

tearing down temples and monasteries; destroying Buddhist statues; and taking over people's graveyards. Such evil acts have aroused hatred far and wide. They have also caused swarms of locusts and droughts which harm the trees and plants. Our country is no longer harmonious, and the Chinese people are no longer secure. This has angered Heaven.

Blessed by the great god in Heaven, all the spirits have descended to set up an altar. They will teach our young men how to support the Qing, eliminate the foreigners, and implement virtuous principles on behalf of Heaven. We want to contribute to the country so that it will be at peace; and to help the peasants so that the villages and neighborhoods are safe. In the end, misfortune will come to an end while prosperity returns. Yet, we worry that ignorant people and hooligans will use the support of the foreigners to mistreat the weak. All such behavior should be reported to the local leaders to be dealt with publicly and in accordance with the laws and regulations. It is forbidden to resolve the matter in a purely selfish manner. The eyes of the gods are as sharp as lightning and will see those who are pursuing the cases purely with selfish motives and will punish them accordingly.

The false methods perpetrated by the deluded foreign missionaries have angered Heaven who has ordered the spirits to descend to the divine altar in order to teach the youth. The meaning of Yihetuan [Boxer] is as follows: *yi* means benevolent, and *he* means unified. Benevolence and unity keep villages and neighborhoods peaceful and harmonious. Virtue is the foundation of living. Agriculture is the means by which we make a living. Buddhism is the religion that we should follow. Public matters should not be handled with selfish aims of revenge. It is not allowed to mistreat the poor and the weak. No one should mistake wrong for right.

5.6 SPIRIT BOXER POSSESSION (1900)

The Boxers' success spread primarily from the group's teachings that resonated with China's large peasant class. One distinguishing characteristic of the Boxer movement was that the Boxer teachings offered spells and incantations that permitted spirits to possess all the initiated. Such egalitarian spirit possession made the Boxers an extremely engaging movement. The spells typically gave the initiated some form of protection. The final poem or incantation of invulnerability at the end of the document is typical of many magic charms, amulets, and enchanted objects prevalent during the Boxer movement. There were many slight variations on the wording, and they were often written on paper that would be burned, the ashes mixed in water and then drunk by the initiate.

Questions

1. Why would the Boxers emphasize tearing down railways and ripping up telegraph wires?
2. Why might the common Chinese farmer find it appealing to join the Boxers?

The Spirit Boxers United in Righteousness arose in reaction to the foreign devils' invasion of China. They persuaded people to believe in their religion, in their God, to abandon [Chinese] gods, and ignore our ancestors and spirits. Their men are amoral and their women licentious, all the devil children are born from mothers and sons. If you do not trust this, look carefully at all foreigners, their eyes are blue. There is no rain coming from above and down below only drought, all because the churches are

WHITE LOTUS

SOCIETY—A secret society based on a mixture of Buddhist, Daoist, and local spiritual beliefs prevalent since the seventeenth century, it was declared heretical and prohibited by the Qing government.

blocking the sky. Spirits are angry and the fairies are mad, together they come down the mountain to show us the correct way. [Our teaching] is not heretical, it is not the **White Lotus** Teachings. It is nothing but reciting spells and reading incantations; learning the true words, burning yellow prayer paper and burning incense; inviting spirits and fairies from all their caves. Fairies leave their caves, spirits come down from mountains, and possess one's body allowing them to perform the "boxing movements." All martial arts are wholly understood. Defeating the foreigners will not be difficult at all. We tear down the railways, rip up the electric poles, rush to destroy the steam ships. France is terribly scared; Britain, America, Germany and Russia will all disappear. All foreigners will be wiped out. The Great Qing will unite once more.

Incantation of Invulnerability:

*United brothers will give it their all,
Each blade of grass and every tree become our warriors.
When ordinary bodies are possessed by magic,
All foreigners will surely be exterminated.*

5.7 IMPERIAL EDICT TO "DECLARE WAR" (JUNE 21, 1900)

After several weeks of vacillation and indecision, the Qing court issued this declaration of war against all foreigners residing in China. As irrational as the Dowager Empress Cixi's support of the Boxers may seem, the edict captures the profound fear and loathing felt by many Chinese citizens for the imperious style of foreigners in China. Very few of the assertions made in this declaration are made without any basis. It more significantly underscores the pent-up frustration over the inability to develop ways to contain the foreign powers. The Dowager Empress and her advisors did not, however, have the complete support of Qing officials, many of whom implored them not to offer another pretext for foreign aggression against China.

