

THE CHINESE LABOR CORPS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR:
FORGOTTEN ALLIES AND POLITICAL PAWNS

by

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ABSTRACT

THE CHINESE LABOR CORPS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR:
FORGOTTEN ALLIES, IMPERIALIST PAWNS

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By the beginning of the twentieth century, China was considered the “Sick Man of Asia.” Almost eighty percent of its territory and infrastructure were controlled by European powers and Japan. Although many anticipated China’s demise, the Chinese people were determined for China to remain intact as an independent nation. The First World War was an opportunity for the restoration of China’s sovereignty. Chinese officials believed they could successfully plead their case for the restoration of Chinese sovereignty at the post-war peace conference, but it first had to become a participant in the war. Most of the European belligerents controlled concession territory in China, and it was feared war might erupt in Asia. Believing the Chinese army was too weak to defend against Western armies, the Chinese quickly declared neutrality at the outset of the war. However, they began to search for a way for China to participate in the war without violating its neutrality. Eventually, a scheme was devised in coordination with the British and French governments to establish the Chinese Labor Corps (CLC), and approximately 200,000 Chinese laborers were sent to Europe to assist the Allies during the First World War.

This thesis recounts the story of the Chinese Labor Corps by first exploring the events

that led to China's involvement in the First World War, including Germany's establishment of Kiautschou leasehold in Shantung Province. It also describes conditions in China leading up to the war, including the overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty and the creation of the first Chinese republic. The thesis continues with a discussion on the creation of the CLC and labor corps' experiences in Europe, including the invaluable service rendered by the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) that made life during the war bearable for the Chinese laborers. To conclude, this thesis discusses the repercussions of the decisions made at the Paris Peace Conference, including the May 4th Movement and China's subsequent turning away from the West.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Entire sections of libraries and bookstores are filled with books about the First World War, but few mention China's participation in the war. China was in fact one of approximately twenty-six allied nations.¹ However, unlike many that were allies in name only, China sent approximately 200,000 non-combat labor troops to Europe to assist the Allies.²

China gradually lost sovereignty over much of its territory in the last half of the nineteenth century. By 1914, almost eighty percent of China and its infrastructure were controlled by European nations and Japan. Germany was a late comer in obtaining concession territory, but to the Chinese people it was far more egregious than other European powers. Germany's Kiautschou leasehold was located in Shantung Province, the birthplace of China's two most revered philosophers, Confucius and Mencius. The Chinese considered Shantung sacred territory, the "birthplace of Chinese civilization." They wanted sovereignty restored over all their land, especially Shantung Province.

The First World War was an opportunity for China to regain its sovereignty. According to international law, all participants in a war are eligible to participate in the post-war peace conference. Chinese officials believed that if they could assist the Allies in winning the war, they could successfully plead their case to have China's sovereignty restored. Surely, the Western powers would gratefully acquiesce and reward China by returning its territory.

The Chinese government's dilemma was finding a way to participate in the war. Most of the European belligerents controlled concession territory in China, and Chinese officials feared the war would spread to Asia. Believing their army was too weak to defend against the Western armies, the Chinese government quickly declared neutrality at the outset of the war. Yet, they began to search for a way to insinuate China into the war without violating its neutrality. One of

these attempts was the Chinese Labor Corps (CLC), a corps of non-combat laborers. On August 14, 1917, China finally declared war on Germany and announced it was prepared to send combat troops to Europe. Transport ships were limited, however, and the priority was transporting American troops to Europe. As a result, Chinese combat troops were never deployed, but the CLC arrived in France in 1916.

Although much has been made in recent years of China emerging from its isolation and engaging with the world; that is exactly what the Chinese were doing at the turn of the last century. Sending labor troops to Europe was an attempt by China to engage in world events and to be recognized and accepted as an equal among nations. This paper explores the history of the CLC, including events that led to the government's creation of the Chinese Labor Corps, and the repercussions from its involvement in the war and the subsequent peace conference. The first chapter recounts the establishment of Germany's Kiautschou leasehold in Shantung, which directly led to China's involvement in the First World War. The second chapter focuses on conditions in China and the events that led to the overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China. The third chapter describes the Chinese Labor Corps and the Chinese laborer's experiences in Europe, including the invaluable services rendered by the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) to the CLC. Chapter four concludes with a discussion of the repercussions from decisions made at the Paris Peace Conference, including the May 4th Movement and China's subsequent turning away from the West.

This paper argues that the CLC was essentially a pawn manipulated by a number of entities. It was first a pawn of the British, French, and American powers. Second, it was a pawn of its own government, which used it to obtain a seat at the Paris Peace Conference to plead its case for restoration of its sovereignty over Chinese territory. Finally, it can be argued that the CLC was a pawn of the YMCA. The YMCA provided incalculable services for the CLC, serving as translators, improving camp conditions and making life bearable for the Chinese laborers far from home. Their benevolent work was undoubtedly done with the best of intentions. Yet, the

YMCA also viewed the CLC with an eye to the future. They considered the Chinese laborers emissaries that would return home to recount their experiences in the West, including the services rendered by the YMCA, and would thereby spread the Christian word among their fellow countrymen. In this way, the CLC was a pawn the YMCA establishment nurtured, hoping to use them to promote the YMCA and Western Christianity to the Chinese people.

Additionally, themes of nationalism, internationalism, and transnationalism, as well as national identity and survival thread through this paper. Germany and China were both struggling to develop national identities and to be recognized and accepted by the more established imperialist nations. Germany, unified only since 1871, was still developing as a nation and attempting to establish itself as a world power. China was also struggling to define itself as a nation. It was in a state of chaos since its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. The turmoil resulted in the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1911-12, which was replaced with the first Chinese republic. China was struggling to define itself as a nation and emerge from the isolation imposed by the Ch'ing to take its place on the world stage. Imperialist European nations had long had a presence in China, but it would ultimately be Germany, a new comer to Chinese colonial politics, and its leasehold at Kiautschou that would serve as an impetus to China's involvement in the First World War. It is hoped that this paper will provide a better understanding of events that occurred a century ago, repercussions from which are still being felt throughout the world.

CHAPTER 2

GERMANY AND THE KIAUTSCHOU LEASEHOLD

In 1919, Kung Hsiang-ko, a seventy-fifth generation direct descendant of Confucius, traveled to the Paris Peace Conference as a special provincial delegate to plead for Shantung Province to be returned to Chinese sovereignty.³ As the site of the birthplace and temple of Confucius at Qufu as well as the sacred Daoist mountain, Taishan, Shantung had long been considered sacred territory, regarded as “the birthplace of Chinese civilization.”⁴ Although much of China’s territory and infrastructure were already under Western control, it was a particularly deep wound to the Chinese psyche when first Germany (1897-98) and then Japan (1914) seized control of Shantung. Despite Kung’s emotional plea and the fact that China sent an estimated 200,000 labor troops to Europe to assist the Allies in the First World War hoping to be rewarded with the return of Shantung, the Versailles Treaty instead upheld Japan’s claim to the territory.

How did Germany, and subsequently Japan, come to control Shantung? And, how did this lead to the largest influx of Asians into Europe since Genghis Khan and the Mongolian invasion of the thirteenth century? Much of China’s territory was controlled by Western nations by the beginning of the First World War, but it was Germany’s leasehold at Kiautschou that caused the most resentment and ultimately drew China into the First World War.

The story of the Kiautschou leasehold is a microcosm of the struggle that occurred between China and the West in the nineteenth century. This chapter focuses on Germany’s Kiautschou leasehold in Shantung Province in northeastern China, detailing how it was established and how it served as an impetus to China’s participation in the First World War. This chapter begins by contextualizing early contact between Central Europe and China, first with missionaries and merchants, and later followed by official diplomatic relations. It also explores

the shift from a Sinophilic to a Sinophobic paradigm, a shift that would portend grave consequences for the Chinese. Sparked by the European Enlightenment, Sinophobia took root in the age of Imperialism and provided justification for the Europeans to take control of Chinese territory on the pretext of “saving” China with Western modernity and Christianity.

This paper further illustrates how Germany and China struggled to develop their national identities, and how they aspired to be recognized and accepted by the more established imperialist nations. Germany, unified only since 1871, was still developing as a nation and attempting to establish itself as a world power. China was also struggling to define itself as a nation. It had been in a state of disarray since its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. The turmoil resulted in the overthrow of the Ch’ing dynasty in 1911-12, which was replaced with the first Chinese republic. Slowly emerging from the Ch’ing imposed isolation, China attempted to take its place on the world stage. Although imperialist European nations had long had a presence in China, it would ultimately be Germany - a new comer to Chinese colonial politics – and its leasehold at Kiautschou that lead to China’s involvement in the First World War. This paper is intended to provide a better understanding of events that occurred a century ago, repercussions from which are still being felt throughout the world.

