declaration of war" against the foreign powers. Actually, they were two parts of one whole. Hence, when the court was informed of the viceroys' action, it fully approved their treachery. So did Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and Yuan Shih-kai, Governor of Shantung, both of whom came into the "mutual guarantee" scheme. Thus its area of operation broadened from Kiangsu, Anhwei, Kiangsi, Hupeh and Hunan provinces to include Kwangtung, Shantung, Chekiang and Fukien. Also covered, in fact, were Szechuan, Honan and Shensi.

* Ibid.

The concoction of this scheme complemented the massacres committed by the allied army of the eight powers in the north and brought foreign imperialism and the domestic comprador-officials into ever tighter collusion. Both forces worked together to suppress the anti-imperialist struggle of the Chinese people. Imperialist warships prowled the Yangtze to keep an eye on the actions of the people. Meanwhile, to obstruct any southward drive by the Yi Ho Tuan, Liu Kun-yi deployed in Whangpoo Harbour all the new guns and gunboats made by the Kiangnan Arsenal and Dockyard, and sent troops to garrison the land line from Hsuchow in Kiangsu Province to the northern part of Anhwei Province. Chang Chih-tung, on his part, used counter-revolutionary carrot-and-stick tactics. He had two simultaneous proclamations posted in every place under his jurisdiction, one threatening the people with suppression and the other, called "Advice to the People," striving to deceive them. The landlords and gentry in the Yangtze valley blissfully imagined that this "mutual guarantee" agreement was a "Great Wall" giving them security in half of China.

The scheme was lauded by the imperialists, compradors, landlords and reactionary gentry because it undermined and obstructed the spread of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement. It enabled the im-

perialists to concentrate their attention and military power in the north for undistracted suppression of the Yi Ho Tuan and quick re-establishment of reactionary order. These were the shared aspirations of the imperialists and their lackeys. It was to safeguard both their interests that the "mutual guarantee" was rigged up.

7 Heroic Battles Against the Invaders

When the invading army of the eight imperialist powers shot its way into China and trampled her cherished territory in attempted partition, the Yi Ho Tuan rose fearless and defiant, and severely punished the enemy. The interceptory battle at Langfang, the attack on the foreign concessions in Tientsin, the siege of the legations in Peking — all were marked by the dauntless heroism and determination to fight to the finish characteristic of the Chinese people.

After the Yi Ho Tuan entered Peking in early June, 1900, the imperialist diplomatic corps in the capital sent a joint SOS to invading foreign forces already in Tientsin. The latter, under the British Admiral Edward Seymour, rushed towards the capital to suppress the patriots. The first trainloads started on June 10. More followed in two days.

To block them, the Yi Ho Tuan promptly tore up rails along the line, which the invaders had to repair as they went. On the afternoon of June 11, while Seymour's troops were thus engaged at Lofa railway station, a contingent of red-turbaned Yi Ho Tuan fighters, armed with swords, spears and clubs, hit them from the north side of the railway. While the stunned and confused enemies were still reaching for their guns, the Yi Ho Tuan fighters were upon them, taking a heavy toll in fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

On the evening of June 13, leaving only a rear-guard at Lofa, the enemy advanced to Langfang station. Early the next morning when their first oncoming train was only a few miles out of Langfang and the second was still at the depot taking on water, 300 Yi Ho Tuan warriors surrounded the station, boldly closed in upon the train and killed five invaders. That afternoon, they encircled and pinned down the enemy rearguard at Lofa. Seymour was compelled to order his first train back to Langfang, while hurriedly dispatching a relief force of Russians, Japanese, British and French, equipped with artillery, to break the ring around Lofa.

Counter-revolutionary forces always overestimate themselves and underestimate the revolutionary people. When entraining at Tientsin, the invaders had thought they could reach Peking

in a few hours, and force their way in as easily. But blocking tactics by the Yi Ho Tuan at every point punctured their illusions. In the end, they took five days to reach Langfang, 60 kilometres from Tientsin, and got stuck there.

By June 15, the invaders, still only half way to their goal, had exhausted their food supplies. Seymour had to send a train back to Tientsin for provisions and munitions. It only got as far as Yangtsun, beyond which the line had been destroyed by the defenders. Taking advantage of the paralysis of the aggressors, the Yi Ho Tuan, with some Ching troops, fiercely attacked Langfang on June 18, and in two hours wiped out more than 50 of them.

Though repeated blocking by the Yi Ho Tuan frustrated his advance by rail to Peking, Seymour, stubbornly set on evil, would not desist. He decided to evacuate Langfang, return to Yangtsun and from there follow the Grand Canal to Peking. This plan was aborted when the Yi Ho Tuan made a night attack on the enemy bivouac at Yangtsun on June 18, inflicting 40 casualties and forcing Seymour to flee back to Tientsin.

The imperialists began their retreat on the morning of June 20. Having to go every inch of the way on foot, they abandoned all their heavy

equipment, loaded a few boats they had forcibly seized with more than 200 wounded and some munitions and fled helter-skelter along the canal banks towards Tientsin. Intercepted at almost every village by the Yi Ho Tuan, this routed force dared move only after dark. It took them three days to reach Hsiku on Tientsin's outskirts.

At Hsiku, the invaders occupied an arsenal abandoned by the Ching army, replenishing their exhausted supplies. Even so, they did not venture to approach the nearby foreign concessions of Tientsin for fear of the Yi Ho Tuan. Only on the morning of June 25 did 2,000 invaders from the concessions came to their aid. Dispatched in response to a secret message Seymour had smuggled out through a traitor in the Ching army, they escorted his defeated rabble to the concessions.

Thus, for all their cannon and machine-guns, the enemy forces were badly beaten by the Yi Ho Tuan armed only with swords and spears. Along a short 60 kilometres of railway line, the 2,000 invaders were forced to linger for over two weeks, lost one-third in casualties, and ended by fleeing back to the concessions. Seymour afterwards had to admit, shuddering in retrospect, that if the Yi Ho Tuan had used modern guns, his inter-allied force would have been wiped out.

The Yi Ho Tuan's attack on Tientsin's foreign concessions had begun prior to the fall of the Taku forts.

Lying on the west bank of the Haiho River, the concessions had been grabbed by Britain, the United States and France in an earlier period. The Yi Ho Tuan's siege was undertaken entirely because of aggression by allied troops there. The first imperialist provocation was on June 13, when 15 Russian guns shelled an Yi Ho Tuan contingent nearing the railway station, killing about 400. Infuriated by this atrocity, the Yi Ho Tuan assembled a large force to fiercely attack the foreign-occupied area.

News of the invaders' seizure of Taku on June 17 further inflamed the people against imperialism. Part of the Ching army, inspired and impelled by the Yi Ho Tuan, joined the attack on the Tientsin concessions. When these were surrounded, the panic-stricken imperialists hurriedly collected a large relief force, trying to keep control of the Lao-lungtou Railway Station. This was an important terminal on the Peking-Tientsin line indispensable to their troop movement towards the capital. It was also a vital strategic position for the defence of the adjacent Tientsin foreign concessions, which would be cut off and exposed without it. For these

reasons, the invaders clung on there with might and main.

The Yi Ho Tuan, too, knew the importance of the place and ringed it strongly with two forces, one encircling the concessions, the other the station.

On June 18, 2,000 Russian troops, including cavalry and artillery, sneaked into the station to reinforce the invaders there. Discovering them, the Yi Ho Tuan charged in with swords, undaunted by heavy Russian shelling. Finally they stampeded the enemy who abandoned their artillery, ran for cover into a Russian bank building, and hoisted a white flag, pretending to want a truce. Because they were in fact just seeking a breathing spell, their demand was rejected. Part of the Yi Ho Tuan inside Tientsin rushed to the railway station to join the battle, with Tsao Fu-tien as its commander.

