

# Germany, China, and the Way to the Boxer Uprising<sup>1</sup>

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The aim of this article is to explain the influence of German policy in Beijing and in the province of Shandong on the origins of “the Boxer Uprising”.<sup>2</sup> German policy towards China in late 1890’s was marked by unconcealed arrogance, and German interference in Shandong, although caused by unrest in the province, only worsened the situation. The circumstances of the seizure of the Jiaozhou Bay in 1897 and of subsequent turning of Shandong into German sphere of influence in 1898 are for the most part excluded from the scope of this article, for they will be treated separately at another occasion.

Since 1644, China was ruled by the Qing dynasty which was of Manchu origin, thus alien to China. The golden era of the Qings ended at the end of the XVIII century. For the larger part of the XIX century, China suffered from horrible uprisings as well from foreign intervention which so far culminated in 1860, when British and French troops conquered Beijing. Since 1861, Chinese policy was dominated by Empress Dowager<sup>3</sup> Cixi (1835–1908), who assumed regency for her minor son, and this scenario was repeated several times for the rest of her life. In 1875, another child became Chinese emperor — Cixi’s nephew and adopted son who reigned under the name Guangxu (lived 1871–1908). Up to 1894, it seemed that China had recuperated from the turmoil of mid-nineteenth century. But the Sino-Japanese War had revealed Chinese weakness: indulgence and greed of the court; corruption of Chinese officials; poor fighting abilities of Chinese army and navy. Foreign powers couldn’t fail to exploit such a situation.

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- 1 This study is one of the outcomes of the grant *The Political and Economic Interests of Great Britain and Germany in China, 1894–1914*, awarded by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (GA13–12431S).
  - 2 This very term is most inaccurate. Its participants didn’t call themselves “Boxers”, nor did they rebel against the Qing dynasty — in 1900, they were declared part of Chinese army. Roots of the movement and its very original name are a matter of controversy and will be reminded later.
  - 3 Cixi was neither an Empress nor a dowager, even though she is generally known under this title. She was a concubine of Emperor Xianfeng (ruled 1850–1861) and mother of his only son and successor, Emperor Tongzhi (ruled 1861–1875).

Until 1897, the Germans didn't take part on foreign aggressions against China. On September 2, 1861, Prussia and China concluded a treaty at Tianjin, thus inaugurated modern diplomatic relations. One somewhat disturbing event took place in 1864, during the war between Austria, Prussia, and Denmark. Prussian war vessel captured Danish ship in Chinese territorial waters, and Viceroy Li Hongzhang (1823–1901), having recently ordered a translation of treatise about international law, induced the Prussians to release the vessel.<sup>4</sup> On July 21, 1870, numerous foreigners and Christians including French consul in Tianjin were slaughtered during anti-missionary riots.<sup>5</sup> Since the representative of the North-German Confederacy was the then dean of the diplomatic corps, his duty was to coordinate foreign response on such an event. The Germans indirectly saved China from another French aggression by being attacked by France themselves during the Prusso-French War. But the reborn German Empire was a great power, and great powers needed a place in the sun.

Of course German activities didn't have only detrimental effect on China. Many Germans were employed in Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, which was a major source of income for Chinese budget.<sup>6</sup> German military advisors assisted modernization of Chinese army, and Chinese armed forces were strongly dependent on war materiel of German origin.<sup>7</sup> Fortifications of Port Arthur were designed by German engineers. Both battleships owned by the Chinese prior to the Sino-Japanese War, *Dingyuan* and *Zhenyuan*, were built by the Vulcan naval yards in Stettin, ordered in 1881 and arriving after the Sino-French War.<sup>8</sup> In 1887, the Germans (Telge and Company) built a telegraph line across Taiwan.<sup>9</sup> Since 1885, German instructors were training Chinese military personnel in many parts of China.<sup>10</sup> It is most

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4 J. K. FAIRBANK — LIU, Kwang-ching (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of China: Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, Vol. 11, Part 2, Cambridge 2008, p. 196.

5 H. B. MORSE, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire: The Period of Submission, 1861–1893*, Vol. 2, London, Bombay, Calcutta 1918, pp. 239–261.

6 In 1893, the income of maritime customs totalled 21,989,000 taels, i.e. one fourth of total income (and expenditure, for at this time China had a balanced budget of 88,979,000 taels) of Chinese central government. FAIRBANK — LIU, Table 21 on p. 63. Tael is a traditional Chinese silver currency. Its value was constantly dropping. In 1875, 1 British pound was worth of 3 taels; in 1901, of 6.67 taels; and in 1903, 7.5 taels. In 1901, 1 silver tael was equal to 3.055 Marks. H. B. MORSE, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire: The Period of Subjection, 1894–1911*, Vol. 3, London, Bombay, Calcutta 1918, pp. 367–368.

7 It is interesting that while German military instructors were training Chinese troops, Germany didn't wish to assist improving of Chinese understanding of diplomacy. In 1896, China announced her intention to build a diplomatic school in Beijing, and asked for British advisor. German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) recommended caution, and German Minister to China von Heyking disclaimed a notion of British-German school for Chinese diplomats. Finally, the plan came to nought. N. PETERSSON, *Imperialismus und Modernisierung. Siam, China und die europäischen Mächte 1895–1914*, München 2000, p. 53.

8 FAIRBANK — LIU, p. 248.

9 *Ibidem*, pp. 261–262.

10 D. R. REYNOLDS (Ed.), *China, 1895–1912: State-Sponsored Reforms and China's Late Qing Revolution: Selected Essays from Zhongguo Jindai Shi (Modern Chinese History, 1840–1919)*, New York 1995, pp. 69–70; FAIRBANK — LIU, pp. 267–268. At this time, there was no uniformi-

interesting that during the decisive naval battle of the Sino-Japanese war, at Yalu (September 17, 1894), circumstances forced a German army officer (!), who was present on board of Chinese flagship, to assume command of Chinese squadron.<sup>11</sup> And on April 23, 1895, after the war, only the Triple Intervention of Russia, Germany, and France saved China from further losses of territory. The intervention was suggested by Russia, and main German aim was to prevent bilateral deepening of Russo-French cooperation. But German note to Japan was by far the most sharp.<sup>12</sup>

The war started a new era of international rivalry in the Far East, and this rivalry was shown also on financial market. The most important of German financial institutions in China was the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank (DAB), established in 1889 by a consortium led by Deutsche Bank.<sup>13</sup> Whereas a Russo-French consortium a Russo-French consortium lent 400 million francs (15.82 million pounds) to China on July 6, 1895,<sup>14</sup> Deutsch-Asiatische Bank cooperated with British-owned Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC). On March 23, 1896, HSBC and DAB lent 16 million pounds to China, and on February, 1898, this loan was followed by another one of the same amount.<sup>15</sup> On June 3, 1896, China concluded a defensive alliance with Russia against Japan and the Russians were granted the right to build the terminal part of the Trans-siberian Railroad through Manchurian territory.<sup>16</sup> It became clear that this Russian design was endangering Chinese sovereignty, and Russo-Chinese relations started

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ty in Chinese land forces. Several viceroys and governors were training modernized units on their own; various units were equipped by weapons of different origin and calibre; and modern military education was introduced only through private effort of viceroys. Both Li Hongzhang and his colleague Zhang Zhidong, Viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, used services of German instructors extensively.