Portugal led the European nations in establishing a foothold in China in 1553 when they established a trading post on Macau Peninsula. Catholic missionaries soon followed, but not until 1611 did Spain and Portugal allow missionaries of other countries to work overseas.⁵ The Jesuit Johann Adam Schall von Bell from Köln (Cologne) arrived in China from Lisbon in 1619 and impressed the Chinese with his scientific skills as a mathematician and astronomer. He became a friend and mentor to Emperor Sun-chih and received many awards and honors, including being named a mandarin of the first class.⁶

Schall von Bell and the Jesuits were prolific in converting the Chinese to Christianity. They are credited with at least 150,000 conversions by 1651, including members of the royal family. However, Schall von Bell was never able to convert the emperor and later, when the

emperor took an interest in Buddhism, the Jesuits began to lose their influence. The Jesuits also fell out of favor with Rome and the order was disbanded in 1773. By that time, a number of other missionary orders were established in China, but the Jesuits disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century.⁷

Schall von Bell and the Jesuits were significant for their “accommodationist” strategy to missionary work.⁸ They were instructed to “Sinocize” themselves rather than “Portugalize” the Chinese.⁹ Their writings conveyed an admiration and appreciation of Chinese culture that introduced the Celestial Kingdom to a Europe not too far removed from the Middle Ages. George Steinmetz discusses European Sinophilia, its influence in literature, art, architecture and society, and its contributions to European development in the early modern era.¹⁰ Their Sinophilia stands in stark contrast to the pervasive Sinophobia exhibited by later missionaries, instilled with a nationalistic and religious sense of European superiority.

While European writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries described the Chinese as “very white,” and “in color and complexion...like the people of Europe,” by the eighteenth century, European writers were influenced by French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, who followed Johann Blumenbach’s categorization of the Chinese as Mongols rather than Caucasian. Blumenbach, a professor at the University of Göttingen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, developed a schema of five races and described the Mongol race as an “extreme degeneration of the human species.”¹¹ Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Chinese turned from “white” to “yellow” in the eyes of Europeans and were increasingly described as “half-civilized,” “savages,” and “barbarians.” Elizabeth von Heyking, wife of the German Minister to China, and author of *Letters that Never Reached Him*, a best seller in Wilhelmine Germany, wrote that the Chinese were “crying aloud for foreign conquest.”¹² This societal shift to a paradigm of Sinophobia had grave consequences for the Chinese. Whereas early Europeans were in awe of the Chinese and their culture, by the nineteenth century they disparaged the Chinese as backward barbarians in need of Christianity,

education, and modernization from the superior Europeans, as a justification for European imperialism and domination of China.

In the seventeenth century, a significant land trade developed between central Europe and China via Russia, but it came to an end in the early nineteenth century due to Russian tax policy.¹³ Sea trade was also established. The first European sea traders in China were the Portuguese, establishing a trading post on Macau Peninsula in 1553. In 1747, merchant ships from Hamburg, Bremen, Emden, and others sailing under the Prussian flag, landed at Canton.¹⁴ Other countries soon followed and trade expanded to other areas of China. In an attempt to minimize Western contact with China, the Canton System was established which limited the number of ports open to foreign ships. Westerners were restricted to trading only with members of the *Co-hong*, an association of Chinese merchants, and they were prohibited from entering the Chinese interior or having any contact with Chinese citizens.¹⁵ When the Portuguese established their trading post at Macau in 1553, rather than forcibly ejecting them from Chinese territory, the Chinese simply walled off the peninsula to prevent further Portuguese expansion into the interior.¹⁶ Thus, from the earliest arrival of Westerners, China relied on a strategy of passivity and containment to limit Western incursion and influence in China.

Through a series of Unequal Treaties between the British and the Ch'ing Dynasty following the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century, China was forced to begin opening its borders. These treaties are known as the Unequal Treaties because of the inequality in powerful European nations coercing a much weaker China into signing over much of its territory, resources, and infrastructure. The Treaty of Nanking (1842) following the First Opium War opened the first five treaty ports, including the lease of Hong Kong to the British.¹⁷ Another eleven treaty ports were opened by the Convention of Peking (1860) following the Second Opium War. Among other things, these treaties provided for foreign legations to be established in Peking, and perhaps most significantly, foreigners were allowed greater access to the Chinese interior for purposes of trade, travel, and missionary work.¹⁸

Although missionaries and merchants from Central Europe had established themselves in China, they were at a disadvantage in not having official diplomatic recognition and relations with China. Prior to 1806, Central Europe remained a part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1806, the Confederation of the Rhine was established, replaced by the German Confederation in 1815, and subsequently, the North German Confederation in 1866. German unification occurred in 1871 under Wilhelm I. In times, individual states and free cities conducted trade and foreign relations independently or through loosely organized trade confederations. Was there a united German Empire. German merchants traded with China using British treaty ports. However, Anglo-German relations were becoming more strained as the rivalry between the two countries intensified. In 1849, there were thirty-three German merchants and four German trading companies in China. By the early 1860s, Germany controlled as much as two-thirds of the Chinese coastal trade.¹⁹

Despite the increase in trade, German merchants feared a British monopoly over trade with China and they pressed the Prussian government, the dominant German state, to intervene. The government declined saying they did not think German interests in China warranted intervention, and even if it did, they had no fleet. The merchants began to lobby for the creation of a naval fleet. Unlike the officer corps of the army, drawn largely from the Junkers, naval officers were more likely to come out of the ranks of the mercantile and educated middle class. This formed the basis of a long-standing coalition between the navy and the merchant class.²⁰

In 1859, the Prussian government finally acceded to the merchants' wishes to establish official relations with China. An expedition of four ships with a delegation headed by Friedrich von Eulenburg arrived in China in 1861 just as negotiations of the Treaties of Tientsin from the Convention of Peking were being finalized. Eulenburg was determined to obtain better privileges than the British and French had negotiated. Few Chinese had heard of Prussia, however, and they refused to meet with them. It was only at the behest of the British and French

that Chinese officials agreed to meet with the Prussians and Eulenburg was lucky to get an agreement similar to that of the other European nations.²¹

In addition to negotiating the first official commercial treaty with China, the expedition was significant for two reasons. It marked the first time Prussia negotiated for the united North German Confederation. Secondly, the expedition included Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, geographer, geologist, and explorer, who would later be influential in the choice of Chiao-chou Bay as the best site for a German colony.²² Between 1868 and 1872, Richthofen made seven trips to China, visiting thirteen provinces. His expeditions were funded by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of assessing the country's mining potential. As he traveled through China, Richthofen kept an eye open for the best location to establish a German colony that could be developed into a sphere of interest.²³

As the number of German merchants trading with China increased, there was a greater demand for protection of their interests in Asia. By the 1860s, both the merchants and the navy were lobbying for the creation of a permanent East Asian fleet and base. Their pleas were not ignored. Prussia was becoming more interested in establishing a foothold in China, and in 1867, they established a depot and hospital at Yokohama, Japan. The following year, Prussia began building corvette gunboats. The first corvettes arrived in 1869, thereby establishing the East Asian fleet, the first permanent Prussian fleet in foreign waters.²⁴

For Germany, the second half of the nineteenth century was a time of rapid industrialization and economic growth. It was quickly catching up with Great Britain, and in some cases surpassed it. In 1860, England produced twice the amount of steel as Germany. By the beginning of the First World War, the two nations had experienced a reversal in fortunes and German steel production was more than twice that of England. German industrialization was on the rise.²⁵ In *Germany in the Fin de Siècle*, Suzanne Marchand and David Lindenfeld suggest that while other European nations, particularly France and Austria, were experiencing a *fin de siècle*, Germany was experiencing more of a "commencement" than a "fin."²⁶

As Germany became more interested in China, China's interest in Germany was also growing. Chinese politicians and military officials came to admire Prussia following its success in the Franco-Prussian War and the subsequent German unification. They viewed Germany as a role model of a weak nation rapidly remaking itself into a powerful and efficient state and they took inspiration from the German military organization and sought to strengthen their relationship with Germany. By the late 1890s, some Chinese were even advocating the adoption of a German-style government. They viewed the German system, with an independent and powerful executive, as more consistent with Chinese tradition than the British system.²⁷

Li Hung-chang, one of the most powerful and influential imperial bureaucrats, was particularly impressed with Germany. He believed Germany had much to offer, and decided to use it as a foil against other nations. His strategy was to develop a close relationship with one foreign country, using tactics such as selecting advisors from that country and awarding special favors and privileges. The other nations would then take care not to be too demanding of territory, privileges, etc., in an attempt to maintain good relations with China. When the favored nation would get too influential and powerful, Li and the Chinese government would begin to curry favor with another nation and distance themselves from the previously favored nation. In this way, Li played the nations against each other and kept them all in check. He chose Gustav Detring, the German Customs Commissioner, as his chief advisor on foreign affairs and he maximized the use of German personnel as a calculated move to undercut the influence British advisors enjoyed at that time. Li also chose a German, Constantin von Hanneken to develop what was then a "windbound junk harbor" into China's greatest naval port, Port Arthur.²⁸

The Germans understood Li's strategy and, in turn, began to cultivate a closer relationship with him, encouraging his inclination to look to the Germans for help in improving China's military and other matters of self-strengthening. German minister to Peking, Max von Brandt, interceded with Berlin on Li's behalf to such an extent that he was criticized for being "overly acquiescent" toward the Chinese.²⁹

By 1895, the volume of German business in China was second only to Great Britain, but far ahead of that of other nations. German imports to China were primarily matches, cloth, sewing needles, and military equipment and weaponry. Thanks to Li's interest in the German military, Krupp enjoyed a virtual monopoly on military equipment going to China in the early 1880s. After 1885, China ceased having its ships built in Germany, but Germany remained its primary supplier of military equipment.³⁰

Germany was also second to Great Britain in the number of firms established in China,³¹ and it was reported to have the second largest number of individuals engaged in business in China, although precise figures are difficult to determine.³² Yet, Germany had no concession of its own in China. It continued to trade under the aegis of the British, using British treaty ports, but this was becoming untenable. The Germans often had to wait for facilities and services at the British ports. A reservation had to be made nine months in advance to have a ship overhauled at the Hong Kong shipyards, and coal was increasingly difficult to obtain for German steamships. During the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895, it was sometimes impossible to obtain coal.³³ For the Germans, this reinforced the need for a coaling station and base of its own.