Tsao Fu-tien, a native of Chinghai County, Hopei Province, was an ex-soldier. In the spring of 1900, he had been active in the Chinghai, Yenshan and Chingyun area (of the present Hopei Province). Later he set up a "shrine" in Tientsin and became one of the principal Yi Ho Tuan leaders there. When Tsao led his troops across the railway, the Russian soldiers opened fire. With typical Yi Ho Tuan valour, one of the leaders un-

sheathed his sword and ran across the rails, defying enemy shot and shell, and shouting, "Brothers, charge!" The rank-and-file, as courageous, followed. Helped by patriotic Ching soldiers, they routed the foe and recovered the station. The 2,000-man Russian force lost over 500 in casualties, a condign punishment. That night the local people jubilantly brought food and refreshments for the fighters to celebrate the victory.

In the days that followed, the Yi Ho Tuan forces converged from all directions to protect Tientsin. On June 27 Tsao Fu-tien issued the challenge to battle. The paper-tiger forces of the imperialists, outwardly fierce but inwardly shaky, dared not accept but cowered inside the concessions. Meanwhile, another Yi Ho Tuan leader, Chang Tehcheng, led 5,000 men by river from Tuliuchen to Tientsin where they arrived the same day in an imposing flotilla of 72 large vessels. A boatman by origin, Chang was a native of the same county as Tsao Fu-tien. The Yi Ho Tuan force at Tuliuchen, led by him, was known as "The First Corps of the World."

With the added strength thus assembled, a frontal attack was launched against the enemy entrenched in the concessions. On July 1, in a fierce five-hour battle personally directed by Chang Tehcheng, the Yi Ho Tuan seized a pontoon bridge,

drove to the dividing line between the British and French concessions, set many imperialist-owned buildings ablaze and withdrew in victory. Pressed hard, the besieged enemy was left without room for manoeuvre, thoroughly worn out and driven to despairing outcries.

It was not by bravery and tenacity alone that the Yi Ho Tuan scored against the enemy. They also brought into full play the wisdom of the Chinese people. An instance was their ingenuity in the heavily mined streets along the perimeter of the foreign concessions. To avoid losses, Chang Teh-cheng ordered a herd of cattle to be driven ahead of his troops, who, with the mines thus cleared, were able to advance quickly to the Bund (Haiho River waterfront) and burned down two buildings of major foreign firms.

When the fighting in Tientsin was mounting to a climax, the Ching court showed its traitorous colours. Its "declaration of war" was a fraud from the start. Its true face came out when the menace to the ruling class from the foreign powers, which were pouring fresh troops into China, outgrew that from the Yi Ho Tuan. In early July, the court hastily appointed Li Hung-chang to be Viceroy of Chihli and concurrently High Commissioner for Northern Administration, and summoned him to come north by a Russian ship. This was preparation for open surrender to the imperialists. At the same time, the court appointed Sung Ching as Deputy Minister for Military Affairs in North China and turned its guns against the Yi Ho Tuan. On July 13 Sung launched a massacre of the Yi Ho Tuan at Tientsin, seriously weakening the patriotic forces. The imperialists took the opportunity to rush in reinforcements, and on July 14 captured Tientsin. They established a "Tientsin Provisional Government" to exercise colonial rule over the people of the occupied city; this alien administration did not end till August 1902.

While the Yi Ho Tuan fiercely fought the aggressors in Tientsin, its forces in Peking undertook a general offensive.

Since entering Peking, the Yi Ho Tuan had met with armed provocations by the invaders who often shot at them without a cause. The German Minister to China Ketteler was one such butcher. Once, while on the wall of the Inner City with a party of German marines, he saw Yi Ho Tuan members drilling on a stretch of sand below and gave orders to fire, so more than 20 were killed. After his crime he blustered: "This is the only way to act when the time for action comes in the East."*

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* B. L. Putnam Weale, *Indiscreet Letters from Peking*, China edition, Shanghai, 1922, p. 69.

On June 19 the invading army closed the "legation quarter" to all Chinese as an "occupied zone" and elected the British Minister Claude MacDonald as commander of the area. Chinese residents were ordered to move out or keep indoors. As admitted by the U.S. Minister E. H. Conger, the legation garrison had killed more than 100 Yi Ho Tuan members up to June 20. These atrocities naturally infuriated Peking's people, and their wrath burned higher with news of the imperialists' seizure of the Taku forts and full-scale attack on Tientsin. It was to meet such imperialist provocations and aggressions that the Yi Ho Tuan in the capital resorted to arms.

On June 20 when the German Minister Ketteler was killed (see Chapter V), the aggressor troops in the legations took frenzied action. The Yi Ho Tuan answered with a general attack by some 6,000 men. Its overture was a simultaneous assault on the eastern and western flanks of the "legation quarter," in which torches and packages of explosives were used to set fire to the buildings. Soon the Belgian, Austro-Hungarian, Dutch and Italian legations were in flames, forcing the enemy to retreat to their second line of defence. To provide cover for its advancing main force, the Yi Ho Tuan had used long poles tipped with kerosene-soaked cotton and set the legation roofs ablaze. On July

13, together with a small number of patriotic Ching troops, it stormed into the French legation and briefly into the German, waging fierce hand-to-hand combat before withdrawing. The French Minister lamented that his legation furnishings had been turned to ashes. Despite the heavy cost of every inch of advance, the morale and valour of the Yi Ho Tuan never sagged.

Heroic mine and tunnel warfare featured the attack. Once, all 13 men digging a tunnel were killed. Others leaped into the breach. The French imperialist writer, Pierre Loti, described the terror this effective sapping inspired in the besieged: "They heard dull sounds in the earth, and understood that they were being undermined, that their executioners might spring up from the ground at any moment, so that it became necessary, at any cost, to attempt to establish countermines to prevent this subterranean peril. One day, toward noon, two terrible detonations, which brought on a regular tornado of plaster and dust, shook the French legation."* The mere sound of shovel and pickaxe plunged the imperialists into fear of fiery death. Up to July 20 the casualties of the troops in the legations were: French, 42 out of 56; Germans, 30 out of 54; Japanese, 45 out of 60. The Russians,

* Pierre Loti, *The Last Days of Peking*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1902, pp. 66-67.

Americans, British, Italians and Austrians also suffered many dead and wounded. The beleaguered invaders shook lest each day be their last. The trumpets of the Yi Ho Tuan, wrote one of them, would "make one's blood curdle horribly."*

The Pehtang Roman Catholic Cathedral, centre of religious aggression and the headquarters of the Catholic bishop, was besieged by the Yi Ho Tuan at the same time as the "legation quarter," after three other cathedrals in Peking had been burned.

But even as the Yi Ho Tuan fought with indomitable courage against the aggressors, the Ching government criminally undermined the movement. After "declaring war" on the foreign powers, it sent a token force ostensibly to join in attacking the legations, but actually to protect them and block the Yi Ho Tuan. Junglu, faithful jackal of the Empress Dowager, even paid a formal visit of "solicitude" to the legations. At the bridgehead of the adjacent palace moat he erected a wooden placard with the words: "Protect the Legations — By Order of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager."

Even more, when the imperialists ran out of ammunition and provisions, the Ching court sent them large quantities of flour, rice and fruit, and Junglu's troops half-openly sold them ammunition to slaughter the Chinese people.

* Putnam Weale, op. cit., p. 45.