- 11 FAIRBANK — LIU, p. 106. Previously, both Admiral Ding Ruchang and his British naval advisor have been wounded. This story perhaps relates to German advisor von Hanneken, who was at that time assistant director of the Northern Coastal Navy. REYNOLDS, p. 69.
- 12 As a possible explanation of the perceived difference between the German note and the other ones, inaccurate transcription of the original text into Japanese was suggested. A. M. POOLEY (Ed.), *The Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi*, Basingstoke 2002, pp. 82–84; M. KAJIMA, *The Emergence of Japan as a World Power, 1895–1925*, Vermont, Tokyo 1968, p. 16. Nevertheless, German Minister to Japan, von Gutschmid, was well aware of the difference, as shown in his report to Berlin from April 23, 1895. Whereas the Russian note pointed out that the “resistance” again three great powers was impossible, the German note clearly used the term “fight”. *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871–1914* (further only GP), J. LEPSIUS — A. MENDELSON-BARTHOLDY — F. THIMME (Hrsg.), Bd. IX, Berlin 1923, Nr. 2252, pp. 275–278. A distinguished scholar Ian Nish is of the opinion that the sharpness of the note was a result of temporal state of mind of German Emperor Wilhelm II. I. H. NISH, *Japan's Foreign Policy, 1869–1942: Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka*, London, Hentley, Boston 1977, p. 40.
- 13 [http://www.bankgeschichte.de/de/docs/Chronik\\_D\\_Bank.pdf](http://www.bankgeschichte.de/de/docs/Chronik_D_Bank.pdf) , p. 34, [2014–09–07].
- 14 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 53.
- 15 P. KŘIVSKÝ — A. SKŘIVAN, *Století odchází: Světla a stíny „belle époque“*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Praha 2004, pp. 270, 283; MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 53–54, 116–117.
- 16 KAJIMA, pp. 49–53. The author, however, states erroneously that the treaty was signed on May 22, 1896.

to deteriorate. Later, German Minister to China Edmund von Heyking (1850–1915) privately told to his Austro-Hungarian colleague Moriz von Czikann that he got the impression that Chinese officials were weary from ties to Russia.<sup>17</sup> Did this hint the possibility of closer German-Chinese cooperation? Subsequent seizure of Jiaozhou by German forces thwarted any chance on such a development, had it existed at all.

German policy in China was inevitably influenced by German opinion on China and the Chinese. Between 1896 and 1899, Germany was represented in China by Edmund von Heyking, who arrived to China together with his wife Elisabeth, a famous writer. Her opinion of the Chinese was most unpleasant: “*Whatever the Chinese may have been in the past, today they are nothing but dirty barbarians who need a European master and not a European ambassador — the sooner the better!*”, she wrote in her diaries in 1897.<sup>18</sup> German Minister to Japan, von Gutschmid, was allegedly even straighter when he explained to his Chinese colleague in Japan: “*You Orientals are just plain beasts.*”<sup>19</sup> A splendid example of an opposite view was Paul Georg von Möllendorff, an employee of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Originally sent by enlightened Viceroy Li Hongzhang to Korea in order to promote Chinese influence, he sided with the Koreans, respected Korean customs, and tried to strengthen international position of Korea.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, German policy in China, as well as policy of other nations, was based on sense of white superiority.<sup>21</sup> This view was based on racial, cultural, as well as religious differences.

But China was not considered only backward and unenlightened, but also potentially dangerous. This sentiment wasn’t new. Prior to 1894, China seemed to be a relatively strong country.<sup>22</sup> Her armed forces were in the process of gradual modernization and her navy was considered the strongest in the Far East. Chinese authorities planned building a railway through Manchuria and even demanded retrocession of the Possieta Bay, surrendered to Russia in 1860. The Russians were so alerted by growing Chinese assertiveness that they finally started building the Transsiberian Railway in 1891.<sup>23</sup> Within a few years, everything had changed.<sup>24</sup> The defeat of 1894–1895 led to the struggle for concessions and spheres of influence. Nevertheless, the very defeat

17 Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien (further only HHStA), Politisches Archiv (further only PA) XXIX, China, Karton (further only Kt.) 6, Berichte 1898, Nr. 2. Czikann an Gołuchowski, Peking, January 7, 1898.

18 G. STEINMETZ, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, Chicago, London 2007, p. 361.

19 Quoted in: D. SCOTT, *China and the International System, 1840–1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in the Century of Humiliation*, Albany 2008, pp. 129–130.

20 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 10–13.

21 For various aspects of Sinophilia and Sinophobia, see STEINMETZ, pp. 361–421.

22 Already in 1883, Edmund Fitzmaurice, a member of British Parliament, stated: “*The Chinese Empire in the last few years had shown an extraordinary recuperative power (...) occupied a position in Asia almost equal to the most palm days of its history.*” Quoted in: SCOTT, p. 82.

23 W. L. LANGER, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, New York 1951, pp. 171–172; A. MALOZEMOFF, *Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881–1904: With Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-Japanese War*, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1958, pp. 26–27, 38–40.

24 “*The war showed the world for the first time how astonishingly the Great Qing Empire — which had been aggressively flexing its muscles around its peripheries for several decades — really was.*” W. T. ROWE, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing*, Cambridge, London 2009, p. 230.

of China by modernized Japan was a proof of inherent capability of Asian nations. The Manchus perhaps were unable to modernize China on their own — in fact, they were frequently considered inferior even to the Chinese —, but many Western observers have just learned to fear Japanese designs. During the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese have forcibly initiated reforms in Korea, and after the war they started assisting Chinese reforms as well. The prospect of modernized China under Japanese tutelage was horrible. And Japan herself, which started to court China after the war, had clearly proven both her willingness and potential to achieve such a change.

German Emperor was among the first to acknowledge this fact. Already in 1895, he ordered a famous painter Hermann Knackfuss to draw a picture called “The Yellow Peril”, or “Peoples of Europe, Protect You Most Sacred Possessions” (“Völker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter”). The picture, based on a sketch by Wilhelm II himself, depicted armed female personifications of European great powers, led by Archangel Michael, united under a cross and watching a European city threatened by dark cloud with a dragon and Buddha in its middle. The picture had to express Emperor’s wish to unite European countries both against the Yellow Peril and against “*anarchism, republicanism, and nihilism*”. Wilhelm II’s special envoy, Helmuth von Moltke the Younger, presented the picture to Russian Czar, who was much pleased.<sup>25</sup> German Emperor considered Russia a bulwark against Asian Paganism and cultural threat, i.e. against the Yellow Peril.<sup>26</sup> Such German attitude towards Asian countries couldn’t fail to have consequences both in Beijing and Shandong.

The first great power rewarded for the Triple Intervention was France. Already in 1895 the French annexed large territory at Sino-Laotian border.<sup>27</sup> The British followed French lead and in February, 1897, compelled China to agree with a “rectification” of Sino-Burmese border.<sup>28</sup> But these areas, although large, were too remote and insignificant, and their loss didn’t cause much disaffection in Beijing. Russian schemes in Manchuria went hand in hand with French desire to build a railway from French Indochina to Chinese province of Guangxi. Yet the beginning of a new phase of humiliation of China is attributed to Germany. On 1 November 1897, two German Catholic missionaries belonging to the Society of the Divine Word were murdered in the Juye county in Shandong,<sup>29</sup> either by casual bandits or, more probably, by the Big Knife Society (*Dadaohui*).<sup>30</sup> In retaliation, on November 14, German forces under command of

25 LANGER, p. 448; PURCELL, p. 90; STEINMETZ, pp. 426–427. The picture is available at [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Voelker\\_Europas.jpg](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Voelker_Europas.jpg), [2014–09–07]. The lady hugging Germania isn’t Austria-Hungary, her ally, but Russia.

26 Nevertheless, many observers dismissed the very idea of the “Yellow Peril”, whereas others feared that the main threat is represented by the possibility of conquest and modernization of China by Russia herself. SCOTT, pp. 136–138.

27 J. CHESNEAUX — M. BASTID — M.-C. BERGÈRE, *China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*, New York 1976, p. 294.

28 LANGER, p. 395.

29 For more information about this Juye Incident, see J. W. ESHERICK, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1987, pp. 123–127.

30 This name is usually translated as “Big Sword Society”. Yet the character “*dāo*” 刀 means either a “knife” or a “short sword”. Since it doesn’t make sense to speak about a big short sword, I prefer the less common translation.

Admiral Diederichs occupied the Jiaozhou Bay on eastern coast of Shandong.<sup>31</sup> Finally, on 6 March 1898 Chinese Imperial court leased the area of Jiaozhou to Germany for 99 years, the entire province was declared German sphere of influence, and Germany was given the right to construct two railways from Jiaozhou to the province capital of Jinan. On 27 April 1898, Germany officially declared Jiaozhou her colony (*Schutzgebiet*). Even so, Chinese provincial officials constantly discussed the precise legal status of the leased territory, which encompassed 553 km<sup>2</sup>. Qingdao, so far a small coastal village, became centre of the new colony and was transformed into a large city with distinctively German character. Around the leased area proper was created a 50 km-wide zone in which German troops were allowed to operate at will — they didn't respect its boundaries, anyway.<sup>32</sup> Jiaozhou was protected by newly formed Third Naval Battalion (*III Seebataillon*) of marine infantry. The colonial administration was subject to German navy. The first governor was appointed Captain<sup>33</sup> Kurt Rosendahl. In 1899, he was succeeded by Captain Paul Jaeschke, who died on 27 January 1901, while in office.