Following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, many believed China was on the verge of collapse. Just as the Ottoman Empire at that time was known as the "sick man of Europe," China was known as the "sick man of Asia." For years, Western nations had been nibbling at China, undercutting and destabilizing its sovereignty. Now they hovered nearby, poised to snatch up the spoils of the once glorious Celestial Empire. Germany was determined to get its share of the spoils, too.

In 1870, Bismarck authorized Guido von Rehfues, Prussian minister in Peking, to negotiate on behalf of the North German Confederation for a naval base centrally located on the Chinese coast. The Chinese refused and Bismarck did not press the point. John Schrecker suggests that Bismarck's early interest in establishing a Chinese naval base was influenced, at

least in part, by Richthofen's optimistic report on the Chinese coast.³⁴ It also might have been a reflection of the widespread belief in Germany that China offered significant economic opportunities. Bismarck sought to avoid conflict with the British, but he became increasingly supportive of private enterprises that could advance Germany's economic interests. In 1885, he fought hard to win a subsidy for a German steamship line similar to subsidies other countries provided for their steamship lines traveling to China. In 1886, Norddeutscher Lloyd received the subsidy and began service to China. Bismarck also supported the establishment of a German bank in China. However, bankers and financiers were among the most hesitant to invest in Chinese enterprises and it was not until 1889-90 that the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank and the Konsortium für asiatische Geschäfte was established, thus becoming the first financial institution in China operated by foreigners other than the British.³⁵

Meanwhile, the Chinese were also beginning to consider establishing a new naval base. The Chinese defeat in the Sino-French War in 1884-1885 roused the Chinese to the necessity for naval reform and development. In 1885, China established its first Bureau of the Navy. The following year, Hsü Ching-ch'eng, Chinese minister and advocate for naval reform, urged the government to develop Chiao-chou Bay. His recommendations were largely based on Richthofen's book, *Travels in China*. Published in 1882, the second volume focused on northern China with Richthofen spending considerable time describing Shantung Province. Other officials agreed with Hsü, but insisted Port Arthur and Taku (location later changed to Weihaiwai) were more important and needed to be finished first. Hsü recommended building fortifications, but when he visited Chiao-chou Bay in 1891, this had not been done.³⁶ Hsü again warned the governor of the need to fortify the area. He believed an enemy seeking a bay from which to launch an attack would look for an undefended anchorage such as Chiao-chou. As a result, four battalions under General Chang Kao-yuan were transferred to Chiao-chou where they remained, except for a short period during the war with Japan, until the German occupation in

1897. Chang constructed barracks and installed a telegraph line to the interior, but by 1897 only one of three gun batteries had been built.³⁷

As China was suffering a shattering defeat at the hands of the Japanese, Germany was preparing for a more aggressive foreign policy in answer to the clamoring of influential sections of German society. This included establishing a foothold in China, but to accomplish this, Germany needed to upgrade its navy. Although Germany was the second most powerful nation in the world, its navy was ranked fifth. By 1895, a group of more reform-minded naval commanders were in charge of the navy, in particular Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. By 1896, under Tirpitz' leadership, the navy's plans for a foothold in China had evolved from a coaling station, to a naval base, to a commercial center, to an economic sphere of interest.³⁸ Tirpitz believed a strong navy was essential to maintain a robust economy and increase Germany's political influence in order to become an international power.³⁹

Tirpitz was named commander of the East Asia Squadron in 1896 with instructions to evaluate potential locations for a base. Just as Hsü before him, Tirpitz was also greatly influenced by Richthofen's book, which included glowing reports of Chiao-chou Bay, Shantung's vast coal deposits, and its potential for economic development.⁴⁰ It had erroneously been reported that Chiao-chou Bay froze over in the winter. Once this was confirmed not to be true and a matter of prior Russian claim to the bay was cleared up, it was decided that Chiao-chou Bay was the best possible site for a complete territorial sphere of interest.⁴¹

Chiao-chou Bay is a large inlet about midway up the southern side of Shantung Peninsula. It is fifteen miles long by fifteen miles wide, with a two-mile wide opening to the sea and a flat strip of land bordering the bay that widens at its tip. Richthofen found the bay vacant except for a few small fishing villages and a small junk harbor that had been doing business with south China for more than a millennium. On the ocean side of the inlet was a small island called Ch'ing-tao (green island), hence the name Tsingtau for the capital city of the future

German leasehold. Prior to the 1890s, it was a very isolated location without Western ships, missionaries, or the Mexican Peso, the symbol of Western commerce.⁴²

Beginning in October 1895, Germany made repeated requests for a Chinese base of operations. China acknowledged its friendship with Germany and granted two long-desired concessions at Tientsin and Hankow, but it refused to allow Germany a permanent base, fearful other Western nations would make similar demands.⁴³ Nevertheless, the fall of 1896 found the German navy making plans for a colony. Although the Germans had not yet mentioned a specific location, it was an open secret that Chiao-chou Bay was their target. In December 1896, German Foreign Minister Edmund von Heyking asked the Tsungli Yamen (the Chinese Foreign Office) specifically for Chiao-chao Bay for the first time. China again refused. It was clear China would not willingly give up its territory and Germany would need some pretext to occupy the Bay.⁴⁴

That year at a New Year's ceremony, Ching-hsien, president of the Board of Finance, pulled at Minister Heyking's sleeve when he made a ceremonial mistake in the presence of the Emperor. Heyking blew this up out of proportion, claiming to have been "seriously insulted." He demanded that Ching-hsien come immediately to the German embassy to apologize, otherwise he would break off diplomatic relations with China. The Tsungli Yamen agreed to the demand, realizing the Germans were looking for a pretext, regardless how flimsy it might be.⁴⁵ In September 1897, Heyking received instructions from Berlin to advise Peking that, if the need arose, the Germans planned to anchor warships at Chiao-chou Bay that winter. China finally decided it was time to reinforce the military defenses at Chiao-chou, but by then it was too little, too late.⁴⁶

On October 30, while Heyking was traveling up the Yangtze River, some locals threw stones at German sailors on the *SMS Cormoran*. Heyking sent a demand for restitution, which again was immediately agreed to.⁴⁷ The Germans were preparing to act on this most recent "provocation" when an even more serious incident occurred. On the night of November 1, 1897,

two German Catholic priests from the Steyl Mission were killed in Chü-yeh-hsien in southwestern Shantung Province.⁴⁸ This was not an isolated incident. Violence against missionaries had been occurring for decades, but it was just the pretext Germany needed.

The German Societas Verbi Divini (the Society of the Divine Word), or Steyl Mission, as it was known, was founded in 1875. Because of the Kulturkampf in Germany, the society was established in the small town of Steyl, Netherlands. The order was established for the express purpose of challenging the dominance of French Catholic missionary work around the world, in response to the lingering tension and resentment following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.⁴⁹

In 1880, Johann Anzer, an aggressive missionary and German nationalist, was the first Steyl priest to arrive in China. He demanded German protection, but the Treaty of Tientsin of 1858 recognized France as the official Protectorate of all Catholics in China, serving as intermediary with the Chinese for all Catholics, regardless of nationality. The French were also responsible for issuing passports required for travel and residency in China's interior. This put the French in an excellent position to exert influence and obtain special concessions and privileges from the Chinese government.⁵⁰ Bishop Anzer and German Minister Brandt lobbied for Germany to take over the protection of German Catholic missionaries. For political reasons, Germany took no action until 1886 when it requested permission from the Vatican to assume the Protectorate of German Catholics. In 1888, with no decision forthcoming, the Germans and Italians declared they would no longer recognize passports issued to their nationals by other governments. Two years later the Vatican made this change official.⁵¹

Anzer was also determined to force the Chinese to open the holy city of Yanzhou, the city where Confucius had lived.⁵² The French Treaty of 1860 banned Christian missionaries from this sensitive area in southwestern Shantung, but this did not deter Anzer. He proceeded to settle there, bringing in other missionaries and establishing a seminary. Not surprisingly, anti-Christian violence proliferated. On the evening of November 1, 1897, Frs. Francis Nies and

Richard Henle, two Steyl missionaries, were murdered, presumably by members of one of the anti-foreigner, anti-Christian secret societies that flourished in Shantung at that time.⁵³

While the anti-Christian and anti-foreign violence is often explained with a dismissive reference to a hatred of Christians, recent scholarship suggests the resentment and antagonism had less to do with religion and more to do with the practice of Christian missionaries intervening in legal matters on behalf of their converts, especially when unwarranted. Regardless of the specifics of the case, missionaries often intervened for their converts and were usually influential enough to prevail. For many rural Chinese, “conversion” was simply a strategy for survival. This caused much resentment and ill will among non-Christian Chinese that often manifested itself in violence, and would eventually escalate into the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.⁵⁴