The Empress Dowager, who showed such concern for the aggressors, did not scruple at publicly executing members of the Yi Ho Tuan. Only three days after the "declaration of war" the Ching court placed the Yi Ho Tuan under the command of two Manchu grandees, Tsaihsun and Kangyi, for tighter control. It made rules stressing that their orders must be obeyed and violators would be punished with death as a "fake Yi Ho Tuan" and "bandits." Many fighters were so labelled and butchered.

Another trick of the Ching court to undermine the patriots was constant transfer of Yi Ho Tuan troops out of Peking on the pretext of need to resist the foreign invaders elsewhere, till the force attacking the legations was badly depleted.

Owing to this Ching government sabotage, the Yi Ho Tuan failed to take the legations, in spite of the 56-day siege, or the Pehtang Cathedral, besieged for 63 days. The Empress Dowager herself admitted: "I imposed restraints at every point. Had I let them loose, they would undoubtedly have overrun the tiny 'legation quarter.'" Those words amply reveal the treachery of the Ching government.

After taking Tientsin on July 14 the troops of the eight powers did not dare to proceed at once to Peking, but spent about three weeks preparing. Only by August 2 did they assemble their motley

force of 40,000. Advancing along both banks of the Grand Canal, with Japanese, British and American troops on the left, and the French, Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian and Italian contingents on the right, the invaders were often intercepted by the Yi Ho Tuan. At Peitsang on August 4 more than 1,000 were annihilated; and the battle at Yangtsun on August 8 brought more heavy losses. Only on August 13 did they reach Peking's outskirts. The Japanese then began scaling the city wall between Chaoyangmen and Tungchihmen gates. The Yi Ho Tuan put up heroic resistance, fighting with rocks when they ran out of bullets. As for the Ching army, it fled when the enemy was still 15 kilometres away. On August 14 the Japanese forced their way through Chaoyangmen Gate, the Russians through Tungpienmen Gate, and the British through Kuangchumen Gate. The other enemy contingents entered in their wake.

With the fall of Peking the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi took to her heels, taking with her the Kuang Hsu Emperor and a small retinue. While in Shansi Province on her flight westward to Sian, she communicated with Li Hung-chang, empowering him to "use his discretion," meaning, of course, to hasten surrender and betray the country without limit. At the same time, she clamoured that the Yi Ho Tuan must be "disarmed, punished and

annihilated," and asked the allied forces to "give aid in suppression."

Now her "declaration of war" was completely exposed as a hoax.

8 Bandit Atrocities by the Invaders

With a mixed force from several countries pouring into China, the invaders felt urgent need for a supreme commander to co-ordinate their actions, lest they fail to reach their goals. Overall command was first exercised by the British Admiral Seymour. But after his trouncing by the Yi Ho Tuan in the Langfang battle, he was considered unfit. Early in August 1900, the German emperor Wilhelm II proposed the German Field-Marshal Alfred von Waldersee, on the grounds that Germany was entitled to primacy for the loss of her envoy, Ketteler. Tsarist Russia was the first to approve, preferring a German allied commander to one from Japan or Britain, both her antagonists. Conversely Japan and Britain would have been unhappy with a Russian in top command, and France had similar misgivings. So a consensus was soon

reached on Waldersee. In late September, he arrived at Tientsin to lead a joint force now grown to almost 100,000.

To wring maximum concessions out of the Ching government, the allied troops occupying Peking pushed further by four routes to take outlying strategic points.

In September 1900, German and Russian forces moved eastward along the Peking-Shanhaikuan rail line. The Ching garrison at Shanhaikuan, numbering about 7,000, could have withstood their onslaughts. But it gave up the fortified town without a battle, upon orders from Li Hung-chang who was trying to propitiate the imperialists.

Southward, the allied troops drove down the Peking-Hankow Railway towards Paoting where Junglu, Grand Councillor to the Ching court, had holed up after Peking's fall. Junglu had boasted that he would recapture the capital. But when the enemy approached he fled further, to Shansi.

Then, in the spring of 1901 the invading forces drove westward from Paoting to the Huolu-Chinghsing area. As usual, the rotten Ching army put up no resistance, and left more of the Chinese people's cherished territory to be trampled under the iron heel of the imperialists. Only when the Yi Ho Tuan attacked them, front and rear, were

the invaders compelled to turn back after occupying Kukuan.

Northward from Peking, the imperialists drove towards Changchiakou through the Chuyungkuan Pass. Here the Ching troops under Ma Yu-kun did nothing to stop them. Instead, they fought the Yi Ho Tuan to clear the way for the advancing aggressors, whose every step was marked by pillage and slaughter. The Yi Ho Tuan punished this invasion force, too. At Huailai, they killed its German commander. Waldersee, who had planned to ransack the nearby Ming Tombs, had to desist after this setback.

The invaders were beasts in civilized garb. From the moment they landed in China, they committed the most heinous crimes. Wherever they went, flames raged and corpses covered the land.

The Russian aggressors razed the town of Tangku to the ground and in Hsinho left only 300 households to survive out of more than 1,000. In Peitang, a big town with over 10,000 families, Russian troops massacred half the population, reddening the waters of the Grand Canal with the blood of the innocent victims. When Tientsin fell, the Japanese aggressors shelled its crowded residential area from the gate-tower on North Wall. In Peking, the French aggressors forced a throng of residents into a blind alley and machine-

gunned them for 15 minutes on end, to make sure none would live. The commander of the German aggressors gave the order: In combat kill any Chinese at sight regardless of age or sex! Even the imperialist Robert Hart had to say publicly that the German-occupied section of the city had been turned into a hell on earth.

All buildings in Peking which had housed "boxing shrines" were set afire. Pierre Loti recorded the scenes in the capital. "Silence and solitude within as well as without these walls. Nothing but rubbish and ruin, ruin. The land of rubbish and ashes, and little gray bricks — little bricks, all alike, scattered in countless myriads upon the sites of houses that have been destroyed, or upon the pavement of what once were streets . . . a city of which only a mass of curious debris is left, after fire and shell have crumbled away its flimsy materials."*

This picture was not confined to Peking. Along the whole route from their landing point at Tangku, wherever the allied troops set foot, they brought destruction. Waldersee himself gave a blunt description: "Throughout the whole stretch of country from Taku to Tientsin I found — as also in no inconsiderable sections of Tientsin itself — a state of

* Pierre Loti, op. cit., p. 60.

terrible devastation. . . . According to a conservative estimate, 300,000 inhabitants (but probably many more) have become homeless along the line of march and are now living in the open."*

All the more were these robbers addicted to plunder. The British imperialist writer, Henry Savage-Landor, penned an eye-witness account of their looting after the capture of Tientsin: "Hardly had the gates been thrown open and the Allied troops found their way into every nook of the town, than Chinese portable property that had any value begun to change hands. American, Russian, British, Japanese and French soldiers ran here and there, poking their noses into every doorway, the door, if not open already, being soon kicked open. The foreign residents of Tientsin, knowing the town well, had an unfair advantage over Tommy Atkins and the American boys [the British and U.S. soldiers], who had to feel their way about, whereas the residents, especially those who had not distinguished themselves in the fighting line, lost no time in making for the Mint, the Salt Commissioner's palace, the Viceroy's Yamen, or the nearest silk or jewelry store, where they knew that wealth was accumulated, and where they helped themselves to anything that took their fancy. *Sycee,* lump silver, and bar gold were preferred."*

* Count Alfred von Waldersee, *A Field-Marshal's Memoirs,* Hutchinson Co., London, 1924, pp. 216-17.