The only other foreign enclave in Shandong was the naval base in Weihaiwei, which was in February 1895 occupied by Japanese troops. The British wished to replace Japan in possession of Weihaiwei, should the Liaodong Peninsula fall into Russian hands, and on 20 March 1898, after Russian seizure of Port Arthur, the British started negotiations with Japan to that end. The Japanese approved the British move, for they were eager to cooperate with the United Kingdom.<sup>34</sup> On 25 March 1898 British cabinet finally agreed upon the seizure of Weihaiwei, and the Chinese consented on 2 April.<sup>35</sup> Negotiations with the Germans led to a declaration of 20 April 1898, whereby

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31 German interest on the Jiaozhou Bay was relatively old. The Prussian expedition of 1860–1861 noticed its advantageous position for the first time. On March 11, 1895, German *Auswärtiges Amt* suggested to German navy that Germany could intervene on China's behalf during peace negotiations in exchange for a suitable naval base. German Minister to China Gustav Adolf Schenck zu Schweinsberg had recommended Jiaozhou again. *GP*, Bd. XVI, Berlin 1924, Nr. 1628, pp. 5–7. In 1896, Admiral Tirpitz, who was at that time commander of German naval forces in the Far East, also suggested seizure of Jiaozhou. However, Russian war vessels have already spent there the winter of 1895–1896, which accordingly to customs of the age gave priority claim on the bay to Russia. In spring, 1897, the Germans informed Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy about their intention to acquire a naval base in China, and sent a powerful squadron led by Admiral Diederichs to the Far East. In August, German Emperor visited his Russian cousin, obtained his approval with German seizure of Jiaozhou, and promised him to support similar Russian action elsewhere. Both Wilhelm II and bishop Anzer were decided to utilize the murder and seize Jiaozhou. LANGER, pp. 451–452; ESHERICK, p. 130.

32 G. STEINMETZ, *Qingdao as a Colony: From Apartheid to Civilizational Exchange*. Paper prepared for the Johns Hopkins Workshops in Comparative History of Science and Technology, "Science, Technology and Modernity: Colonial Cities in Asia, 1890–1940," Baltimore, January 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, p. 15. Available at: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~geostein/docs/Qingdaocolony.pdf>; [2014–09–07].

33 All governors of Jiaozhou held the rank "Kapitän zur See", which is equivalent to "Captain at Sea".

34 KAJIMA, pp. 100–101.

35 T. G. OTTE, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894–1905*, Oxford 2007, pp. 122–127.

the British pledged themselves not to connect Weihaiwei with Shandong interior by a railway and to restrain from “injuring or contesting the interests of Germany in the Province of Shantung, or of creating difficulties for her in that province”.<sup>36</sup> During private meetings between British statesman Joseph Chamberlain and German Ambassador to the United Kingdom Hatzfeldt, Chamberlain even suggested joint German-British protectorate over China in order to prevent Russian encroachment.<sup>37</sup> The Japanese still held Weihaiwei until the war indemnity was paid by the Chinese, i.e. until 9 May 1898. On 24 May, the British replaced Japanese occupants in order to counterbalance Russian occupation of the Liaodong Peninsula.<sup>38</sup>

German seizure of Jiaozhou differed from previous aggrandizement of French Laos and British Burma in several aspects. Firstly, it wasn't achieved by negotiations, but by direct action of German armed forces. Secondly, Jiaozhou wasn't an insignificant area on the end of the Chinese world. Even though the settlement of Qingdao was inhabited only by few fishermen at that time, it lay in one of core provinces of China proper. Thirdly, despite earlier permanent “rectifications of borders” and requests for railway concessions, the seizure of Jiaozhou was the act which initiated the true scramble for concessions and spheres of influence. What else could enrage the Chinese more? Nevertheless, Chinese foreign relations in 1890's were as turbulent as Chinese domestic policy. These relations were undergoing a constant change, which meant, generally speaking, only deteriorating. British prestige in China was seriously weakened when the British refused to support China during the Sino-Japanese war. As a result, embittered Chinese turned to Russia. But, as a result of factional struggle at the court, the Russians were increasing their demands. Their ships spent the winter of 1897–1898 in Port Arthur, and in March 1898, Russia seized both Port Arthur and Dalny at the Liaodong Peninsula. On the other hand, Japanese government started courting Chinese court and the relationship between two Asian empires greatly improved. Therefore the possibility of improvement of relations between Germany and China was not a priori precluded even after the seizure of Jiaozhou. However, German policy towards China was quite different, exploiting the weakness of the Middle Kingdom.

Other powers followed German example. The Russians not only seized the Liaodong Peninsula, but also extended their influence throughout Manchuria, Mongolia, and Chinese Turkestan. The French reserved for themselves area of provinces bordering to Indochina<sup>39</sup> and established a naval base at Guangzhouwan in western Guangdong. The British leased additional territory in the neighbourhood of Hong Kong and exacted on China a pledge of non-alienation of all provinces in the Yangzi (Chang Jiang) basin — no other power was allowed to obtain any special rights there or any part of the provinces. The Japanese requested and obtained similar assurances in respect to Fujian. Various foreign nations were granted many economic rights throughout China, especially railway and mining concessions.

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36 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 119; OTTE, p. 130.

37 OTTE, pp. 147–148.

38 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 118.

39 I.e. Yunnan, Guangxi, and western part of Guangdong — the British prevented any extension of such a privileged French position to the vicinity of Hong Kong. Eastern Guangdong fell under British influence.

For the time being, China was saved from greater losses only by her enormous dimensions and by mutual rivalry of the great powers. The progressive part of Chinese society desperately felt the necessity to modernize China. The most influential advocate of reforms was a young Cantonese scholar Kang Youwei (1858–1927), who gained Guangxu's trust. Since 11 June 1898, many reform edicts were issued. Foreign diplomats including German Minister didn't believe in success of the reforms.<sup>40</sup> Since the pace of reforms was ever increasing, many dignitaries started feeling threatened. Finally, the reform effort was hindered especially by conservatism and lack of cooperation, if not direct opposition, of most officials and even the Empress Dowager Cixi herself. In September, the rift between reformers and conservatives was too deep, and both sides were plotting against each other.<sup>41</sup> The reformers tried to persuade Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) a brilliant commander of Han Chinese origin, to support their cause; yet Yuan betrayed their plans to his superior Ronglu.<sup>42</sup> On 21 September 1898, the Empress Dowager executed a successful coup d'état, imprisoned Guangxu and executed many reformers (Kang Youwei himself managed to escape).<sup>43</sup> "It is by such methods as were now to be adopted that general elections are held in Asiatic countries."<sup>44</sup>

The conflict had a substantial "racial" dimension. The reformers were Han Chinese, especially Southerners — in China, there existed a significant mistrust between people from the South and the North, and this contributed to cold reception of reforms by many Han officials born in the North. The victorious reactionary clique, since the September coup controlling the Beijing court, was formed by Manchu aristocrats, including close relatives of the Empress Dowager. Among the most prominent Manchu reactionaries was Zaiyi, Prince Duan (1856–1922), who wished the appointment of his own son Pujun (1886–1929) heir apparent. That would facilitate Guangxu's elimination. Yet immense pressure prevented such a move. Immediately after the coup d'état, dignitaries and gentry throughout all China declared sympathy towards the Emperor. Even more significantly, diplomats of all countries with the exception of Russia were concerned by Emperor's "poor health" and explained that they were accredited by the Emperor's person. As a result, a French physician was allowed to visit the Emperor, and diagnosed kidney disease and overall weakening of organism.<sup>45</sup> For the time be-

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40 PETERSSON, p. 70.

41 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 141.

42 The role of Yuan Shikai is analyzed by Jerome Ch'en and H. B. Morse. J. CH'EN, *Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1859–1916: Brutus Assumes the Purple*, Stanford 1961, pp. 55–62; MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 141–144. Ronglu (1836–1903) was Manchu aristocrat who was on best terms with the Empress Dowager Cixi. During his life he held top-ranking military and governmental posts, and he was the maternal grandfather of the past Manchu Emperor Puyi.

43 Minister Heyking refused to join a plea of his British colleague MacDonald to save life of a prominent reformer and diplomat Zhang Yinhuan, who had been sentenced to death. PETERSSON, p. 72. Finally, Zhang was pardoned and sent into exile in Chinese Turkestan, only to die at the very end of the "Boxer Uprising". A. W. HUMMEL (Ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912): (A–O)*, Vol. 1, Washington 1943, p. 63.