The murder of Frs. Henle and Nies set in motion events the Germans had long awaited. On November 14, 1897 at seven o'clock in the morning, Admiral Otto von Diederichs sailed into Chiao-chou Bay and landed seven hundred men near the Chinese garrison. This was a small contingent compared to Chang Kao-yuan's troops, yet Chang made no attempt to prevent the Germans from sailing into the bay or landing ashore. At noon, Diederichs issued an ultimatum giving Chang three hours to depart, leaving all weapons behind, except rifles. By two-thirty that afternoon, Chang and his troops were departing and the German flag was flying over what they now called Kiautschou Bay.⁵⁵

By December, Chinese officials were urging a quick settlement with the Germans in an attempt to prevent other Western nations from following their lead. Despite China's attempt to negotiate terms, Germany was in a position to get virtually everything it wanted. On March 6, 1898, the Chinese and Germans signed a treaty giving Germany, among other things, a ninety-nine year lease with sole sovereignty over the bay, the surrounding territory, and a fifty-mile neutral zone between the German leasehold and the Chinese-controlled hinterland, in which the German military would have free access.⁵⁶ Germany also obtained the right to build three

railways, the first from Tsingtau to Tsinan, the provincial capital of Shantung. Mining rights were also obtained within a 30 li (10 mile) wide strip along the length of the railroads. The proposed railway lines conveniently transected almost every coalfield Richthofen mentioned in his book. In addition, the treaty bound the Chinese government to build three new cathedrals and seven bishopric residences, as well as pay monetary damages to the Steyl mission.⁵⁷

Thus, the Germans had their leasehold in China and they were determined to create a better-organized and managed colony than that of any European nation. They wanted their colony to be like British Hong Kong, as independent of China as possible. From the German point of view, their plans for a "German Hong Kong" was nothing more than what the British had already done, except the Germans were determined to do it better.⁵⁸ From the Chinese point of view, however, the Germans were more egregious. For the first time, a foreign country had complete autonomy - not shared control - over a portion of mainland China.⁵⁹ That the leasehold was located in the sacred territory of Confucius' and Mencius' birthplaces made it that much worse.

Just as the Chinese predicted, other countries were emboldened to demand additional leaseholds and concessions. This scramble for territory resulted in Russia taking control of Port Arthur and Talienwan, Great Britain negotiating a lease for Weihaiwai and all the islands in its bay including Liukung, the base for China's northern naval fleet, and France obtained a lease for Kwangchuan in Kwangtung Province. In addition, there were a number of railroad and mining concessions.⁶⁰ By 1910, foreign countries dominated the Chinese economy. Foreigners controlled 84 percent of shipping, 34 percent of cotton-yarn spinning, 93 percent of railroads, and 100 percent of iron production. Foreigners were also involved in such diverse industries as banking, textile manufacturing, sugar-refining, spinning and weaving, tobacco, and public utilities. No industry was left untouched by foreigners and what little infrastructure was still under Chinese control was used in payment of indemnities to foreign governments or as collateral for

loans.⁶¹ By 1918, seventy-nine percent of China's 4,300,000 sq. mi. of territory was controlled by other nations.⁶²

Nevertheless, the Germans had what they wanted and they wasted no time starting work on their sphere of interest. Aside from being the first autonomous foreign leasehold on the Chinese mainland, the Kiautschou leasehold was unusual in being the only German colony managed by the navy rather than the Colonial Department. Not only did they want to develop a "German Hong Kong" more successful than British Hong Kong, but they also wanted to prove they could do a better job at constructing and managing a colony than the Colonial Department was doing with its colonies in Africa and the South Pacific.⁶³

No detail was left to chance. Admiral Otto von Diederichs, commander of the troops landing at Kiautschou and self-styled "Governor" of Shantung, issued a decree on the day the Germans arrived placing a moratorium on the buying and selling of land. The navy's plan was to purchase all the land it needed at fair prices and then act as land agent, selling lots at reasonable prices for commercial and residential development. In this way, Kiautschou escaped the rash of land grabbing and price gouging experienced in other areas of China.⁶⁴

A virtual *tabula rasa*, Tsingtau was built literally from the ground up. The Germans relocated the local residents and then burned down the fishing villages to clear space to construct a city, Tsingtau. The navy drew up elaborate plans for Tsingtau. They developed zoning restrictions and building codes for residential and commercial areas, as well as segregated areas for the Chinese and European populations, which included exclusive neighborhoods of mansions and villas for the latter. Interestingly, the Japanese were included in the European sector. Locations were predetermined for a railroad station, hospitals, churches, schools, a business district, a governor's mansion, and a courthouse, as well as boulevards, electricity, telephone and telegraph lines, water and sewage systems, gardens, a beach and recreational area, and more. The Germans also initiated a program of forestation, planting millions of trees, and supported private enterprises such as a shipyard, a soap factory, a

tannery, a pottery factory, a barrel company, a sausage firm, two albumen companies, a soda water company, a silk factory, a brewery, and schools to educate a potential work force.⁶⁵ By 1904, Westerners residing in China considered Tsingtau a modern city and the healthiest city in Asia. The climate made it a popular vacation spot for Europeans, Americans, Japanese, and Chinese from Hong Kong, Shanghai, Yokohama, and other eastern ports with sweltering summers. Tsingtau was known as the "Brighton of the Far East."⁶⁶

Tsingtau also differed from other colonies in being a non-settler or "citified" colony rather than a settler-colony.⁶⁷ Admiral Tirpitz and the navy were more concerned with the economic development of Tsingtau than with its colonization. They understood that a successful economic sphere of interest included involvement of the business community so separate chambers of commerce were established for European and Chinese businessmen to function in an advisory capacity to the navy's administration of the leasehold.⁶⁸

The Germans also had extensive plans for the port and harbors. A large harbor and shipyard were built separate from the existing small junk harbor, which remained intact. The Chinese government erected a customs house at the (German) Imperial Maritime Customs at Tsingtau. This was the only official Chinese presence in the entire leasehold, and they were restricted to collecting customs duties and did not involve themselves in the collection or administration of tonnage, port, or lighthouse dues.⁶⁹ Moreover, the treaty stipulated that Chinese officials and customhouse staff be of German nationality and all correspondence and communication must be in German. The Chinese Inspector General of Customs was to confer with the German legation at Peking if the need arose to appoint a new customs official for Tsingtau. To stimulate traffic at the port, fees, duties, and tariffs were reduced or waived as inducement for merchants and tradesmen to ship their goods to or through Tsingtau. Thus, Tsingtau was operating essentially as a free port, on an equal footing with Hong Kong.⁷⁰

Two of the colony's main projects were railroad construction and mining, both integral to the economic development of the leasehold. The railroads and mining operations were private

enterprises, but the navy shepherded the projects through the governmental bureaucracy. The Germans decided to build the line to Tsinan, the provincial capital, first. They had complete autonomy over the development of their leasehold territory, but once railroad construction moved into the neutral zone and the hinterland, things began to change. There was growing opposition to the foreigners from the locals. Among other incidents, equipment and supplies were stolen, freshly laid tracks were ripped out, and railroad workers were attacked.⁷¹

Rather than driving the Germans out, however, Chinese opposition only strengthened Germany's hand. According to the treaty, the German military had free access to the fifty-mile neutral zone, but the Chinese retained control of it. The unrest and violence played into German plans for extending their sphere of interest. They sent increasing numbers of troops into the neutral zone, claiming it was necessary because the Chinese were unable to provide protection.⁷²

In reviewing their detailed plans, micro-managed to the smallest detail, there is little doubt the navy's interest in creating an ideal colony was genuine. Ever haunted by a feeling of inferiority, particularly to Great Britain, Germany wanted to prove to itself and to the world that it could create the most successful colony in China and, thus, be included in the ranks of world powers.⁷³ Tsingtau was, in fact, emerging as a successful colony, but regardless of how well intentioned the Germans, or how successful the colony, the fact remained it was Chinese territory and China wanted its sovereignty restored.

In the beginning, China's approaches to regaining sovereignty and fending off the West were unsuccessful. John Schrecker outlines three strategies China used to rid itself of Western occupation. The traditional conservative approach advocated peaceful passivity, believing the use of violence was a sign of failure. The strategy of playing the nations against each other was effective for a time, but ultimately it did not prevent the Western powers from establishing leaseholds and spheres of interest on Chinese territory.⁷⁴ The more militant conservative approach, advocating confrontation and violence against foreigners, was also ineffective.