In Peking pillage was expressly legitimized. An order allowed soldiers to loot for three days. Actually they never stopped all the time they were there. Again to quote Waldersee: "Immense damage to property must have been done during the three days of authorized looting (followed by much private looting)."**

"In the case of England this phase of war-making is covered over with certain formalities. The booty had to be handed over and placed in the spacious apartments of the Legation, for public auction a good many days later. The money forthcoming from this, like the prize-money, was distributed in accordance with a certain scale among the officers and non-commissioned officers."***

"With the Russians looting is carried out in the crudest fashion, being accompanied in their case by a careless scattering about of the objects examined."****

One Russian officer, it is recorded, returned to his country with 10 big trunks of valuables.

* A. Henry Savage-Landor, *China and the Allies,* Scribners, New York, 1901, Vol. I, pp. 189-90.

** Waldersee, op. cit., p. 218.

*** Ibid., pp. 218-19.

**** Ibid., p. 219.

"With the Japanese . . . the booty taken by them from Tientsin amounted in value to 2,000,000 taels."*

The behaviour of German troops is described by another eye-witness: "As soon as night closes down all these men fall to looting and outraging in any way they can. They say that the Kaiser, in his farewell speech to his first contingent, before Peking had been heard of for weeks, told the men to act in this way. They are strictly obeying orders."**

The Americans and French in no way lagged behind the others. The crafty American authorities, wanting to show how "civilized" they were, hypocritically forbade looting by their troops. Just the same, the latter participated with gusto. From the Tientsin Salt Commissioner's office, they seized, in one morning alone, a "mountain about thirty feet long, thirty broad, and four high of solid silver."*** The U.S. pretence was exploded by the other aggressors. Savage-Landor, after reading in the U.S. press that "the American soldiers in China were the only ones who did absolutely no looting," wrote in rebuttal: "In this case the report was particularly false. In regard to looting the American soldier was no worse, indeed, but decidedly no better, than any other soldier present."* And he summed up, "If looting is to be looked upon as a crime, the soldiers of all nations, none excepted, disgraced themselves alike. The Russian, the British, the American, the Japanese, the French, all looted alike. They one and all were looters of the very first water."**

* Ibid., p. 219.

** Putnam Weale, op. cit., pp. 434-35.

*** Savage-Landor, op. cit., p. 205.

The imperialist troops were not the only birds of prey. Many missionary "preachers of the gospel" also took the chance to strike it rich. The French bishop Alphonse Favier, ransacking the house of the Ching grandee Lishan, made off with property worth a million taels of silver. American missionary W. A. P. Martin looted a grain store of more than 20,000 catties (10 tons) of assorted stock.

Besides filling their own pockets, the missionaries guided the invading troops in their plunder and carnage. A French invader has recorded that when they marched from Pehtang to the imperial palace, the missionaries followed them, encouraged them to loot and kill and pointed out the places to do it.***

* Ibid., p. 200.

** Ibid., pp. 190-91.

*** *Reveil du Nord,* December 14, 1900.

In this evil disaster, not only did countless Chinese people lose their families and property. The colossal wealth and immense collection of art treasures amassed by the dynastic rulers over a long period also, in large degree, perished. Japanese troops stationed in the imperial palace removed all they could to Japan. The Russians plundered the Yi Luan Tien Palace in Chungnanhai to their hearts' content, then destroyed what was left. Waldersee, chief of the allied army, who resided there wrote afterwards: "It was found that this Palace also had been plundered of the greater part of its removable objects of value and that, with a few exceptions, only such valuable articles were left in it as it would have been very difficult to take away. . . . Numerous erections . . . had been broken into and such of their contents as seemed valueless thrown about on the ground and in the courts."* The treasures in the Yi Ho Yuan (Summer Palace) were removed by the imperialist robbers by camel caravans to the foreign concessions in Tientsin over a period of several months.

Countless ancient bronzes, porcelains, jade objects, carvings, scientific instruments, books, paintings, etc., dating from all China's dynasties and representing her continuous national culture, were

* Waldersee, op. cit., p. 220.

carried off or destroyed. The bronze instruments of the Peking Observatory — made in the 17th century, and including an astrolabe two metres in diameter, quadrants, sextants and other items — were divided between France and Germany which wrangled for this booty. The *Yung Lo Encyclopedia,* or rather the 307 volumes comprising the small remnant of that famous series compiled during the reign of the Yung Lo Emperor (1403-24) in the Ming Dynasty, was again seized, after earlier plunder by the Anglo-French forces in the Second Opium War (1856-60). By incomplete count, more than 46,000 rare books were stolen by the allied army.

The loss to the Chinese people from these robberies defies reckoning. Waldersee himself admitted: "The amount of damage done to the country down to date by ravage and plunder will never be calculable, but it must be immense."* The looters turned rich overnight, shipping off innumerable trunkfuls of treasure and offering a great many that were left over for sale in Peking, which was turned into a huge market place. In Waldersee's words, "A big trade is being carried on here in the proceeds of the looting. Dealers, especially from America, have taken up their position here and are making big profits."** The goods bought and sold

* Ibid., p. 221.

** Ibid., p. 231.

included invaluable works of art of various dynasties. These fell into the hands of American and English merchants at a tiny fraction of the true value, and later brought them big fortunes.

Not only did the imperialist soldiery burn, murder and rob. They raped as well. In the "official brothel" at Piaopei Hutung, women kidnapped by the foreign troops were the victims. As admitted by Waldersee: "Unfortunately the looting has not failed to be attended by other excesses: outrages on women, barbarities of all descriptions, murder, wanton acts of incendiarism, etc."* Many women were forced into suicide by misfortunes of this kind.

Such were the atrocities committed by the scions of "Western civilization"! Such were their "civilized" and "rational" deeds! Yet for long years afterwards, to sow confusion and conceal their own crimes, the imperialists kept on howling that it was the Chinese who had inflicted loss of life and property upon the foreigners, that the Chinese were "uncivilized," that the Yi Ho Tuan were "Boxer bandits who murdered, burned and were opposed to all things foreign."

Chairman Mao has written: **"Was it the Yi Ho Tuan organized by the Chinese people that went to**

* Ibid., p. 221.

the imperialist countries in Europe and America and to Japan to stage rebellion and 'commit murder and arson'? Or was it the imperialist countries that came to invade China, this land of ours, to oppress and exploit the Chinese people and so aroused the masses of the Chinese people to resist imperialism and its lackeys and corrupt officials in China? This is a major question of right and wrong which must be debated and cleared up."*

The ironclad facts are that the real criminals, murderers and incendiaries were none other than these imperialist brigands who came to China for purposes of aggression, oppression and exploitation. They trampled on Chinese territory, violated Chinese sovereignty, slaughtered the Chinese people, looted their material as well as spiritual wealth. Thus, it was the imperialists who were bandits in the true sense of the word.

* *People's Daily*, Peking, April 1, 1967.

9 Tsarist Russia's Invasion of Northeast China

Apart from participating in the eight-power invasion of the Peking-Tientsin area and the atrocious massacres there, the tsarist Russian army acted on its own to occupy northeast China.

Russia, by unequal treaties, had already grabbed immense territories from China and obtained a host of political and economic privileges. Yet the greed of the tsar was not satisfied; his plan was to annex all of the Northeast and build a colonial "Yellow Russia" there.

To this end, and in order to suppress the Yi Ho Tuan, the tsarist government launched a campaign to whip up counter-revolutionary public opinion and chauvinism throughout Russia. It lied to its people that "violent disorder" and a "Yellow peril" had arisen in China. Tsar Nicholas II blustered that the "protection" of Europe from "invasion"

by the yellow race was a "glorious" mission. This shameless nonsense was then and there nailed by the great revolutionary teacher Lenin. In his "The War in China" he declared sternly that colonialist aggression and oppression by the Western powers was the precise cause of the Chinese people's rebellion, and that the tsarist government, after its seizure of Port Lushun some years earlier, was now gobbling up Manchuria, and had **"flooded the frontier provinces of China with hordes of contractors, engineers, and officers."*** Thus Lenin unmasked the facts behind the tsarist government's savage snarls against China.