44 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 144.

45 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 5, Berichte 1898, Nr. 22. Czikanan an Góhuchowski, Peking, October 24, 1898; XIANG, Lanxin, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, London, New York 2003, p. 23.



ing, Guangxu's life was saved by pressure of foreigners and governors. Nevertheless, the unfortunate Emperor remained for the rest of his life<sup>46</sup> absolutely powerless, bullied and supervised by the Empress Dowager Cixi. The concern of foreign powers including Germany for Guangxu's life was deeply detested by Manchu aristocracy at the court.

Immediately after the coup, unruly elements started attacking Christians and foreigners in the area of Beijing. Foreign diplomats decided to summon significant number of troops to Beijing as legation guards. The position of the victorious court faction was far from secure. The court feared both foreign intervention and insurgency led by partisans of the Hundred Days of Reform. On 5 and 8 November 1898, two edicts have encouraged loyal Qing subjects to form militia.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the court summoned reinforcements to the vicinity of Beijing, some 30,000 men altogether. About half of these troops were Muslims from the province of Gansu, nicknamed "Gansu Braves". They were under command of General Dong Fuxiang (1839–1908). Their background didn't prevent them from ruthlessly crushing the revolt of Gansu Muslims of 1895–1896. Unfortunately, both Dong and his troops hated the foreigners, and these soldiers, being unpaid for a long time, started plundering the Beijing metropolitan area and threatening the Christians and foreigners on their own.<sup>48</sup> As a result, foreign diplomats in Beijing twice sent a collective note to the Zongli Yamen,<sup>49</sup> demanding withdrawal of Dong's troops. Chinese diplomats, perhaps fearing harsh German action, asked Heyking not to do anything which could be considered as an undue pressure on the Empress Dowager.<sup>50</sup> Finally, Dong's troops were withdrawn.<sup>51</sup>

In early 1899, the great powers recalled their legation guards from Beijing. The Germans and Italians have delayed the withdrawal of their troops, whose presence constituted a sort of pressure on Chinese government.<sup>52</sup> Whereas the Germans desired concessions in Shandong, the Italians wished to acquire a naval base on Chinese coast. On 10 March 1899, Italian Minister to China Di Martino presented an ultima-

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46 The Guangxu Emperor died at the same time as the Empress Dowager Cixi, in November 1908. Chinese court publicly declared that he had died on 14 November 1908, the day before Cixi's death. However, the precise date and cause of his death will be forever unknown. MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 441–442; CH'EN, p. 98.

47 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (further only PA AA), R 18244. Nr. 1248, Ketteler an Auswärtiges Amt, Peking, December 16, 1899; C. T. TAN, *The Boxer Catastrophe*, New York 1955, p. 41. Such a move had been already suggested by the reformers. ESHERICK, p. 173.

48 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 5, Berichte 1898, Nr. 23c. Czikanan an Gołuchowski, Peking, October 31, 1898.

49 Zongli Yamen ("Office for General Management") was created in 1861 in order to manage dealings with foreigners. For the most part of its existence it was presided over by Prince Gong, chief collaborator of the Empress Dowager Cixi. After the "Boxer Uprising", it was replaced by a normal ministry for foreign affairs (*Waiwubu*).

50 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 5, Berichte 1898, Nr. 24b. Czikanan an Gołuchowski, Peking, November 13, 1898.

51 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 151–153.

52 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 6, Berichte 1899, Nr. 3. Czikanan an Gołuchowski, Peking, April 4, 1899.

tum and demanded lease of the Sanmen Bay in the province of Zhejiang. The Imperial court, dominated by xenophobe clique, firmly rejected any such concession and alerted troops in the threatened area, and on 12 March 1899 Italian government succumbed, denied any knowledge about the ultimatum and recalled her minister. Renewed Italian attempt the following summer was rejected again.<sup>53</sup> For the first time since the seizure of Jiaozhou in 1897 China successfully resisted foreign threat. The entire foreign community in Beijing realized that any further attempt to force China into submission would be much more difficult.<sup>54</sup> Yet this Chinese victory was a Pyrrhic one, for it strengthened arrogance and self-confidence of reactionary elements in China. Anyway, the Germans were more successful than the Italians, for their demands were accepted at the end of May 1899. Thereafter, German detachment, which was the last to leave, departed from Beijing. German guards were accompanied by Heyking and his wife, who left China for all. German Minister was recalled, granted a leave for one year (nothing unusual among diplomats at that time) and had to be replaced by Gerhard von Ketteler (1853–1900), who had already for several years served at German consulates on lesser posts in China, then represented Germany in the United States, and prior to his new appointment he was German Minister to Mexico.

Naturally, German companies were active at Chinese market. Due to imperfection of trade statistics,<sup>55</sup> the exact amount of Sino-German trade is hard to be evaluated. Shipments by British ships were often considered of British origin;<sup>56</sup> merchandise imported via Hong Kong was attributed to Hong Kong.<sup>57</sup> In the period of 1899–1903, Sino-German trade designated as such constituted only 3.39% of all exports from China and 5.5% of all imports to China.<sup>58</sup> German industrial and mining enterprises on Chinese soil are easier to quantify. In the period of 1895–1913, altogether 12 German and mixed Sino-German companies were established in China, representing 8.8% of all foreign and semi-foreign industrial enterprises.<sup>59</sup> In 1899, there were 115 German companies and 1,134 Germans present in China, out of total 933 foreign companies and 17,193 foreigners settled in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>60</sup> The trade with Germany was essential in one respect. China was modernizing her armed forces, thus continued to

53 KŘIVSKÝ — SKŘIVAN, p. 285.

54 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 6, Berichte 1899, Nr. 4. Czikann an Gołuchowski, Peking, April 27, 1899; OTTE, pp. 178–180.

55 Some aspects of statistical methods at that time were analyzed by Yehuda Don. Y. DON, *Comparability of International Trade Statistics: Great Britain and Austria-Hungary before World War I*, in: *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1968, pp. 78–92.

56 A. SKŘIVAN, Jr., *Austro-Hungarian Export to China*, in: *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, Vol. 12, 2008, p. 196.

57 LEE, Chinyun, *Obchod mezi českými zeměmi a Čínou před první světovou válkou*, in: *Historický obzor*, Vol. 17, No. 1/2, 2006, p. 24.

58 FAIRBANK — LIU, Table 20 on p. 52. The share of British export and import reached 8.6% and 20.13%, respectively; and trade with the rest of the British Empire constituted 13.98% of overall export and 28.33% of import.

59 *Ibidem*, Table 11 on p. 30. Establishment of foreign factories in China was permitted only in 1895 by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, and by the most-favoured-nation principle the right was granted to all foreign powers.

60 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, footnote 172 on p. 326.

rely heavily on import of top-quality German weapons. Many of modernized Chinese infantry units were armed by Mauser rifles. As far as artillery was concerned, the Chinese considered Krupp's cannons the best in the world and strongly preferred them. During the last three decades of the XIX century, Krupp alone sold two thousand artillery pieces of all kinds to China.<sup>61</sup>

The creation of spheres of influence in China posed a threat to the principle of free trade, which was most beneficial for some of the great powers. The British were traditional supporters of free trade. This policy was shared by the Americans, who dreamed of unrestricted access to potentially huge Chinese market. American power at this time didn't enable the United States to gain a sufficiently large area in China for commercial exploitation. Moreover, such move would be in contrary to American idealistic policy of anti-colonialism and strengthening of Asian countries. But the United States of America was in the period of 1898–1899 fully occupied by war with Spain, by "liberation" of her colonies and by defeating Filipino insurgents. The German-American rivalry in respect to Spanish colonies and subsequent German acquisition of remaining Spanish possessions in Micronesia in 1899 are outside the scope of this article. In 1898 and 1899, American state secretary John Hay didn't accept British proposal to secure formal acceptance of equal commercial competition in China, for he was occupied by the Spanish-American War and its aftermath. After the war and the Scramble for Concessions had ended, John Hay seized the opportunity and in his note of September 6, 1899, he suggested the Open Door policy. Hay requested that:

(1) Within its sphere of interest or leasehold, a power would not interfere with any treaty port or with the vested interest of any other power.