Rather than pushing the Germans out of Shantung, the violence resulted in a backlash of greater German military presence and increased control over Chinese territory, justifying it by saying the Chinese were unable to protect foreigners.⁷⁵

The third approach, radical reform, was born of a younger generation of Chinese. In the 1880s, a new generation of Chinese reformers began to advocate for radical reform. They, too, wanted to preserve the Confucian system and Chinese sovereignty, but they believed the Ch'ing government had become too corrupt and radical institutional reform was needed to save China. Led by K'ang Yu-wei and his lieutenant, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, these reformers were on average twenty to thirty years younger than the earlier self-strengthening reformers who became influential in the wake of the Taiping Rebellion. This younger generation had no memory of a China without Western influence. Many members of the younger generation were the first to be educated in the West. K'ang based his reforms on a Western framework of international law, democracy, and equality of nations. His radical reform movement gained popularity in the tumultuous time following the Sino-Japanese War and the loss of the Kiautschou leasehold to Germany.⁷⁶

Three months after the March 6, 1898 treaty with the Germans, Emperor Kuang Hsü, deeply influenced by K'ang, issued an edict outlining a new program of reform and self-strengthening. Four days later, he requested K'ang to appear for an audience and over the next few months, under K'ang's mentoring, ordered a series of reforms. This was abruptly ended after approximately one hundred days when Dowager Empress Cixi, the widow of Emperor Xianfeng and aunt of Kuang Hsü, coordinated a coup and removed her nephew from the throne, thus ending the Hundred Days Reform.⁷⁷

The traditional conservatives were once again in control and violence towards foreigners increased. One of Kuang Hsü's edicts from the Hundred Days Reform was a decree against anti-missionary violence. Following Kuang's removal, Liang Chi'-ch'ao noted that during the three months of reform there was not a single missionary case, but "on the fourth day after

the coup the violence in Peking began, and within two months there were already five or six cases involving the murder of missionaries.”⁷⁸ Shantung also experienced this same ebb and flow of violence based on the political agenda of the current governor. Li Peng-heng, provincial governor at the time the Steyl missionaries were murdered, and Yü-hsien were both militant conservatives who condoned, even encouraged, violence against foreigners. While acquiescent when confronted by the Germans, behind the scenes they endorsed violence as a way to drive out the foreigners.⁷⁹

This changed in 1899 when General Yüan Sh’kai became governor of Shantung. While K’ang and some of his followers fled to Japan for safety, other followers remained in China. Yüan was one of these. He was an adherent of K’ang’s teaching, believing violence was ineffective, but he was also a political pragmatist. Following the overthrow of Kuang Hsü, a politically ambitious Yüan entered an alliance with the dowager empress, and was appointed governor of Shantung.⁸⁰

Yüan was astute in understanding the West and adopting Western strategies. As governor, he understood the Germans used violence and unrest as a pretext for leveraging control over an extended area. Yüan strengthened his own provincial army and struggled hard to maintain law and order. Thus, by reducing the violence, he eliminated Germany’s pretext for greater military presence. Yüan also began to hold the Germans to a stricter interpretation of treaty provisions that were more favorable to Chinese interests.⁸¹ When the Germans first landed at Kiautschou, they had the upper hand and dictated the terms of the leasehold agreement. They subsequently interpreted treaties and agreements to their benefit and disregarded them when expedient. Now, Yüan turned the tables on the Germans and by eliminating their pretext for encroachment, successfully pushed the Germans back, containing them within their leasehold.

Yüan also deserves credit for successfully keeping the violence in Shantung Province in check during the Boxer uprising. When the violence reached its height, Yüan urged German

officials to pull back their workers to Tsingtau for safety. The Germans hesitated, afraid of getting behind schedule and fearful of leaving valuable supplies and equipment unprotected. Yüan promised he would protect their property. Later when terms of indemnity, typically inflated, were being settled after the Boxer Rebellion, the indemnity for Shantung was surprisingly low.⁸² This was a reflection of Yüan's success at keeping his promise to protect foreign property, and a testament to his skill in controlling the violence in Shantung, the home province of the Boxers.

The Boxer movement culminated in the Boxer Rebellion, in which the Boxers laid siege to Peking in the summer of 1900 until subdued by a coalition of Western troops. The Boxer Rebellion is often described as being born out of hatred for Christians and Westerners, but the "Boxers" were in fact only part of a long standing network of secret societies. Secret societies with names such as *I Ho Twan*, the "Righteous Harmony Fist," the "White Lotus Society," the "Eight Dragons Sect," and the "Red Fist Society," were originally organized in opposition to the Manchu Dynasty. As early as 1808, Manchu Emperor Chia Ch'ing issued decrees against these societies. The influx of Westerners and Christian missionaries into China in the late nineteenth century was further proof to members of these secret societies that the Manchu were ineffective in ruling China and maintaining Chinese sovereignty. The societies conflated their opposition to foreign incursion with their anti-Manchurian views. Attacks on missionaries were, therefore, more often predicated on political opposition rather than anti-Christian foment. Furthermore, these societies were constantly disbanding and regrouping under various names, eventually all being merged together in the common parlance as "Boxers."⁸³

The political climate in Europe was also changing. As the rift between Germany and Great Britain expanded, Germany began to find the development of a sphere of influence in Shantung untenable. By 1902, other European powers were accusing Germany of being too militaristic and anti-German sentiment was rising, especially in Great Britain. Above all, Germany wanted to establish a robust economic sphere of interest, but anxious to avoid unnecessary confrontation, it now backed away from the idea, even denying it had ever wanted

a special position in Shantung.⁸⁴ The German navy was once recognized for its development and efficient management of the Kiautschou leasehold, but its involvement in the leasehold now became a liability. By 1905, many Germans were questioning if the value derived from the colonies were worth the expense, not to mention the antagonism of other nations. In reviewing colonial activities, the Reichstag, which had consistently singled out Kiautschou as the model of colonial management, began to question Kiautschou's viability.⁸⁵

The end came in 1914 with the start of the First World War. Just as Germany had waited for the right pretext to stake a claim to Chinese territory, so too did Japan. The Japanese, already in control of a large area in Manchuria, had long sought a greater foothold in China. The Anglo-Japanese Security Alliance of 1902 was born of a common opposition to Russian expansion. It was never anticipated that the Japanese would use it against Germany as a pretext to invade Shantung Province, but that is exactly what happened.

After Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 3, 1914, the Japanese wasted no time putting its plan into action. Based on the pretext of defending British interests in East Asia, Japan issued an ultimatum on August 15, demanding Germany turn over Kiautschou to the Japanese and remove its fleet from East Asian waters by September 15. The Germans immediately offered to return the Kiautschou leasehold to China, but the Chinese government did not act quickly enough. Having received no reply by the August 23 deadline, the Japanese declared war on Germany. It showed its true hand, however, when it chose not to carry out a direct attack on the Germans at Kiautschou Bay. Instead, the Japanese army landed at the northeastern tip of Shantung peninsula, and worked its way through Shantung in a southwesterly direction, taking control of almost the entire province before finally attacking the Germans at Tsingtau.

The outcome was inevitable. Germany had recalled the majority of its troops to Europe to engage in the war, so the remaining troops were far outnumbered. The Japanese, assisted

by a small contingent of British troops, took control of Tsingtau on November 7, 1914, thus ending Germany's aspirations for an economic sphere of interest in China.⁸⁶

The Japanese not only demanded the transfer to Japan of all German territory, concessions, rights, and privileges they possessed in China, but they went even farther than the Germans had dared. The Japanese took complete control of the entire province. This was bitterly resented by the Chinese. For centuries, they considered the Japanese an inferior people, so it was difficult for them to understand how the Japanese, in a relatively short time, had risen to take over China's most sacred territory, Shantung.

China appealed to the Western nations for help in ridding itself of the Japanese, but they were occupied with the war in Europe. Therefore, China set about devising a plan to regain sovereignty of Shantung, thus setting the stage for the formation of the Chinese Labor Corps.⁸⁷

CHAPTER 3

THE SICK MAN OF ASIA

China suffered a devastating and humiliating defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and, by the beginning of the First World War, much of its territory and infrastructure was in the hands of Western powers. The “Sick Man of Asia” appeared to be in its death throes. Having endured two decades of chaos and political revolution, overthrowing the Ch’ing Dynasty and replacing it with the dysfunctional Chinese Republic, China’s collapse was anticipated by the West.⁸⁸ However, a growing reform movement was struggling to reverse China’s downward spiral by creating a new China, a new identity and a new nationalism necessary to survive in a modern world controlled by the West.

China wanted its land back, but the Western nations turned a deaf ear to its plight. Japan’s occupation of Shantung Province was particularly offensive. The Chinese Labor Corps (CLC) was a scheme the Chinese devised to regain sovereignty of its land. According to international law, all participants in a war were eligible for participation in the peace treaty process. The Chinese believed that given a chance to plead their case in such an international forum after helping the Allies win the war, the Western nations would surely restore China’s sovereignty. For China, the CLC was a means to an end, but an end that went far beyond having its territory restored. It was also a means to cure a long-term malady afflicting China and preventing it from taking its place in the family of nations forged in an age of imperialistic nationalism.

