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Boxer Rebellion - III

Lead: Chinese hatred of foreigners in 1900 exploded in the Boxer Rebellion.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Many Chinese resented the presence of western soldiers, diplomats, merchants, and missionaries. The weak Imperial government seemed impotent to face powerful outside forces and by the end of the 1800s bitterness became violence. Chief among those opposed to the foreign devils was a secret fraternity named I Ho Chuan, the

Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, or Boxers. Part of their ritual was a set of physical and spiritual drills in which they would sink into a trance and there battle imaginary demons. Waking, they seethed with hatred for all things foreign.

With little central organization, in 1900 they began to attack Europeans. Men, women and children were hacked to death with swords or burned alive in their compounds. Any Chinese closely associated with foreigners, particularly Christian converts, were singled out for the most exquisite torment. Foreign governments demanded that the Chinese ruler, the Dowager Empress Tzu-hsi, crack down on the Boxers,

but she was a sympathizer, and with her encouragement the attacks spread. By mid-June hundreds of foreigners and many more Chinese Christians were besieged in the diplomatic quarter of Beijing while out in the countryside, the slaughter continued. Finally, in August 1900 an international relief force came up from the coast and broke the siege. Over 200 Christian missionaries and their children had been killed. More than 30,000 Chinese Christians were butchered. China was forced virtually to disarm and to pay enormous reparations.

Ironically, the Boxers' brutality increased western influence. Missionaries returned in greater

numbers. Mission-educated Chinese helped bring about the Revolution of 1911, established the nationalist government, became Marxists, fought the Japanese, founded the Kuomintang's refuge on Taiwan, built the Communist state on the mainland, and today are guiding the nation back to market economics.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts

Resources

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