(2) Within its sphere of influence, no power would discriminate against nationals of other countries in matters of harbour dues or railway rates.

(3) Within each sphere of influence, the Chinese treaty tariff should apply and the Chinese government be allowed to collect customs duties.<sup>62</sup>

Among the original recipients were Germany,<sup>63</sup> the United Kingdom, Russia, and France.<sup>64</sup> On 13 and 17 November 1899, Hay presented the same demands to Japan and Italy, respectively. All countries in principle expressed their acceptance of the Open Door policy, yet they tried to evade formal commitment until they knew that the others would accept. Even so, German reaction from early December claimed that "*the policy of Germany in the extreme Orient is de facto the policy of the open door*". After all,

61 A. SKŘIVAN, Jr., „Čínské obchody“ Škodových závodů před první světovou válkou, in: Moderní dějiny, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2012, p. 38.

62 FAIRBANK — LIU, p. 113. These points were formulated by former US minister to China W. W. Rockhill who was in contact with A. E. Hippisley, a British employee of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service.

63 The text of Hay's message to Andrew D. White, who was at that time US ambassador in Germany, is available at <http://www.vlib.us/amdocs/texts/opendoor.html>, [2014-09-07].

64 Various sources disagree about the date when the note was sent to France. The website quoted above states that France figured among the original recipients, as does MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 126. KAJIMA, p. 322 states that the note was presented to the French only on November 21, 1899.

German industry was second to none, and open Chinese market was preferable to a closed Shandong one. On February 18, 1900, German Chancellor Bülow explained that Germany “*from the beginning, not only asserted, but also practically carried out to the fullest extent, in her Chinese possessions, absolute equality of treatment of all nations with regard to trade, navigation and commerce*”.<sup>65</sup> Since the Germans declared Qingdao a free port<sup>66</sup> and allowed an office of Imperial Maritime Customs Service to be located there, this statement was substantiated.<sup>67</sup>

Whereas German diplomatic activity in some cases supported the status quo in China, and whereas the concern for Emperor’s safety in accordance with wishes of a substantial part of Chinese population, German policy in Shandong was of a different nature. German sense of cultural superiority was manifested by disrespect towards Chinese religion and dignitaries, and enabled German troops to treat Chinese inhabitants of the province with unjustifiable harshness. The province of Shandong had many distinct features. Its people were well known for their martial spirit. Since both Confucius and Mencius were born in Shandong, the province was particularly fond on Confucian heritage. Nevertheless, its western part — the cradle of the “Boxer” movement — differed from the rest of province. Western Shandong was for many decades unstable, molested by banditry and ancient feuds between family lineages, and its inhabitants were often resorting to violence. In the area lived relatively few degree-holders, i.e. members of local elites who were well versed in Confucian learning and were interested in its protecting and promoting among their neighbours.<sup>68</sup> In late 1890’s Shandong suffered from many disasters — floods, droughts, banditry, foreign invasions. Due to proximity of Shandong to Beijing, large unrests in Shandong had consequences in Chinese capital and at the Imperial court.

Both Germany and China were interested in building railways in Shandong; and since November 1897, the Germans insisted on obtaining exclusive rights in this respect. In December of the same year, while negotiations over the fate of Jiaozhou were under way, China announced her desire to build a railway from Tianjin through Jinan in Shandong to Zhenjiang at the lower Yangzi Jiang. Due to German objections, this plan came to nought.<sup>69</sup> Since January, 1898, various German entrepreneurs were forming consortia aimed at exploiting new opportunities in Shandong, and these consortia eventually joined forces. On 1 June 1899, they were granted the desired railway concession in Shandong, and on 14 June they established the Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft (SEG; Shandong Railway Company). Financial backing was provided especially by Disconto-Gesellschaft, one of the most powerful German banks.<sup>70</sup> German engineers were already on spot and have planned two railway lines from Qingdao to the province

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<sup>65</sup> MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 126–127.

<sup>66</sup> Germany declared Qingdao free port on September 2, 1898, on 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her great victory at Sedan. P. BIGELOW, *Germany’s First Colony in China*, in: Harper’s New Magazine, Vol. 100, No. 598, 1900, p. 588.

<sup>67</sup> STEINMETZ, *Gingdao*, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> ESHERICK, pp. 7–37.

<sup>69</sup> MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 89.

<sup>70</sup> C. WENDELS, *Die Schantung Eisenbahn: Das Interesse der Finanzwelt an der deutschen Bahnlinie in Ostchina*, Siegburg 2012, pp. 19–39.

capital of Jinan, with a branch leading to coal deposits at Boshan. Both German and Chinese companies participated on the construction, and material was mostly of German origin. Shortly thereafter, in October 1899, was established a related company Schantung Bergbau Gesellschaft (SBG; Shandong Mining Company).<sup>71</sup> Prior to the outbreak of the Boxer Uprising, both companies have just started operating. The projected railway wasn't completed until 1904, but then became very profitable. In contrary, mining operations were unsuccessful, and finally, in 1913 SEG and SBG have merged together.<sup>72</sup>

These economic matters had no direct connection to the genesis of the Yihetuan movement. But the arrival of German engineers and surveyors at Shandong countryside led to many problems, caused by very nature of their work. Generally, the Chinese in late XIX century disliked railroads. Since Chinese graves were scattered throughout the entire countryside, many of them had to be removed in order to make place for the railroad track. As in case of other buildings built by foreigners, the principles of *fengshui* were violated. The people were well aware that after the completion of the railway many transportation workers will lose their jobs. Chinese authorities for their part opposed foreign ownership of railways, which they considered a tool of foreign interference. The Germans had to overcome Chinese objections, like demands to build railway stations as far from cities as possible.<sup>73</sup> The subsequent profitability of the railway company proves that the Germans knew better how to build and manage railways. They even tried to recognize Chinese sensitivities at least in the appearance of railway stations — those inside the leased area were built in Western style, those throughout the rest of Shandong resembled Chinese buildings.<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately, the Germans didn't know things which the Chinese considered truly essential. Railways were “damaging ‘dragon’s vein’ (*longmai*)”; mining was “letting out the ‘precious breath’ of the mountains (*baoqi*)”.<sup>75</sup> Chinese religious beliefs were even more threatened than Chinese territorial integrity.

Among the Chinese, there existed several types of religious beliefs. Confucianism was state ideology, revered by Chinese elites and used to legitimize ancient order. Its values were deeply rooted in Chinese society. Next to Confucianism, Chinese masses were deeply influenced by Buddhism, Taoism, and various folk beliefs. Many Confucian scholars considered such beliefs and folk customs inferior to Confucianism and occasionally wrote treatises proving their “erroneousness”; but these beliefs weren't contradictory to the state ideology of Confucianism, were widespread and generally harmless, and thus tolerated. The third type of beliefs was represented by heterodox learning, which could be silently tolerated or ruthlessly suppressed. Official policy towards such sects was determined especially by their opinion on the Manchu regime. Official, legal, or subversive — all forms of Chinese religious beliefs were endangered by the spread of Christianity.

Christianity was incompatible with Chinese religious systems in essence, since it was a monotheistic belief. Catholic missionaries were present in the Far East since

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71 Its statutes were approved on 10 October 1899, and are available in Berlin: PA AA, R 18244, Nr. 602. Satzungen vom 10. Oktober nebst vorgedruckter Concession vom 1. Juni 1899.

72 WENDELS, pp. 41–42.

73 Ibidem, p. 39.

74 STEINMETZ, *Quingdao*, p. 11.

75 FAIRBANK — LIU, p. 117.

XVI century. They scored notable successes during the last phase of the Ming dynasty, and even the Manchu dynasty originally accepted them in Beijing. Yet the Catholics were ultimately unable to accept Chinese folk customs and adapt them for the purpose of spreading Christian faith. Especially the ancestor cult, which was since times immemorial the core of Chinese culture, was considered idolatrous at that time. Since Rome was finally persuaded to ban all such suspicious practices in the XVIII century, Christianity in China had suffered a serious setback for a century. As a consequence of the Opium Wars, everything had changed. No longer were missionaries only tolerated guests in a self-respecting country; they became a vanguard of foreign encroachment, supported by superior and hostile force and protected by the principle of extraterritoriality.