Guoqi Xu describes China’s malady as the “Middle Kingdom Syndrome,” referring to China’s unwillingness to abandon its worldview of China as the superior civilization at the heart of the universe. The persistent Sino-centered syndrome prevented it from accepting and

adapting to a new worldview centered on the Western world. The mandarin *Zhongguo* translates to “central kingdom” or “middle kingdom.” China was a civilization, not a nation, and had no formal name until the Chinese Republic in 1912. From about 1000 B.C., it was simply referred to as the Middle Kingdom because it considered itself the middle (center) of the world, surrounded by barbarians. The Chinese believed “all land within six directions belong to the emperor” and “wherever there is a sign of human presence, all are subjects of the emperor.”⁸⁹ They believed the Chinese were superior to all other people and isolated themselves from the surrounding barbarians, believing foreigners should only come to the Middle Kingdom to pay tribute to the emperor.⁹⁰

In 1914, this Sino-centric worldview still persisted with many Chinese. Constructing a new identity was crucial in the modernization process and an integral component of China’s social and cultural transformation. According to Xu, national identity is vague, imprecise and dynamic, derived from a mix of common culture, traditions, and a nation’s self-perception of its status in the world. “If a country has problems with these issues, it will certainly face a crisis.”⁹¹

China was indeed facing a crisis of identity, culture, and worldview. Reinventing itself into a modern nation was crucial to its survival. Over the previous seventy-five years, China had not only been forced to open its borders to foreigners, but was also coerced into giving the Western powers an increasing number of concessions. Perhaps most devastating, it was defeated by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War. For millennia, China was the Celestial Kingdom, center of the Universe. The Japanese were considered an inferior people and while The Western assault on China’s sovereignty was egregious and insulting, being defeated by the inferior Japanese was nothing less than a complete shock and humiliation.

Following more than four thousand years as the dominant force in Asia, China was reeling. Internally, it needed to redefine itself, to create a new identity and perception of how it fit into the modern Euro-centric world. Externally, it needed to redefine itself to change how it was perceived by the world in order to be recognized as an equal among nations. These two goals

were not mutually exclusive. To better understand China's attempts to redefine itself and engage with the world, one might use the constructs of international relations. As Akira Iriye writes, international relations are "interactions of cultural systems" which may be considered in terms of "dreams, aspirations, and other manifestations of human consciousness" including national identity and perceptions of worldviews. The emphasis is on the inter and intra communications of these systems.⁹² This goes beyond traditional diplomatic history to include the context of cultures. Xu believes the use of these systems as a construct is a "more reliable compass" in understanding China's attempt to reconcile an Eastern Worldview based on culture and morality and a Western worldview based on economic and military power. National identity, therefore, links the processes of internalization and internationalization.⁹³

Increasing numbers of Chinese were determined to reinvent China and see it take its place as an equal among nations. The Ch'ing government continued to employ isolationism as a control mechanism, but fearing a complete loss of control if it held the reins too tightly, it began to relax some of the traditional restrictions. This occurred for two reasons, both related to opening Chinese borders to Westerners. First, Western culture and ideals were becoming more widespread as an increasing number of Westerners traveled to China and more Chinese were exposed to Western thought. Secondly, as more treaty ports were opened, more trade was conducted with Chinese businessmen and merchants, creating more wealth for the Chinese. Increasingly prosperous businessmen and merchants began to form middle and upper classes of society and they wished their children to have the advantages of a Western education.

For centuries, the Chinese were forbidden to leave the country, threatened with execution upon their return.⁹⁴ Gradually this began to change with greater exposure to the West. In 1872, thirty Chinese students were allowed to travel to the United States to study. The number remained relatively small until 1909 when the United States began returning its Boxer Indemnity to China to be used to send more students to study in America. By 1915, there were 1,200 Chinese students in the United States.⁹⁵ Other Chinese students traveled to Europe,

particularly France, to study, and 15,000 went to Japan to study between 1895 and 1905.⁹⁶ By 1919 about 4,500,000 students had received an education that included some Western-style studies either in China or abroad.⁹⁷

Students traveling to Japan far outnumbered those traveling to Europe or the United States. This was mainly due to geographic proximity, but in addition, there was a strange dichotomy at work in the relationship between China and Japan. On the one hand, there was an antagonism and resentment verging on hatred of Japan for defeating China in the war and subsequently taking over Shandong Province, in addition to previously held territory in Manchu and northern China. On the other hand, a younger generation of Chinese was drawn to Japan, fascinated and even admiring, of how it had been able to modernize so quickly. Japan had achieved an element of acceptance and status in the West following its defeat of the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, an acceptance that had thus far eluded the Chinese. Their opinion of Japan would later change following the disclosure of Japan's issuance of the Twenty-One Demands, an attempt to wrest control of China through economic and political means without waging an extensive and costly war. To protest, the students would leave Japan *en masse*, but for the time being, many Chinese students gravitated to Japan.

As the students returned home, they brought back new thoughts and ideas to a China still mired in the Middle Kingdom Syndrome. Gradually, things began to change. A Western-influenced academia began to flourish in China. A rising merchant class and a better educated citizenry resulted in a higher literacy rate. This combined with a public increasingly interested in politics and foreign affairs, encouraged a proliferation of newspapers. Between 1815 and 1890, seventy-six newspapers and periodicals were published in China, but half of these were distributed by churches and missionaries and were devoted to religious matters rather than politics and international affairs.⁹⁸ In the late Ch'ing period, of a national population of about four hundred million, thirty to forty-five percent of males, and two to ten percent of females had attained a level of basic literacy. Yet, only two to four million used newspapers as a source of

information. Thus, a tradition of print news was established by the end of the Ch'ing dynasty, but it was used primarily by a highly literate minority.⁹⁹

The Sino-Japanese War forever changed the nature of newspapers in China. Unlike earlier newspapers and gazettes that focused on religious or commercial concerns, newspapers established after the war focused on national and international affairs. From 1895-98, about 120 Chinese-language newspapers and magazines were published. In 1915, there were about 222 newspapers, 165 published in Chinese; and by 1919, there were 362 newspapers, 280 published in Chinese.¹⁰⁰ Beginning in 1895 with the loss to the Japanese, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and other reformers developed a network of newspapers and created a full-fledged political press to promote their agenda of reform and renewal.¹⁰¹ For the first time, there was an independent, non-governmental political press intent on creating an informed public.

Creating an informed public opinion was also the goal of reformer K'ang You-wei. In April 1895, K'ang was in Peking for the triennial national civil service examination when it was announced that China had accepted the Treaty of Shimonoseki concluding the war with Japan. Among other things, the treaty ceded much territory to the Japanese as well as opening additional ports and paying a large indemnity. Angry at China's capitulation to the Japan, K'ang organized a mass protest demanding reform from the Ch'ing administration.¹⁰² He circulated petitions and organized political study groups, which established independent political newspapers as a way for their voices and opinions to be heard. This all served to raise national awareness and concern for the direction the Ch'ing were leading the nation. By 1898, there were about 668 study societies of all kinds in China, most dedicated to decrying the Ch'ing administration and increasing public awareness of the need for reform by highlighting the failures of the traditional Chinese worldview and promoting a new worldview of equality with the West.¹⁰³

1895 was the beginning of the end for the Ch'ing Dynasty, culminating in its collapse in 1911. The demoralizing defeat at the hands of the Japanese shattered public confidence in the

Ch'ing administration. Thanks to the political press, for the first time in Chinese history, current events and political thought were accessible to the Chinese public. In 1906, the Ch'ing court decreed that all affairs of the state would be open to public scrutiny.¹⁰⁴ The reform movement served to create a political nationalism dedicated to revitalizing China and establishing equality with other nations. The movement also created a coalition of social elites, the working class, and academics to advocate for reforms and promote China's interests. In the process, they struggled to create a new identity reflecting newly adopted Western ideals of democracy, self-determination, and equality of nations and rejecting the isolationism and backwardness of the Middle Kingdom mindset.

Journalism played a pivotal role in the revolution. In 1912, after the relatively bloodless overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao proclaimed "the establishment of the Republic of China was the result of a revolution of ink, not a revolution of blood."¹⁰⁵ Their press campaign was also successful in the international arena. An article dated December 13, 1911 in *The New York American*, a Hearst publication, issued a direct plea to the U.S. Congress to send a message of solidarity to the Chinese people.

It would be both in harmony with the traditions of the United States and in conformity with international law of the Congress in Washington should extend the sympathy of this great nation to the patriots of China now battling to establish a popular government in that vast empire...Chinese lovers of liberty and free institutions were engaged in a great struggle to overthrow the ancient despotism that stood like a great wall barring the introduction of modern ideas into China.¹⁰⁶

Under pressure from public opinion and the American press, Congress issued a resolution in early 1912 congratulating the Chinese on their "assumption of the powers, duties, and responsibilities of self-government." President Woodrow Wilson's administration followed with a statement of its own recognizing the Republic of China, thus becoming the first major

country to do so.¹⁰⁷ The Chinese people were grateful for America's recognition and show of support for their new republic. It stood in contrast to other foreign nations such as Great Britain, France, and Japan, which exploited the new republic for their own purposes, either by refusing to recognize the new republic until China gave them what they wanted or by using the Chinese revolution to plan the takeover of further Chinese territory.¹⁰⁸

Another significant reformer was Yang Du. Beginning in 1906, he published a series of articles in *Zongghou Xinbao*, a journal of which he was editor-in-chief, introducing his theory of gold-ironism. His theory promoted the exploitation of China's resources, in this case gold, to make China rich and militarily powerful. He asserted that only by achieving wealth and power could China become an active and influential member of the new world system.¹⁰⁹ The significance here is not so much his theory of China using its own resources to accrue wealth and influence, but more importantly, that a Western blueprint was endorsed to advance China's interests and goals.