In July 1900, using the spread of the revolutionary flames of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement over northeast China as her pretext, tsarist Russia proclaimed that she would "protect" the Chinese Eastern Railway she was building there under privilege extorted from the Ching government. Taking advantage of China's being faced with imperialist aggression, Russia dispatched a 177,000-strong infantry and cavalry force to invade the area along six routes. 1. Southward from Transbaikalia through Hulunbuir, crossing the West Khingan Range; 2. from Hailanpao (Blagoveshchensk) cross-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1960, Vol. 4, p. 374.

ing the Heilungkiang River to attack Aigun, and through Moerhken to Tsitsihar in Heilungkiang Province; 3. from Poli (Khabarovsk), along the Sunghua River, via Ilan to Harbin in Heilungkiang; 4. from Nikolayevsk to attack Suifenho in Kirin Province and join with the other forces at Harbin; 5. from Haishenwei (Vladivostok) to attack Hunchun and Ninguta in Heilungkiang Province and then to Kirin; and 6. from Lushun to attack Yingkow and through Liaoyang to Fengtien (Shenyang in present Liaoning Province).

The people of northeast China, already tempered in struggle, were undismayed by the fierce enemy assaults and struck back heroically in many places. At Aigun in Heilungkiang, the Yi Ho Tuan fighters, under their own banner and armed only with swords and spears, valiantly defied the enemy's cannon, and some patriotic Ching troops joined the battle. In early August in the Kaiping-Haicheng area (now in Liaoning Province) the enemy lost many encounters to a combined Yi Ho Tuan and Ching force. At Ilan, Heilungkiang, the enemy regimental commander Vennikov was killed in battle by the people. At Ninguta, local militia long blocked the enemy's advance.

But the Ching commanding generals in Shengking (now Liaoning) and Kirin did not fight the invaders. Rather, they hindered the heroic Yi Ho

Tuan, even slaughtering some members, and thus greatly helped the enemy army. The latter, after driving across the Heilung River in mid-July, captured Aigun, Ninguta, Haicheng, Tsitsihar and Harbin. It completed the occupation of all northeast China with the seizure of Fengtien (now Shenyang) on October 1.

Wherever they went, the barbarous soldiery of the tsar committed unspeakable crimes of arson, murder and plunder. Here is one atrocity. In the Second Opium War (1856-60), a vast area north of the Heilung had been annexed by Russia. But there remained a part still under Chinese jurisdiction, the "Sixty-four Villages East of the River," which Russia regarded as an unfinished dish. Before grabbing it, Russian troops forced its 6,000 Chinese inhabitants to the river bank and shot them down. Most of those who escaped the bullets were driven into the river to drown — only about 200 survived. Another outrage attended the crossing of the Heilung River, when Russian troops reduced the 200-year-old frontier town of Aigun to ashes. Lenin, promptly and indignantly, denounced the aggressors for **"burning down whole villages, shooting, bayonetting, and drowning in the Amur** [Heilung] **River unarmed inhabitants, their wives, and their children."*** Incomplete figures

* Ibid., p. 374.

count tens of thousands of people murdered by the Russian invaders at Aigun, Hunchun, Ilan, Hailar and Moho.

While perpetrating the most brutal slaughter, the invaders tried to "legalize" their occupation. They abducted Tsengchi, General of Shengking, and on November 11, 1900 forced him at bayonet point to sign the "Preliminary Russo-Chinese Agreement Regarding Manchuria," a piece of paper selling out northeast China. It stipulated, among other things, that "Russia may establish a Commissioner at Fengtien" to control the Northeast's administration, thus making the Ching government organs responsible to Russia, and cutting down their functions to the maintenance of local order.

Meanwhile the sinister document, "Russian Jurisdiction over Manchuria," was stealthily cooked up in St. Petersburg by the Russian ministers of foreign affairs, finance and war. Impudently it required that the Ching government "give up the right of military defence in Manchuria," arrogated to the Russian Amur and Kwantung military regions the right to "oversee" the three Chinese provinces of Heilungkiang, Kirin and Fengtien and forbade China to defend her northeastern frontiers.

It furnished clear proof of Russia's plot to devour all northeast China at one gulp, after earlier swallowing of the vast Chinese territory north of the Heilung and east of the Wusuli rivers.

No sooner did the "Preliminary Russo-Chinese Agreement Regarding Manchuria" leak out than it met bitter opposition from the Chinese people. This compelled the Ching government to deny its existence and cashier General Tsengchi. Then Yang Ju, Chinese envoy in Russia, was named as plenipotentiary to negotiate with her. And in February 1901 the tsar's government concocted a new convention, of 12 articles, concerning Russian evacuation of Manchuria. In fact, this went beyond the old — with added demands for mining and railway rights in Mongolia and Sinkiang, and the right to build a direct railway from the northeastern provinces through the Great Wall to Peking. Basing herself on military force, tsarist Russia swung the hegemonist cudgel. She took advantage of China's being under constant harassment by the allied army, with which the Ching government could hardly cope, to force the latter to agree to Russia's occupation of the northeastern provinces and the extension of her sphere of power.

The other imperialist powers feared that success of Russia's go-it-alone plan of aggression would imperil their own interests in China. Hence, they moved to thwart it. Japan, Britain, the United States and Germany warned the Ching government

that they would oppose any treaty, other than a joint one with all the imperialists, affecting China's territory and finance. If their will was ignored, they threatened, they would follow Russia in grabbing Chinese territory. Japan and Britain, Russia's arch-rivals, were the most fiercely insistent. Russia saw that she would be at a disadvantage if these two powers acted against her together. So, by both cajolery and intimidation, she tried to compel the Chinese envoy, Yang Ju, to hurriedly sign the convention, thus seeking to perpetuate the fruits of her aggression in the Northeast.

The Chinese people, on their part, never ceased dauntlessly hitting back at Russian aggression. In 1900 the masses of the Northeast, together with the Chung Yi Chun (Loyal and Righteous Army) formed by the Yi Ho Tuan under Liu Yung-ho's command, raised the battle-cry "Resist the Russian invaders and recover lost territory." This army, which numbered tens of thousands (in its hey day 200,000), broke many "encirclement and suppression" campaigns by the enemy. In April 1901, in a striking application of flexible tactics, it harassed a Russian "suppression campaign" force between Kirin and Hailung. Sometimes the Chinese fighters would lie low during the day and attack enemy bivouacs at night; or lie in ambush around an enemy camp and assault it when the occupants

sallied out, enticed by more distant gunfire. As admitted by Waldersee, in northeast China there were cavalry groups, often well equipped and each numbering several hundred, which assaulted and harassed the Russian forces. Russia's own Minister of War spoke of her troops being constantly "surrounded by hostile Chinese masses."

Due to this situation, plus the influence of other forces opposing her, Russia failed, despite both cajolery and intimidation, to get the Chinese envoy Yang Ju to sign the 12-article convention.