Most troublesome missionaries in Shandong were members of the Society of the Divine Word (*Societas Verbi Divini*; SVD; “Steyley Missionaries”), which is even today engaged in missionary activities throughout the world. At that time it was predominantly German enterprise, founded by German Arnold Jansen. Due to the *Kulturkampf*, Jansen was not able to operate freely in Germany. As a consequence, SVD was established in 1875 in Steyl in the Netherlands. Its most notable members in China in late XIX century were Johann Baptist von Anzer (1851–1903) and Josef Freinadametz (1852–1908). In 1879 they arrived to Hong Kong and two years later they reached Shandong. On January 8, 1882, Anzer was put in charge of mission in southern Shandong and four years later he was appointed vicar apostolic of southern Shandong and titular bishop of Thelepte in former Roman Africa.<sup>76</sup>

Since 1886, Anzer tried to enter the city of Yanzhou. Due to proximity of Qufu and Zoucheng, birthplaces of both Confucius and Mencius, respectively, the city was closed for the foreigners. For the Chinese, Yanzhou was a holy city. For Anzer, it was a “*bulwark of the devil*”.<sup>77</sup> Catholic missionaries were traditionally protected by France. In 1890, after the *Kulturkampf* had terminated, Anzer asked German government to assume this role, and his wish was fulfilled.<sup>78</sup> Immediately thereafter, German consul at Tianjin, von Seckendorff, perhaps decided to imitate his French colleague, who was killed in 1870. Seckendorff departed for Jinan, willing to visit the governor of the province, and without invitation ruthlessly rode into his official compound by a gate reserved for respected and invited guests. Thereafter he proceeded to Yanzhou and narrowly escaped lynching by angry mob — “*he said that [...] he would begin by killing six of them, and would then be killed himself, but his death would bring severe reprisals for the Chinese*”. After his return to Jinan, Seckendorff ordered the Chinese to put into a pillory a man who had insulted him.<sup>79</sup> This had happened in January 1891, at the time when “*relations between Germany and China were quite harmonious*”.<sup>80</sup> Such a combination of courage, arrogance, and selfishness was in no way unique to the Germans,

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/banzer.html>, [2014–09–07].

<sup>77</sup> STEINMETZ, *The Devil's Handwriting*, p. 417.

<sup>78</sup> However, German presence in the Far East was at that time much less significant than the French one. In 1896, Anzer expressed fear that his subordinates might compel him to return under French protection. *GP*, Bd. XIV, 1. Hälfte, Berlin 1924, Nr. 3662, pp. 25–26.

<sup>79</sup> ESHERICK, pp. 80–81; CHESNEAUX — BASTID — BERGÈRE, pp. 287–289.

<sup>80</sup> REYNOLDS, p. 70.

though. In 1896, Anzer himself finally managed to reach the hated, yet desired city. The contempt of the Germans for Confucius was even better shown in February 1898, when German troops desecrated a Confucian temple at Jimo, some 30 km to the north of Jiaozhou.<sup>81</sup>

Missionary activities didn't have only unfavourable effects on China. Many missionaries were bringing modern education and medicine, and were fighting against foot binding. Yet the overall effect of missionary presence in China was negative. The ambivalence of missionary activities is well demonstrated on attitude of Josef Freinademetz towards China. "His whole life was marked by an effort to become a Chinese among the Chinese, so much so that he wrote to his family: 'I love China and the Chinese. I want to die among them and be laid to rest among them.'"<sup>82</sup> During a typhus epidemic in 1908, he was assisting the sick, got infected, and died; and in 2003, he was canonized.<sup>83</sup> Yet he was ready to assist foreign penetration of China. During the Scramble for Concessions he advised Austro-Hungarian diplomats that Austria-Hungary should seize the port of Qingkou to the south of border between Shandong and Jiangsu.<sup>84</sup>

The missionaries frequently intervened on behalf of their converts at Chinese courts. If unsuccessful, they resorted to higher officials, and, eventually, through intermediation of consuls and diplomats of their respective countries, to the Zongli Yamen and the Imperial court. The Chinese usually succumbed. Many people converted in order to escape real oppression by their landlords.<sup>85</sup> Yet many Christians learned how to abuse this newly gained protection. Some converts, especially the Catholic ones, even abused missionaries' power to such an extent that they themselves were showing disrespect towards the authorities and refused to pay taxes, only to be supported by the priests.<sup>86</sup> Worst of all, criminals were joining Christian ranks and enjoyed immunity. Even those converts who were behaving modestly were detested by their neighbours, for the missionaries forbade them to attend traditional folk fairs and feasts, or to pay a part of its expenses. The Christians were accused from causing natural catastrophes, for many churches were violating the principle of *fengshui*, and other were higher than neighbouring temples of Confucius.<sup>87</sup> Some missionaries were provident enough that they were fortifying their churches and arming their converts — only to deepen suspicions of Chinese Pagans.

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81 STEINMETZ, *Qingdao*, p. 15; ESHERICK, p. 84. Both claim that the statue was desecrated. Steinmetz adds that the temple was sacked, and Esherick claims that local authorities were so frightened that they tried to cover up the story.

82 This attitude wasn't typical for many of his brothers from SVD, though. ESHERICK, p. 125.

83 [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20031005\\_freinademetz\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031005_freinademetz_en.html), [2014-09-07]; [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/homilies/2003/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20031005\\_canonizations\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20031005_canonizations_en.html), [2014-09-07].

84 HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 6, Varia 1899. Auszug aus einem Privat-Schreiben des oesterr. Missionärs und Provinziars von Süd-Shantung, Pater Freinademetz, October 20, 1899.

85 ESHERICK, p. 90.

86 J. K. FAIRBANK (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of China: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, Vol. 10, Part 1, Cambridge 2008, p. 567.

87 PURCELL, p. 133.

The effort of Anzer and his colleagues bore its fruit. In 1882 there were relatively few Christians in his theatre of operations.<sup>88</sup> After the “Boxer Uprising”, no less than 47,221 Catholics and 85 Catholic missionaries lived in Shandong, together with 14,776 Protestants and 180 Protestant missionaries.<sup>89</sup> This difference in effectiveness of proselytizing was partially due to the fact that the Catholics were less interested in moral profile of their “sheep” and slightly more willing to support them against Chinese officials than the Protestants. Some Protestant missionaries were occasionally purging their flock from unlawful elements; yet Protestant arrogant sense of superiority over Chinese “superstitions” was no way lesser than the Catholic one.

The very same foreigners who considered their sacred duty to get China rid of bad habits of her people had certain bad habits on their own. One of these bad habits was the eagerness to put pressure on the Imperial court in order to punish officials under whose jurisdiction attacks on foreign subjects took place. After two German missionaries were murdered on 1 November 1897, the Germans demanded punishment of Li Bingheng, who was at that time governor of Shandong and was already promised the viceroyalty of Sichuan. The court originally hesitated,<sup>90</sup> but on 15 January 1898 finally succumbed to German pressure. Not only didn't Li Bingheng become viceroy of Sichuan, but he was forbidden to be employed in any official post again.<sup>91</sup> In 1900 this injustice was washed off by rivers of blood, for Li Bingheng gained Imperial favour again, supported the anti-foreign violence, and took his revenge on Christians, foreigners, and moderate dignitaries at the court. Li Bingheng was succeeded by Zhang Rumei.

Arrogant German behaviour had consequences in the sphere on which the Germans were so proud. Prior to the seizure of Jiaozhou, the position of German military advisors in Chinese land forces was superior to position of any other advisors. In late 1890's, this German position was questioned, and finally lost, due both to disappointment by German aggressive behaviour after 1897 and to rise of competition among foreigners. Both Russia and Japan spared no effort to replace German advisors. This was evident in case of the Guard Army, deployed not far from Beijing, led by Ronglu, and divided into five divisions or “armies”. “Tenacious Army” of General Nie Shicheng was originally led by German advisers; yet Russian mission led by Lt. Col. Woronov managed to oust them all.<sup>92</sup> Brilliant military leader Yuan Shikai, who had to shape China's destiny in the decades to come, had experience with the Germans as well. Since 1895 he led the “Newly Created Army”, or “Guard to the Right”, which was composed largely from recruits from Shandong. Not only did Yuan accept German military advisors, he even ordered his subordinates to recite the *Introductory*

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88 Joseph Esherick states that in Shandong already lived 4,000 Christians in 1839, whereas Vatican online source claims that no more than 158 Catholics lived there in 1881, although it doesn't state unequivocally whether or not the number relates to Shandong or southern Shandong. ESHERICK, p. 77; [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20031005\\_freinademetz\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031005_freinademetz_en.html), [2014-09-07].