Questions

1. What factors led the Dowager Empress to declare war?
2. Who is the primary audience for the edict?

On the 25th day of 5th month, Guangxu 26th year. [June 21, 1900]

Ever since the foundation of the Dynasty over two hundred years ago, foreigners coming to China have been treated kindly. In the Daoguang (1821–1850) and Xianfeng (1851–1861) reigns, they were allowed to trade. They also asked to propagate their religion, a request that the Throne reluctantly granted. At first, they were amenable to Chinese control, but for the past thirty years they have taken advantage of China's forbearance to encroach on China's territory, trample on the Chinese people and to demand China's wealth. Every concession made by China only heightened their reliance on violence. They oppressed peaceful citizens and insulted our gods and religious leaders. Their actions provoked a burning fury within the people, hence the burning of chapels and slaughter of converts by patriotic warriors. The Throne was anxious to avoid war, like previous protectors, we worried about harming our people. Therefore, time and time again we issued edicts protecting the legations and defending the [Christian] converts. The earlier decrees stating that the Boxers and converts are all our children were issued with the hope of ending the feud between commoners and converts. Exceptional kindness was shown towards the "people from afar" [i.e., foreigners]. But these

people knew no gratitude and increased their pressure. A dispatch was yesterday sent by George Du Chaylard, calling us to turn over the Dagu Forts to them, otherwise they would be taken by force. These threats only serve to reveal their aggressive intentions. In all matters relating to international intercourse, we have never been wanting in civility. But while styling themselves as “civilized states” they continue to act with complete disregard to what is right, depending solely on their military force. I have now reigned for nearly 30 years and have treated the people as children, and the people in return have treated me as their divinity. In the midst of our reign we have been the recipients of the gracious favor of the Dowager Empress. Furthermore, our ancestors have come to our aid, the gods have answered our call, and never has there been so universal a manifestation of loyalty and patriotism. With tears have I announced war in the ancestral shrines. Better to enter the struggle and do our utmost than seek some measures of self-preservation involving eternal disgrace. All our officials, high and low, are of one mind, and there have assembled without official summons several hundred thousand patriotic soldiers [Boxers]. Even children are carrying spears in the service of the State. Those others [foreigners] rely on devious schemes, our trust is in Heaven’s justice. They depend on violence, we on humanity. Not to speak of the righteousness of our cause, our provinces number more than twenty, our people over 400,000,000. It will not be difficult to vindicate the dignity of our country.

We conclude this decree by promising heavy rewards to those who distinguish themselves in battle or subscribe funds, and threatening punishment to those who show cowardice or act treacherously.

5.8 BOXER PROTOCOL (SEPTEMBER 7, 1901)

From the moment the eight allied nations decided upon the need for a multinational force, disagreements between them emerged. Fearful of Japan’s intentions in China, the European and American governments refused Japan’s proposition to send 20,000–30,000 troops to relieve the siege of Beijing, effectively postponing the relief mission for six weeks, until the other nations could transport their forces to China. The allied troops entered Tianjin in early July and reached Beijing in early August. Once the troops had occupied the city, they plundered and looted the Yihe Yuan in a grim repeat of the 1860 Anglo-French destruction of the Old Summer Palace (Yuanming Yuan) four decades earlier. It took nearly a year for the various governments to agree upon demands to impose on China. The final protocol required China to pay an indemnity of 450 million taels (or roughly 333 million US gold dollars at 1901 exchange rates). It was the largest indemnity in China’s history and effectively bankrupted the imperial treasury, already in a state of financial crisis.

Questions

1. What goals does the protocol appear to be pursuing? How does an indemnity of 450 million taels help or hinder them?
2. What role does the fear of anti-foreignism in China play in the protocol (specifically Articles IIa, X, and XII)?

Article Ia

By an Imperial Edict of the 9th of June last, Zaifeng, Prince of Chun, was appointed Ambassador of His Majesty the Emperor of China, and directed