The setback forced the tsarist government to shelve, temporarily, its scheme for a "Yellow Russia." As a cover, it made an official statement to exculpate itself from the invasion of northeast China. But the trick only highlighted its crime. Soon after this (in September), the Protocol of 1901 was signed and foreign forces began to withdraw from Peking and Tientsin. With the pressure of her rivals' intervention getting less, Russia made another try. A patched-up version of the 12-article convention was presented to Peking as the basis for new negotiations. Reliance was placed on Li Hung-chang to see it through. But the old traitor died while trying, even on his last day the Russian plenipotentiary, Pozdneyev, was still hurrying him to sign. No wonder Pozdneyev reported in alarm to Russia's Finance Minister Witte that with

Li dead, everything would have to be started again from scratch!* The gathering anti-Russian storm in China, the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the growing conflicts among the imperialist powers all pressured Russia, in April 1902, to sign an agreement to withdraw her troops from northeast China by stages. The parleys over the Northeast thus stopped for a while. But this did not at all mean that Russia had given up her territorial appetite. She tried new tricks to make up for those that had failed, and refused to pull out her troops as stipulated, thus triggering an even more massive anti-Russian movement throughout China.

* See B. A. Romanov, "Russia in Manchuria (1892-1906)" (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 329.

The Protocol of 1901

10

Following the eight-power invasion, faced with a tangle of contradictions at home and abroad the Ching government headed by the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi was compelled to "declare war" on the foreign powers. But in fact, it had no real desire to fight and was preparing for surrender when the time came. Before the fall of Tientsin, the Ching court had cabled its envoys in Japan, Britain and Germany to present official letters to the monarchs of these countries, asking them to help settle the disputes and normalize the situation. Meanwhile, it appointed Li Hung-chang to be Viceroy of Chihli and High Commissioner for Northern Administration, calling him north to start negotiations with the foreign powers. Then, after Tientsin fell, the Ching court begged for peace openly. It sent messages to the French, German and British govern-

ments requesting their intermediacy and named Li Hung-chang as its plenipotentiary to ask for a truce prior to negotiations.

All this desperate peace-seeking was ignored by the imperialist powers. Filled with ambition and greed, they had already decided to occupy Peking. When the capital fell and Tzu Hsi with her court fled, Yikuang, Prince Ching of the First Rank, was appointed plenipotentiary to help Li Hung-chang speed surrender. And Li himself was authorized to "use his discretion" in the national sell-out. During two or three months of zig-zags, the fundamental line of the Ching government emerged clearly as one of internal oppression and external capitulation.

The aim of the allied powers in launching this war was to partition China if possible. But the heavy blows by the Yi Ho Tuan and firm resistance by the entire Chinese nation, along with the disputes and conflicts among themselves, dispelled their fond dream. All of them were furious that the Ching government, hitherto utterly servile, was now being awkward. Nevertheless it continued to manifest, in many ways, that it was still their docile tool. Hence they decided to preserve the integrity of the Ching empire, so far as appearances went, while in fact turning it into a puppet in their scheme "to rule China through the Chi-

nese." By now this seemed the safer policy, and the one more likely to succeed. Having so resolved, they agreed to open negotiations, and a new act in their game of mutual contention began.

What was common to the allied powers was aggression. What set them at loggerheads were their separate greeds, which brought a host of contradictions into the parleys. The first was over the credentials of Li Hung-chang as Chinese plenipotentiary. In his diplomacy of national sell-out, Li had a penchant for "playing one barbarian state against another." Thus, after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, he had insisted on "uniting with Russia," a policy that eased the way for her aggression in the ensuing years. Now, despite the fact that Russia was one of the allied powers attacking Peking, and had herself invaded and occupied northeast China in July 1900, Li Hung-chang considered it "most opportune" to ask her to mediate the conflict. Naturally, she was the first to accept his credentials. But Britain and Japan, which had long nursed misgivings about Li's hook-up with Russia, feared most of all that the Ching government might recognize Russia's occupation of the Northeast. Hence, they tried hard to bring their own collaborators to the fore, and turned down Li Hung-chang. Germany, afraid that Russia's increasing influence might cramp her own

plans, joined with Britain and Japan. Faced with their united opposition, Russia sought help from the United States. The dispute was finally settled when two collaborators of Britain and Japan, Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung, were added to the Chinese delegation in return for the unanimous acceptance of Li Hung-chang.

On October 16 Yikuang and Li Hung-chang, as Chinese plenipotentiaries, submitted a draft "peace treaty" to the invading powers. The foreign envoys ignored it as falling short of their demands. Moreover, they let it be known that until the imperialist countries reached mutual agreement they would not negotiate with Yikuang and Li Hung-chang. The role assigned to the Ching government was only to accept and sign, not to negotiate at all. Scared by their masters' angry tone the two traitors, Yikuang and Li Hung-chang, hurried off to plead with the allied military chief, Waldersee, for early peace talks.

The Ching court, fugitive in Sian, had been waiting most anxiously for the imperialists to state their terms. This scum of the Chinese nation, represented by Tzu Hsi, could swallow any terms, however harsh, so long as the Ching throne was kept intact. The court wired endless orders to Yikuang and Li Hung-chang to "succeed without fail" in the negotiations, and obtain peace without

delay and at any price, to avoid jeopardy to the dynasty.

The allied powers, after much wrangling among themselves, produced a draft protocol of 12 articles, which became the gist of the subsequent treaty. On December 24, 1900, the eight invading powers, the United States, Britain, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Austria-Hungary, plus Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, stated in a joint note to the Ching government that all their conditions were "irrevocable." This was parroted by Yikuang and Li Hung-chang. They reported that the demands were "agreed upon by the powers and to reverse any of them would not be easy," and pleaded with the throne to ratify them post-haste. The court answered explicitly from Sian on December 27 that "all 12 articles shall be accepted." So the basic terms of the protocol were finalized without any preliminary negotiations at all between the Ching government and the allied powers. A vivid exposure of how the imperialists were trampling on China and how servile were the Ching rulers!

With the 12 articles formulated, formal peace negotiations began. In relation to the Ching government they did not mean much; its sole role was to knuckle under. The conference was mainly an argument among the imperialist powers. It focused on the indemnities and how they were to

be shared out. So fierce was the wrangling that the talks almost broke up.

The first big row was over the amount. The United States proposed a total of £40,000,000 sterling, to be alloted in proportion to each country's "losses." Its motive was that gradually expanding trade with China would serve its interests better than a big indemnity, in which the U.S. share would in any case be minor. Washington's show of "magnanimity" was also meant to win the Ching government's goodwill, which could be used by the United States to acquire more privileges and extend its aggression in China. Britain, taking a similar stand, agreed to keep the total to £50,000,000. She too was worried — lest a big indemnity defrayed from Customs revenues would adversely affect her own trade with China, the biggest of any foreign country. But Germany and Russia were strongly opposed, being bent on a fat payment. In fact, each had already decided on how to use the loot. Germany wanted it to help build a navy that could compete with Britain's, and Russia to speed construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, in order to consolidate her own position in the Far East. After much haggling, the sum was finalized at £67,500,000 sterling (or 450,000,000 taels in terms of silver).

The second argument was about how this would be paid. Tsarist Russia wanted the total at once, suggesting that the Ching government should borrow it from international financiers under a guarantee by the allied powers. France backed her. But all the other imperialists, and especially Britain, objected. They argued, as a mere pretext of course, that if the foreign powers became guarantors, they would have to co-manage China's finance, a thing out of keeping with the principle of "respecting the administrative integrity of China." In fact China's Customs, her biggest source of revenue, was already controlled by Britain, whose monopolistic position would be shaken by co-management. Therefore the London government, supported by the United States, and with Germany's consent, proposed a schedule of annual amortization. This was finally written into the treaty, with an amendment by Germany under which China was to issue bonds, repayable over 39 years at 4 per cent annual interest.