89 ESHERICK, p. 79.

90 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 107.

91 STEINMETZ, *Qingdao*, p. 3.

92 REYNOLDS, p. 72.



*Manual of German Army Drills* “until they gradually understood it”.<sup>93</sup> Yet in 1899 some 40 Japanese instructors arrived to China, only to be followed by many others.<sup>94</sup> In the following years Yuan started relying on Japanese help, and as a result, he had 175 Japan advisors in 1908. At that time, Japanese military advisors have replaced most of other foreigners with the exception of a handful of Germans. It is an irony that Meiji Japan herself had modernized her army under German tutelage.<sup>95</sup>

A sort of a vicious circle was operating in Shandong. Financial problems forced the authorities to dismiss large part of military forces in the province. Prior to the Sino-Japanese War, there were almost 50,000 troops on the payroll in Shandong, but these numbers have dropped to 30,000 in 1897 and to some 21,000 only in 1898. Fear from further German designs, and undoubtedly also from subsequent rage of the Imperial court, forced the authorities to deploy the remaining troops in eastern Shandong and at the coast, whereas the interior of Shandong was left with insufficient force.<sup>96</sup> Dismissed troops (had they existed at all, for Chinese commanders were often reporting higher numbers of troops under their command, and then embezzled their salary) became unemployed, thus tempted to resort to banditry. Even if the bandits hadn't attacked the foreigners themselves, the need to fight the bandits was the reason why many Chinese joined the “Boxers”. In other words, strategic decisions caused by foreign aggression led to such unrest that the foreigners gained a pretext to another aggression.

In Chinese society, there was an ancient tradition of forming various secret societies and sects. Some of them were well known — and feared — for centuries, while others were relatively new. In 1890's the Big Knife Society was formed in western Shandong, started fighting banditry, and cooperated with local officials. In June 1896 when the society turned against Christians, looting their possessions but not killing a single one of them. In July, the Big Knife Society was ruthlessly suppressed by Yuxian, a Manchu who was at that time prefect of Caozhou.<sup>97</sup>

Soon thereafter, a dangerous mass movement emerged in Shandong. In the West it is known as the “Boxers”. Since it was a secret society, little is known about its intentions, history, or even original name. Accordingly to an official named Lao Naixian, the sect was a branch of the Eight Trigram Society, which had unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the dynasty in 1813 and then went into hiding. An alternative theory by scholar George N. Steiger states that the movement was had originated as a militia founded in accordance with decrees from November 1898. The attitude of the “Boxers” toward the Manchu dynasty was most uncertain. It is most probable that among them were both loyal and disloyal elements, and that most of newly-admitted members in later phases of the movement weren't informed about seditious designs, had such designs existed. Anyway, the battle-cry of the “Boxers” was “*Support the Qing, exterminate the foreigner*” (*Fu Qing mie yang*). Official attitude towards the movement was indecisive. The movement originally called itself *Yihequan*, or “Righteous

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93 Ibidem, p. 70.

94 PURCELL, p. 100.

95 REYNOLDS, pp. 74–77.

96 ESHERICK, pp. 170–173.

97 Ibidem, pp. 115–122, 191–192.

and Harmonious Fists”, hence the nickname “Boxers”. Sometimes in 1898 or in 1899 the name had changed to *Yihetuan*, or “Righteous and Harmonious Militia”.

In 1899, the foreigners for the first time noted the existence of the anti-foreign movement in Shandong, even though they weren’t certain about its name. The roots of the movement were discussed in an article in “Shen Pao”, Chinese newspapers printed in Shanghai.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly to the article, a sect was founded by Zhu Hongdeng, a bandit chief who repeatedly changed both its name and territory of operations. Originally his society was supposed to be called “Red Lantern”,<sup>99</sup> “Armor of the Golden Bell”,<sup>100</sup> “Iron-cloth Shirt” and “Great Water Sect”.<sup>101</sup> After a clash with governmental troops, Zhu was supposed to have renamed his society to *Yihequan* and, ultimately, to *Yihetuan*.

On 15 March 1899 the court gave up to a long-term goal of the Catholic Church and recognized equality of Catholic clergy with Chinese dignitaries of equivalent rank.<sup>102</sup> Thus, Anzer was considered equal in dignity to governors and viceroys of the same country whose sovereignty and dignity he was constantly ignoring. It is interesting that Anglican bishops refused the same position.<sup>103</sup> Yet the foreigners in Shandong were occupied by other matters. In late 1898 the magistrate of Yizhou declared that he would no more send troops in order to protect missionaries without direct orders from the governor.<sup>104</sup> In November 1898 a Catholic priest Georg Stenz from SVD has temporarily arrested or kidnapped in a port town of Rizhao in southeast Shandong. It is most probable that this incident wasn’t connected with the *Yihetuan* movement. Bishop Anzer at first contended himself with a huge indemnity, but Heyking refused. German governor of Jiaozhou Jaeschke sent investigators, who were threatened by the Chinese as well. With approval from Berlin, two punitive expeditions took place; two villages in the Yizhou prefecture were burnt and many Chinese killed. After some period of occupation of Rizhou by German troops, their commander invited local gentry to a meeting, captured five of them and took them as hostages to Qingdao.<sup>105</sup> Another punitive expedition was connected with violating of German railway property. Even though the SEG hasn’t been founded yet, German engineers and workers already started surveying the proposed route and even preparing terrain for the railway track. When Chinese villagers started removing survey markers, German mariners

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98 Quoted in Berliner Neueste Nachrichten. Die “Boxer” in Schantung, *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, April 6, 1900.

99 “*Rother Lampenschirm*” in German original. Although the word “Lampenschirm” means “lampshade”, it is most probable that the author had confused the “Boxer” society itself with its female branch called “Red Lanterns”.

100 “*Schleier der goldenen Glocke*” in the original article. A spiritual technique called “Armor of the Golden Bell” was exercised in Shandong in 1890’s. ESHERICK, pp. 104–106.

101 In the original article, it is transcribed “*Tatauhui*”. It seems that the correspondent had mistranslated the name of the Big Knife Society.

102 PURCELL, p. 77.

103 Ibidem, note 4 on p. 302.

104 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 173.

105 Ibidem, pp. 174–175; ESHERICK, pp. 187–190; STEINMETZ, *Qingdao*, p. 15. Whereas Morse claims that Rizhao was occupied for six weeks, Steinmetz states that the hostages were dragged away after five days of German occupation.

stole their cattle and killed two Chinese in the process.<sup>106</sup> Such brutal measures were perhaps adopted partially from fear that the Germans would otherwise lose face, even in the eyes of other foreigners. More fortunate Chinese were “only” fined — the foreigners were extorting huge sums indeed, both from the people and from the government. In the period of 1897–1899, the missionaries accepted 104,000 taels altogether.<sup>107</sup>

Zhang Rumei was so occupied by foreign threat that he absolutely neglected the care of dikes at the Yellow River. In summer 1898, severe floods followed, and as a consequence, Zhang Rumei was dismissed in spring 1899.<sup>108</sup> On 11 April 1899, his successor Yuxian assumed his office. He was a Manchu conservative who was favourably disposed to the Yihetuan movement. Although his original attitude toward the “Boxers” is disputed,<sup>109</sup> he had finally shown himself to be great supporter. Yuxian was of the opinion that among the “Boxers” were both loyal and disloyal elements, and he intended to use the loyal ones as militia. He had shown a high self-esteem when he tried to negotiate indemnity for destroyed property and Chinese killed by the Germans, and even asked Zongli Yamen to ask German government to replace officials responsible for punitive expeditions.<sup>110</sup> This effort was unsuccessful, but German campaign from spring 1899 was followed and counterweighted by temporal transfer of large detachments of the Guard Army from Zhili to Shandong.