An acceptance of Western ideas is also reflected in the so-called "*ti-yong*" theory. This was a hybrid theory developed in the late nineteenth century advocating a new approach for China to move forward in the new world order. Advocates believed that although China lagged behind the West in science and technology, its traditional culture was superior to that of the West. Therefore, it would be best to adopt Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications. In this way, China need only adopt Western technology without changing its civilization or culture.¹¹⁰

Both of these examples illustrate the radical changes China experienced between 1895 and 1914. There was a momentum for reform and gravitation towards Western ways, tempered by internal contradictions and ambiguities. A new group, the foreign policy public, was emerging, obsessed with China's world status and a desire for China to participate in the new world order. Gabriel A. Almond describes the foreign policy public as a four-stage pyramidal hierarchy with a large base of "disinterested and ignorant" general public, followed

by a narrow layer of an “interested and informed attentive public,” next is an even thinner layer of active as well as attentive “public opinion elite,” and at the apex is a very small group of “official leadership.” These divisions were dynamic and permeable, depending on issues and interests.¹¹¹

The foreign policy public, or informed public, increasingly expressed a desire for China to become an influential nation. The Ch’ing government did not establish a formal foreign ministry until 1901, and then only under pressure from the West,¹¹² but China increasingly began to emerge from its self-imposed isolation. The Chinese recognized their economic and political inferiority and were determined to learn from the West. Li Kuyi, minister of commerce and industry, expressed the views of many when he said that China was anxiously striving to establish good government and he hoped other nations would give the Chinese advice on how to do this. As Xu describes it, “The young nation, with all earnestness, enthusiasm, openness, and perhaps a bit of naiveté, was working hard to join the international system.”¹¹³

China showed its good intentions in becoming engaged with the world and contributing to its betterment by attending such international forums as the Hague Convention (1899-1907), the Geneva Convention (1906), the Hague Opium Conventions (1912-14), and the Convention for the Publication of Customs Tariffs (1890). China took the lead in the crusade to stop the opium trade, something that had such a profound impact on the Chinese people. In 1906, the Chinese nationalists forced the Ch’ing government to issue a decree banning the use of opium. China attended the first, second, and third International Opium Conferences at The Hague (1912, 1913, and 1914). More than any other nation, China took very seriously the opium problem. In fact, at the conclusion of the First World War, Yan Hui-chin, the Chinese representative to the opium conferences, suggested to U.S. Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, that the signing and ratification of the Opium Convention of 1913 be included as one of the conditions in the peace treaty; however, his proposal was not adopted.¹¹⁴ Kathleen Lodwick in *Crusaders against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, declared China’s

campaign against opium after 1906 the “largest and most vigorous effort in world history to stamp out an established social evil.”¹¹⁵ This is clearly an indication of China’s efforts to engage with the world and make a positive contribution. China wanted to be accepted by the world and recognized as an equal.

The First World War was another opportunity for China. Interestingly, the term *weiji*, meaning crisis, is the combination of two Chinese characters, *wei* meaning danger and *ji* meaning opportunity.¹¹⁶ The war was a time of danger as well as opportunity for China. Since all the principles engaged in the war had concessions and a presence in China, there was a fear the war might carry over into China, but at the same time, it offered China the opportunity to engage in a major world event, as well as the opportunity to regain Shantung. The beginning of the First World War found China struggling take its place in the world while fending off further foreign encroachments. Thanks to the thriving political press, the Chinese were no longer unaware of or disinterested in world events. News of the war electrified the foreign policy public. Many saw opportunity for China, but were unsure of how best to take advantage of the situation.¹¹⁷

Liang Ch’i-ch’ao wrote several books and articles on European history, including *On the History of European Battles*, in an effort to inform the Chinese and provide context for the antagonisms raging in Europe. The Chinese people were hungry for a better understanding of the European situation. Thousands flocked to hear Liang speak about the war and the opportunities it provided. He advocated joining the war to enhance China’s status in the new international system, thus ensuring China’s long-term survival. Liang further argued that if China exploited the situation to the fullest extent, it could complete the process of becoming “a completely qualified nation-state” and rise in status in the world.¹¹⁸

There were many more articles regarding the war and its impact on China. *Dong fang za zhi* (Eastern Miscellany), an influential and popular magazine, invited the public to contribute articles on the war and its implications for China. One article said the war would serve as a

“strong excitant” to “Chinese patriotism and national consciousness.”¹¹⁹ Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang), philosopher, political activist, and proponent of civil rights in China, spent the first two years of the war in Germany where he had been a student. He followed the war so closely that his landlady accused him of being a Japanese spy and reported him to the authorities. Upon returning to China, Zhang became a political activist. Many Chinese were impressed with the German military, but from his experiences and observations in Europe, Zhang was convinced Germany would lose the war. He advocated for China to join the Allied war effort as a means to recover Shantung and the treaty ports, have the Boxer indemnity cancelled, and coerce other concessions from the west in exchange for its participation in the war.¹²⁰

Lui Yan, another political activist, wrote several memorandums to foreign ministry and state council officials, urging China to declare war on Germany and take control of Tsingtau before the Japanese did.¹²¹ The government hardly needed persuasion. It, too, focused on recovering its territory, but it was undecided on the best way to accomplish this. Government officials tried to collect as much information as possible so they could make the best-informed decision. The Chinese Foreign Ministry instructed its diplomats to report daily on war-related activities around the world.¹²² These examples illustrate the extent to which China had emerged from its isolation. It confronted the war and world events, debating its own involvement, and how best to exploit the situation to its own advantage. The use of political machinations, leveraging, and exploiting were not new to the Chinese, but they were becoming more adept at using them in relation to the West.

World events were occurring rapidly. The British declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. Two days later, China declared its neutrality to stave off the war from spreading to China. This was strictly a matter of expediency. China was prepared to send combat troops to war, if it could be assured that the question of its sovereignty would be addressed after the war. Xu calls China’s neutrality an intermediate strategy used until a better option could be determined.¹²³ It did not preclude China from considering other options. China was ambivalent

about joining the war effort. It was anxious to reap the rewards of being a part of the winning side, but it was also fearful of the consequences and repercussions should it join the losing side. For China, then, the war was a matter of picking the winning side in order to advance its own interests.

Unbeknownst to the public, the government had secretly begun negotiations to join the war effort soon after the war began. Japan declared war on Germany on August 23, 1914. That same month, China secretly made its first attempt to join the war. Knowing it was too weak to stand up to the Japanese itself, China proposed a preemptive strike to British Minister John Jordan, offering 50,000 Chinese troops to join the British military in taking back Tsingtau. Jordan flatly rejected this without even consulting the French or Russians.¹²⁴ Instead, the Japanese, assisted by a token British force it reluctantly allowed to join in the attack, defeated the Germans at Tsingtau on November 7, 1914. The Chinese requested to join the attack since the objective was Chinese territory, but once again, they were rebuffed. This was a clear indication that Japan's intentions in forcing the Germans out of China was not to liberate the province, although it made assurances that Shantung would be returned to the Chinese – eventually.

As early as August 17, 1914, French Minister to China, Alexander R. Conty, advised a visiting secretary from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, that in all likelihood, Japan would take Shandong from the Germans and suggested that the only thing China could do was attend the peace conference after the war. By November 10, Wu Tingfang, a high-level foreign minister, was also urging the Chinese government to avoid direct confrontation with Japan and take the Shantung matter to the international peace conference.¹²⁵

This seemed China's best course of action, especially in light of the Twenty-One Demands. Japan wasted no time in pushing its advantage. On January 18, 1915, Japanese Minister to China, Hioki Eki, with a total disregard for diplomatic protocol, presented Chinese President Yüan Sh'kai with the Twenty-One Demands.¹²⁶ This was a set of five demands, with a

total of twenty-one articles, demanding China confirm Japan's acquisition of Shandong Province, as well as a number of other territories and concessions, Japan was also to receive expanded rights over these territories as well as over rail and mining enterprises. In addition, China was to employ only Japanese governmental advisors and it was not to award any further treaty ports or concessions of any kind to any country except Japan. Furthermore, the Japanese would control the Chinese police force and a number of other miscellaneous requirements, such as Japanese Buddhist monks would be allowed to conduct their missionary work in China.¹²⁷ In essence, Japan was attempting to make the entirety of China its sphere of interest. This is not as far-fetched as it might seem. By 1914, the Europeans considered Japan the dominant force in Asia and, when China approached the British, French, and Americans about joining the war effort, they all advised it must first get Japan's permission.