It took over a year of hot words for the imperialists to reach a general agreement. On September 7, 1901 it was signed, by Yikuang and Li Hung-chang, as plenipotentiaries of the Ching government, and by the envoys of 11 countries — the United States, Britain, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Spain, Belgium

and the Netherlands. Known as the Protocol of 1901, it was an unprecedentedly humiliating deed of sale into slavery for China. Its main text was supplemented by 19 annexes, and its gist was as follows:

1. Extortion of an enormous indemnity: Totalling 450,000,000 taels of silver, this was to be paid in instalments over 39 years. Including interest, the real amount was more than 982,000,000 taels. In addition, local indemnities had to be paid by the provinces, amounting to at least 20,000,000 taels. Known in Chinese history as the "big indemnity," it was a piece of wanton robbery hitherto unseen. No wonder the tsar's Foreign Minister, Lamsdorf, referred blissfully to the Russian invasion of China as "a fully rewarding war."* The Protocol provided that payment should be secured by three sources of China's revenue — the receipts of the Maritime Customs and Salt Gabelle (salt tax bureau), in both cases after deducting previous foreign obligations, and the "Regular" or "Native" Customs (collected by the Ching government at land and water communication points or trade centres). For this purpose, all "Regular" Customs stations within 25 kilometres of any open port were to be controlled by the Inspector-General of the Maritime Customs.

* Quoted in B. A. Romanov, op. cit., p. 262.

Thus China's Customs and salt revenue administrations were to become simply debt collectors for the imperialist powers, which were given control of the "Regular" Customs as well.

2. Military Supervision: The Protocol stipulated that Chinese government "raze" the forts at Taku as well as those between Taku and Peking; and that foreign troops be stationed at 12 strategic points along the railway from Shanhaikuan to Peking. Thus the arteries leading to Peking were cleared of all obstacles to the imperialists who could put military pressure on the Ching government at will. Moreover, no Chinese troops were to enter or be stationed within a 10-kilometre radius of Tientsin. That city, in fact, was converted into a military base of the imperialist powers for surveillance over the Ching central government.

3. Establishment of the "legation quarter," the headquarters for aggression against China: The Protocol stipulated the establishment in Peking of the "legation quarter" where the Chinese would be barred from living and foreign troops would be stationed. This created "a state within the state," from which the imperialists could intrigue and interfere in China's internal affairs.

4. Suppression of the Chinese people's anti-imperialist struggle: Government officials who had supported the Yi Ho Tuan were to be punished.

Examinations for official service, civil and military, were to be suspended for five years in localities where anti-imperialist movements had occurred. The Ching government was to ban all popular anti-imperialist organizations. Local officials were bound to enforce this, on pain of being "immediately dismissed, without possibility of being given new functions or new honours."

Thus, through the Protocol of 1901, the imperialist powers not only extorted from China immense indemnities, the long-term right to station their troops at her strategic points and a privileged position for the "legation quarter," which became a virtual colonial government exercising control over the Ching state. They also tried to disarm the Chinese nation morally by banning the national liberation movement so that the country would be subjugated forever. Among the vicious means to this end were the punishment of officials, the suspension of examinations and the banning of popular anti-imperialist organizations.

Yet the Empress Dowager, ruler of the moribund Ching Dynasty, expressed snivelling gratitude for this humiliating unequal treaty. "We should feel thankful for the understanding given us by the foreign powers," she said. And she shamelessly pledged to "win the good graces of the powers, commensurately with China's resources." With

this as a keynote, she devised and conducted a foreign policy of sell-out and capitulation. For the ruling Ching camarilla, the national line of demarcation had disappeared. It had degenerated into a crew of out-and-out traitors.

After the signing of the Protocol, by which Tzu Hsi "redeemed her sins" and won back the "good graces" of her foreign masters, she started back for Peking to "recover the prestige" of the throne. On October 6, 1901 the court left Sian with a caravan of 3,000 baggage carts. Travelling through Honan and Chihli provinces, it arrived in Peking on January 7, 1902. All along the long route the people were bled white with wanton extortions to provide this enormous retinue with comforts, lodging and specially paved "imperial roads." The Loyang district alone had to lay out 30,000 taels of silver. The requisitions of labour and provisions were a veritable scourge. To it the people of Chengting, Chihli Province, responded with an eloquent roadside poster.

> The foreign troops came to our town,
> In flames the houses tumbled.
> Indemnities are huge;
> We common folk must pay them.
> . . . . . .
> Imperial levies weigh heavy now,
> Officials grab like hungry wolves.

Who dares stray near the imperial road,
Is fined three thousand silver taels.
And all along and by this road,
Razed are the houses and ancestral tombs.

What a bold, slashing attack on the atrocities of the allied troops and the Protocol of 1901! What a graphic depiction of those "hungry wolves" — the robber swarm of the imperial retinue!

All reactionaries are subjective idealists. They are incapable of understanding the objective law that the heavier the oppression, the greater the resistance. The imperialist powers nursed illusions. They fancied that, locked in the new fetters of the Protocol of 1901, the Chinese people could no longer rebel against them. The Ching government, too, miscalculated. It imagined that by all-out capitulation it could save its own neck. Yet no sooner was the Protocol signed than popular posters appeared as a warning omen. The resonant slogan "Sweep away the Ching Dynasty, exterminate the foreigners" rang out, a herald of new battles. Though the Protocol brought fresh miseries upon the afflicted people, it also deepened their national and class hatred for their enemies. In a word, it awakened them to the truth that their only salvation lay in protracted and unflinching revolutionary struggles to throw out the imperialists and the Ching rulers.

11 Long Live the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Spirit of the Yi Ho Tuan!

When the allied troops were penetrating into the heartland of China the Ching rulers, headed by the Empress Dowager, fled their secluded palace grounds to take refuge in Sian far from the battle zone. They abandoned Peking, Tientsin and all the neighbouring towns and villages to the mercy of the invaders. The only concern of Tzu Hsi and her fugitive court, at that juncture, was to save their own necks and preserve the throne for the Aisin Gioro "imperial clan."

The official and comprador forces headed by Liu Kun-yi, Chang Chih-tung and Sheng Hsuan-huai rejoiced in every reverse of the Yi Ho Tuan and shamelessly hailed the victories of the imperialists. Like obedient watchdogs, they stood guard over the Yangtze valley for their foreign masters.

The bourgeois reformists, represented by Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao, were obsessed by

illusions that the imperialist powers would "share a common destiny, life or death" with China. They went to the lengths of expressing regret that the troops of the eight allied powers in China were too few, and declaring that they would personally help them suppress the Yi Ho Tuan.

No sooner did the invaders begin to pour into Peking, even though the Yi Ho Tuan was still fighting back at the city gates and in the streets, than the gentry and officials hoisted flags of surrender. Donning their ceremonial robes, they knelt by the roadways to receive the "conquerors." Overnight on many of the vermilion gates of aristocratic mansions, "safe-conduct" notices were posted in foreign languages, with hats and boots, which had been discarded by the invaders, hung alongside to indicate submission to them. Amid the foes' orgy of murder, arson, rape and plunder, this scum of the Chinese nation servilely presented them with inscribed tablets, purportedly "in the name of the people," lauding their "merits and virtues."

These degenerates, who saw the invaders as their saviours, were happy to serve the enemy as menials, betraying their own land. They provisioned the foreign troops, and acted as guides to run down Yi Ho Tuan members still in the city. Some scholars sank so low as to sit for an examination organized

by Waldersee, and accept awards from the imperialists.

In sum, all sections of the Ching ruling class, from the sovereign and court nobles down to local officials, at once threw themselves into the arms of the imperialists. Included in their number were the advocates of "Westernization," reformists and scholars, who had bragged about their loyalty to the emperor and love of the country.