Of course the Germans weren’t intimidated. Instead, they started another punishment operation. Between June 23 and July 10, 1899, forces of Captain Mauve were sent to punish the city Gaomi for attacks against German railway workers. Soon thereafter, between July 22 and August 11, 1899, Shandong’s countryside became target of another expedition by Lieutenant von Rettberg and his cavalry detachment. The expenses of Rettberg’s expedition amounted to 1,782.02 marks, the expedition to Goumi cost 7,126.57 marks. Fortunately, these expenses were partially paid by a contribution forced upon local officials, which totalled 2,402.05 marks.<sup>111</sup> But such measures couldn’t suppress the entire province. Already on July 26, 1899, Ketteler both informed and warned Governor Jaeschke by a 32-pages long message. He was of the opinion that even though the governor of Shandong had originally supported xenophobic sects (Big Knife Society and “Red Fist”, i.e. the “Boxers”), they got entirely out of his influence and have merged with state-supported and state-armed militia.<sup>112</sup> In late August, disturbances in Shandong forced Minister Ketteler to warn the Zongli Yamen that “*if they cannot control their people and prevent their interference with the railway construction, Germany will take the matter in hand herself*”.<sup>113</sup> One week later, the Germans discovered a group of Chinese who planned to attack the railway. Many plotters were arrested and weapons in their possession confiscated.<sup>114</sup>

106 ESHERICK, p. 184; STEINMETZ, *Qingdao*, p. 15.

107 CHESNEAUX — BASTID — BERGÈRE, p. 329.

108 ESHERICK, pp. 177–180.

109 Ibidem, pp. 190–192, 198–202.

110 Ibidem, p 193.

111 PA AA, R 18244 Nr. 254. J. Jaeschke, Tsingtau, February 2, 1900. 2 Beilagen.

112 PA AA, R 18244, Nr. 1248. Ketteler an Auswärtiges Amt, Peking, December 16, 1899.

113 *Peking & Tientsin Times*, August 26, 1899.

114 *Peking & Tientsin Times*, September 2, 1899.

In late 1898, the “Boxers” from north-western Shandong for the first time openly displayed their exercise. They were publicly practicing martial arts, believing that they were securing invulnerability by magical means. Thereafter they harassed Chinese Christians. In October 1899, large “Boxer” disturbances in northwest Shandong forced local authorities to use open force. Governor Yuxian dismissed the dignitaries responsible for suppression of the Yihetuan movement, even though he used the substantiated pretext that their troops have got out of control and endangered peaceful inhabitants.<sup>115</sup> While the Yihetuan movement flourished in Shandong, i.e. on south-eastern border of Zhili, another violent resistance against foreigners was taking place in Russian-occupied Manchuria, to the north-east of Zhili. Manchurian bandits — khunkhuzy (*Honghuzi* — lit. “Redbeards” in Chinese) — were relentlessly attacking Russian targets both before and after the “Boxer Uprising”. Yet their behaviour was too criminal in its nature, and they had no distinct ideology on their own, so their influence on events outside Manchuria was negligible.

At the end of 1899, the situation in Shandong was turbulent, and the interior of the province didn’t resemble sphere of German influence. In November, the “Boxers” started attacking foreign targets and Christian targets on a large scale and at some places engaged in bloody clashes with well-armed converts. Employees of SEG were attacked, and the railway construction was temporarily halted. On December 1, 1899, Anzer reported to Ketteler that German missionary area was at peace.<sup>116</sup> Yet Ketteler’s report of December 16, 1899 reiterated minister’s fear from Chinese sects which have merged with militia.<sup>117</sup> At that time, Shandong had finally received a governor able to cope with the situation. On December 6, 1899, Yuxian was recalled to Beijing “on consultations” and replaced by Yuan Shikai. Yuxian was indeed granted an audience at the court and he spoke in favour of utilization of the Yihetuan movement against the foreigners. This was in absolute accordance with traditional Chinese policy — countless notable military leaders were originally bandits, pirates, insurgents or rascals of all kinds, until they were pardoned by the authorities. In March, 1900, Yuxian was appointed governor of Shanxi, and he became notorious for massacres which took place in that province during the “Boxer Uprising”.

In contrary, Yuan Shikai clearly saw the threat posed by the Boxers” and was fully determined not to get into trouble. Yuan also knew that his power was based solely on the “Newly Created Army”, which followed him to Shandong. “*The first thing Yuan did was to test the Boxers invulnerability.*” In a memorial to the throne of January 13, 1900, Yuan pointed out that several hundreds of “Boxers” were unable to conquer a single fortified church. “*How can they wipe out the foreigners,*” he asked?<sup>118</sup> It is a matter of paradox that the situation in Shandong didn’t improve, and the first murder of a stranger, British missionary Brooks, took place on December 31, 1899, i.e. only after

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<sup>115</sup> ESHERICK, pp. 246–257; MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 177.

<sup>116</sup> PA AA, R 18243. Telegramm Nr. 140. Ketteler an Auswärtiges Amt, Peking, December 7, 1899.

<sup>117</sup> PA AA, R 18244. Nr. 1248. Ketteler an Auswärtiges Amt, Peking, December 16, 1899.

<sup>118</sup> CH’EN, p. 66.

Yuan had assumed his duty in Shandong.<sup>119</sup> Assaults by Chinese mobs on construction workers caused the construction of the Shandong railway to be interrupted anew between December, 1899, and February, 1900.<sup>120</sup> Yet the focus of the Yihetuan movement moved to the metropolitan province of Zhili. At the same time, on January 24, 1900, Prince Duan's son Pujun was appointed heir apparent at last. It was a clear proof of power of the Manchu reactionary clique; but, at the same time, countless reaffirmations of loyalty towards Guangxu arrived from the provinces and even from abroad.<sup>121</sup> Foreign diplomats failed to congratulate Prince Duan, thus even more annoyed him.

With Chinese xenophobes raging in the metropolitan area and Manchu xenophobes at power at the court, the stage for the "Boxer uprising" was prepared. Germany had contributed much to such a development. Arrogant behaviour of her officials and missionaries and brutality of German troops offended and threatened Chinese dignitaries and people alike. Chinese officials have encountered unjust and biased demands of the foreigners and they had the choice between humiliation and immediate threat of dismissal by their own court, which itself was bullied by foreign powers. Chinese religion wasn't respected. Chinese population was forced to pay high indemnities; villages were burnt and people killed. Even though Chinese troops were often behaving in equally or even much more brutal manner towards their country-fellows, they were after all native to the country, whereas the Germans were simply foreigners, unwelcome, despised, and considered "barbarian". To sum up, the encounter between two ancient civilizations, the Western and the Chinese one, took a form of a deathmatch. Many foreigners appreciated that. Already in 1857, Gideon Nye, American vice-consul in Canton, wrote that "*the last armed struggle between Paganism and Christianity*" was taking place in China.<sup>122</sup> Many Chinese, for their part, got the impression that the foreigners were nothing but devils, organizing and arming Chinese criminals and aiming at destroying the very core of Chinese civilization. Since Chinese civilization was considered the only genuine civilization, such destruction would be an analogy of the end of the world. China was ripe for the final battle between light and darkness; yet no-one represented the light.

#### ABSTRACT

Prior to 1897, Sino-German relations were generally peaceful and in some respects beneficiary. Yet since the seizure of Jiaozhou, Germany was following a policy of harshness and used any opportunity to exert pressure on China. This was due to widespread feeling of racial, cultural, and religious superiority. Even though Germany wasn't the first great power to gain Chinese territory after the Sino-Japanese War, German seizure of Jiaozhou started the Scramble for Concessions. Christian missionaries didn't respect Chinese beliefs, and they were in most cases supporting their converts

119 Brooks wasn't killed immediately after his capture. Although he was wounded, he unsuccessfully attempted to escape. Enraged, the bandits beheaded him. MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 178–179; PURCELL, pp. 290–291.

120 PA AA, R 18244. Without number, Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft, Berlin an Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft, Tschingtau, Berlin, February 7, 1900; WENDELS, p. 46.

121 MORSE, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 183–185; HHStA, PA XXIX, China, Kt. 6, Berichte 1900, Nr. 3. Czikanan an Gołuchowski, Peking, February 19, 1900.

122 Quoted in: SCOTT, p. 36. In the original text, the phrase has been emphasised.

against Chinese justice at all costs. The missionaries themselves were supported by Germany. German military had undertaken many punitive expeditions against inhabitants of Shandong, thus radicalized the people. At the same time, the “Boxer” movement had emerged in Shandong. Due to inappropriate response of the authorities, the movement gained significance, and at the eve of the year 1900 it was ready to cause havoc in the metropolitan province of Zhili. At the court in Beijing, the most influential group was represented by anti-foreign aristocrats.

**KEYWORDS**

Germany; China; Qing Dynasty; Triple Intervention; Yellow Peril; Jiaozhou; Qingdao; Boxers; Yihetuan; Imperialism; Missionaries

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