Only the undaunted Yi Ho Tuan, facing the guns of the invaders, did not flee but hit back vigorously; did not surrender but resisted; did not betray the country but fought to the last breath. On the eve of Peking's fall, it was still fiercely battling the enemy between Tungchihmen and Chaoyangmen gates. And afterwards, when the enemy soldiers pushed on from the "legation quarter" to the Pehtang Cathedral, frequent interceptions by the Yi Ho Tuan forced them for three days to inch forward at the cost of more than 400 casualties, despite their superior strength. In occupied Peking, the invaders were assaulted in out-of-the-way lanes. Enemy officers were killed in villages in the outskirts. Even the enemy's encampments were harassed by the people with stones and bricks. Yi Ho Tuan strongholds continued to hold out as close to the capital as Patachu (the Eight Temples) in the Western Hills and Lianghsiang to the southwest. In

Tientsin, anti-imperialist posters continued to be put up by the Yi Ho Tuan. It even managed to bomb and destroy the city's heavily guarded East Arsenal.

Yi Ho Tuan units scattered in the countryside regrouped to continue the fight. They attacked the Peking-Tientsin and Tientsin-Shanhaikuan railways, once took the county seat of Huaiju, and killed the magistrate of Miyun County who had collaborated with the imperialists.

Other units, which had withdrawn from Tientsin and Peking to central Chihli, went back into action after a half year of consolidation under the command of a highly popular leader, the school teacher Chi Tzu-kang. They took Wangchiachang in Hsiunghsien County and repeatedly thwarted the Ching forces sent against them. The latter once surrounded Wangchiachang from four directions and shelled it from a gunboat on the Taching River. The Yi Ho Tuan met the crisis by sending a detachment to the enemies' rear, firing on them from behind, and routing their land force. Not only was the battle won ashore, the supplies on the enemy gunboat were captured as well.

Continued betrayal by the Ching government after it signed the Protocol of 1901 added to the fury of the Chinese people. It awakened the Yi Ho Tuan, too, to the fact that the dynasty was a

lackey of the imperialists. New armed risings broke out. A major one, led by Ching Ting-pin in southern Chihli in March 1902, raised the slogans: "Misgovernment makes the people rebel" and "Sweep away the Ching Dynasty, exterminate the foreigners." It raged over the three counties of Kuangtsung, Chulu and Weihsien, destroying churches and killing imperialist missionaries. Its slogans won such mass support that its fighting force grew quickly to some 40,000.

Stunned by Ching Ting-pin's uprising, the Ching court hastily commissioned Yuan Shih-kai to suppress it. Seeking the approval of his Chinese and foreign masters, this time-server threw in his own "Viceroy's Army," aided by some 6,000 foreign troops — German, Japanese and French — between Kuangtsung and Chichow. On May 9 they attacked the Yi Ho Tuan base at Chienchih Village from three directions. The stronghold was gallantly defended. When one section of the fortifications was breached, fighters from the others rushed to reinforce it. Only after fierce hand-to-hand fighting was the enemy able to enter. Undaunted, Ching Ting-pin and his men moved to Peichangpao in Chengan County where they raised new contingents and continued to battle against imperialism and feudalism. By then, popular struggles to resist the levies for paying the indemnity to the

foreign powers had broken out in most provinces.

Thus the imperialist attempt to make use of treaties and the domestic reactionaries to quench popular revolt drew powerful counter-blows from the Chinese people, whose resistance did not flinch.

The world-shaking Yi Ho Tuan Movement is the glory and pride of the Chinese people. It laid a cornerstone for the great victory of their revolution 50 years later. It gave the invaders a taste of the people's heavy fist and shattered their fond dream of partitioning China. Earlier, they had arrogantly boasted that with 10,000 soldiers carrying modern arms they could subjugate all China. Clamour for partition had filled the air. But after the Yi Ho Tuan mounted the political stage, this claptrap was no longer heard — not because the imperialists had changed in their aggressive nature and their desire to carve up China, but because the mighty Chinese people had taught them a bitter lesson through the Yi Ho Tuan. As later admitted by the allied commander-in-chief Waldersee, "Neither any European nor American nation nor Japan has the intellectual or military strength to rule over such a country with a quarter of the world's population. The partitioning of China is therefore the least feasible policy." And William Broderick, Under-Secretary at the British Foreign Office, declaimed

in the House of Commons that the government of China must be by the Chinese, for the Chinese, and that this crisis should be a lesson of caution and patience in the necessary development of China.* These new tunes by the imperialists proved that it was precisely the heroic struggles of the Yi Ho Tuan which had saved China from the fate of dismemberment.

To the Chinese people the Yi Ho Tuan Movement brought a better understanding of imperialism, strengthening them in attacks against its rule in China. The imperialist powers liked to pose as guardians of civilization. The crimes of their soldiery on Chinese soil bared this lie, unmasking their real savagery for all to see.

Further, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement exposed the treasonous character of the Ching government. It both weakened the feudal ruling power and precipitated the subsequent growth of the revolutionary movement.

These great and historic merits of the Yi Ho Tuan can never be obliterated.

Yet the Yi Ho Tuan Movement has long been abused and slandered by the imperialists and all reactionary forces. In its own day, the imperialists labelled it a manifestation of "the hostility of the

* *North China Daily News*, Shanghai, August 4, 1900.

yellow race towards the white race" and of "Chinese hatred for European culture and civilization." Imperialist lackeys dubbed it "irrational." And 50 years later, in the U.S. State Department's notorious "White Paper," *United States Relations with China,* a U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, slandered it as an anti-foreign disturbance.

All the shameless abuse by the imperialists is refuted by the appraisal of the movement by the great revolutionary teacher Lenin, who wrote in 1900: **"What made the Chinese attack Europeans, what caused the rebellion which the British, French, Germans, Russians, Japanese, etc., are so zealously crushing? 'The hostility of the yellow race towards the white race,' 'the Chinese hatred for European culture and civilization' — answer the supporters of the war. Yes! It is true the Chinese hate the Europeans, but which Europeans do they hate, and why? The Chinese do not hate the European peoples, they have never had any quarrel with them — they hate the European capitalists and the European governments obedient to them."***

What a shattering rebuttal of the howls and sophistries of the imperialists and their lackeys! What great and inspiring support for the Chinese

* V. I. Lenin, "The War in China," *Collected Works,* FLPH, Moscow, 1960, Vol. IV, p. 373.

people in their struggle for national independence!

The Yi Ho Tuan Movement was strangled by the imperialists and their lackey, the Ching government, acting in collusion. However, like all other revolutionary movements of the Chinese people in the last 100 years, it gave proof of **"the Chinese people's indomitable spirit in fighting imperialism and its lackeys"*** and showed that **"we Chinese have the spirit to fight the enemy to the last drop of our blood, the determination to recover our lost territory by our own efforts, and the ability to stand on our own feet in the family of nations."** "Thanks to the Chinese people's unrelenting and heroic struggle during the last hundred years, imperialism has not been able to subjugate China, nor will it ever be able to do so."*****

Not in vain did the Yi Ho Tuan heroes shed their blood. Their patriotism and dauntless courage will inspire the Chinese people forever. In the annals of the Chinese nation, the anti-imperialist and

* "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung,* FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. II, p. 314.

** "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung,* FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. I, p. 170.

*** "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung,* FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. II, p. 314.

anti-feudal exploits of the Yi Ho Tuan will always be a lustrous chapter.

Long live the anti-imperialist revolutionary spirit of the Yi Ho Tuan!

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