To the Japanese, this was *realpolitik*, but for the Chinese, the Twenty-One Demands was an unprecedented act of aggression. Just as China was recreating and redefining itself, Japan undercut all its progress with their oppressive demands. Worse, no country would come to China's defense. The Chinese people were outraged and solidified in their opposition to Japanese demands. The Chinese students studying in Japan departed *en masse* in protest. Upon returning to China, they joined in the mass protests in Shantung, Peking, and other cities. On March 8, 1915, 40,000 protesters attended an anti-Twenty-One Demands rally in Shanghai. A number of societies and associations, from student study groups to chambers of commerce to unions and business organizations, were involved in the protest that manifested itself in every conceivable way from boycotting Japanese goods to shunning Japanese women's hairstyles, which had come into vogue in China following the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905.¹²⁸

China frantically sought help from all sides. It even leaked the contents of the demands to the West hoping to stir outrage and encourage someone to come to China's aid, but the other nations were occupied with the war in Europe and no country could be bothered with China's predicament. China stalled as long as it could, but it finally gave in to all but the fifth demand on

May 9, 1915. The Chinese people were devastated. The Chinese National Education Association said May 9 should be commemorated every year as “a day of national shame,” and students made a resolution to read the Twenty-One Demands daily to remind everyone of their national humiliation. In a letter to a friend dated July 25, 1916, Mao Zedong predicted that China and Japan would be at war within twenty-five years.¹²⁹

China's priority now was to attend the peace conference, confident its grievances against Japan would be redressed. It tried in a number of ways to engage itself in the war and the events in Europe. According to the Second Hague Peace Treaty, a neutral country would automatically be invited to the peace conference if it had tried to mediate to end hostilities. China attempted to initiate such mediations, but the belligerents were not ready to negotiate a settlement. Another possibility was to attend under the auspices of Germany. Shandong was Chinese territory, so it would be a tangential participant. China would be allowed to attend under Germany's sponsorship, but this option was not seriously pursued.¹³⁰

China would not declare war on Germany on its own behalf, instead contriving circuitous plans to assist the Allies while maintaining a façade of neutrality. For example, China conspired to deliver 100,000 rifles to the British at Hong Kong in January 1916.¹³¹ The Western nations refused to consider using Chinese combat troops in Europe without Japan's permission, so China repeatedly tried to win Japan's consent. Japan, however, had designs on taking over China, so the last thing it wanted was a build-up of the Chinese military, which would inevitably occur if China were to engage in the war. Japan refused to agree to this and China was again stymied in its efforts to join in the war.¹³²

Thwarted by Japan and the Allies, China felt compelled to seek an alliance with Germany. China's first president, Yüan Shih-k'ai, was secretly planning to declare himself emperor and begin a new dynasty. An agreement was reached whereby Germany and Austria would recognize Yüan as emperor. However, conditions within China caused a postponement of Yüan's enthronement and before it could be carried out, Yüan Shih-k'ai died.¹³³

In early June 1915, Liang Shiyi, a financier and industrialist, first entered into discussions with British military attaché Lieutenant-Colonel David S. Robertson about the possibility of supplying 300,000 military laborers armed with 100,000 rifles to serve under British officers. Robertson, however, seemed the only one interested in a plan to use Chinese laborers. The British rejected the plan immediately.¹³⁴ Not until after the Battle of the Somme, in which the British experienced the loss of many lives, did they reconsider and agree to import unarmed Chinese laborers to assist in the war effort.

Liang had more luck with the French. On March 17, 1915, the French Minister of War, Alexandre Millerand, had independently proposed using Chinese laborers for roadwork. Initially, there were objections based on the disadvantages and legalities of using Chinese laborers in a French military zone. However, by June 9 when Liang approached French Minister Conty with the same proposal he made the British, the French had already decided in favor of using the Chinese laborers. The Chinese were willing to provide laborers on one condition. To avoid all appearances of violating its neutrality, it insisted the laborers be hired by “theoretically” private companies.¹³⁵

The French Ministry of War sent retired Lieutenant-Colonel Georges Truptil to China to investigate and make preliminary plans. Truptil conducted his investigations surreptitiously under the guise of being an agricultural engineer. Meanwhile, in May 1916, Liang set up a private enterprise, the Huimin Company, as a third party to handle recruitment and avoid the appearance of any connection with the Chinese government. The contract between the Truptil Mission, under the aegis of the French Ministry of War but operating as a “private corporation,” and the Huimin Company was signed on May 14, 1916.¹³⁶ Although care was taken to maintain an appearance of private businesses, it was soon obvious that the French and Chinese governments were behind the scheme. Questions were raised regarding the Chinese laborers being under the Direction des Troupes Coloniales, part of the French Ministry of War, even though China was not a French colony, as well as the use of Chinese troops assisting with

France's national defense. However, the French simply chose to ignore these issues, anxious to get the laborers to France.¹³⁷

The Germans protested immediately upon learning of the labor scheme and issued repeated warnings to the Chinese government that it was violating its neutrality. The Chinese responded simply by saying the laborers were private citizens hired by a private French corporation. At the same time, it sent secret communications to local Chinese officials advising them the recruitment plan was being conducted by the government and asking for their cooperation and secrecy.¹³⁸ The Truphil Mission recruited mainly in northern China, but soon other Chinese recruiting companies were established in other parts of China. Originally, the French planned for 40,000 laborers, but this was soon increased to "at least 50,000."¹³⁹

Meanwhile, although the use of additional labor was tempting, the British remained adamantly opposed to the idea of Chinese laborers assisting in the war effort. They thought themselves superior to the Chinese and believed they could win the war without assistance from Asians. The summer of 1916 was a turning point for the British. In July of 1916, the first month of the Battle of the Somme, the British toll was 187,000 soldiers killed, wounded, or missing. By mid-August, the number had risen to 223,000. The British were desperate for manpower and reconsidered the offer of Chinese laborers. On August 14, 1916, the British informed the French they planned to employ a "considerable number" of Chinese laborers.¹⁴⁰ Xu was perhaps only slightly hyperbolic in writing, "The very existence of Britain was at stake and British arrogance had been replaced by British desperation."¹⁴¹

The British first thought to recruit Chinese laborers at Hong Kong from the southern provinces, but Minister Jordan thought the southern Chinese would be unsuitable for work in the colder climate of Europe. It was decided to use Weihaiwei, a British outpost on the northeastern tip of Shantung Province, as a base for their recruitment. Unlike the French, the British did not use private companies to recruit workers. All recruiting was done by British military agents.¹⁴² On January 25, 1917, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent a telegram to the Chinese minister in

London instructing him to ask the British if they would agree to the following: (1) Britain would allow China to delay payment of the Boxer Indemnity for fifty years with no increase in interest. (2) Britain would immediately allow China to raise taxes, something the Western powers had prohibited China from doing for some time. (3) Britain would help China secure a seat at the postwar peace conference.¹⁴³ Of these three, securing a seat at the peace conference was by far the most important. Although the British did not agree to these requests immediately, it cleared the ground for later agreements. More significantly, it was the first time China openly and officially linked the labor scheme to its larger plans.¹⁴⁴

The first Chinese laborers arrived in France on August 24, 1916. The Chinese had their laborer scheme, they were a part of the war effort, and the groundwork was laid for China's participation in the peace conference.

CHAPTER 4
THE CHINESE LABOR CORPS IN EUROPE

The French may have gotten off to an earlier start in recruiting Chinese laborers, but their project was plagued with problems. To begin, French Foreign Minister Alexander R. Conty had begun negotiations with Chinese officials regarding recruiting Chinese laborers before the Trupuil Mission was established. Conty felt he should be in charge of the entire recruiting project, so from the beginning there were disagreements and a lack of cooperation between the Foreign Ministry (Quai d'Orsay) and the Ministry of War's Trupuil Mission. Conty was constantly complaining about the way the Trupuil Mission was conducting the recruiting. Nevertheless, since it was a time of war, the military was given deference and the Trupuil Mission continued.¹⁴⁵

The French calculated an additional 10,000 Chinese laborers would be available every month with a total of 100,000 laborers in France by the end of 1917. Plans had even been made for assignments the laborers would be given. However, without explanation, the military cancelled the recruitment program in early 1918. This was a breach of contract with the Chinese. Since the French foreign office in Peking had guaranteed the contract, the military left it to the Quai d'Orsay to straighten matters out with the Chinese. There were arguments over responsibility and charges and countercharges. At one point, the French tried to refuse payment on the contract claiming the laborers were of "poor quality." In the end, with French prestige at stake, the War Ministry agreed to settle in "a spirit of conciliation."¹⁴⁶

The British recruiting of Chinese laborers did not begin until early 1917, but their recruitment process was entirely under the auspices of the British military, thus avoiding the internal conflicts that plagued the French recruitment project. By all accounts, the British project was more organized and better managed than the French, yet the French are cited for treating

the Chinese laborers more humanely than the British. A number of Chinese laborers showed up at French camps having deserted the British. Nevertheless, the British laborer project is better documented and the proponderance of information on the Chinese Labor Corps in English-language sources deals with the British Labor Corps.

Recruitment was at first slow, but once the laborers understood the Chinese government had given tacit approval and support to the project, the numbers increased.¹⁴⁷ Conditions at the time were harsh in China with much poverty and hunger. Enlisting in the labor corps was very enticing. It not only provided free food, clothing, housing, lighting, fuel, medical care, and free transportation to and from Europe for each Chinese worker, it also provided the laborer's family in China with a monthly allotment.¹⁴⁸

New recruits were provided with room and board while the processing took place. When he arrived at the recruitment center, better known as the "sausage machine," he was stripped, bathed, and had his queue cut off. He then underwent a medical checkup testing for twenty-one disqualifying diseases including tuberculosis (phthisis), bronchitis, venereal disease, and trachoma (a highly contagious inflammation of the eye). If he failed the medical exam, a small cross was tattooed on the back of his left wrist indicating he had been rejected. He was then put back into his old clothes and given money for his return trip home.¹⁴⁹

If a recruit passed the medical exam, he was given an identification number, which appeared on all his documents and identification papers, along with his fingerprints. His identification number was imprinted on a brass tag attached to a metal chain that was permanently soldered together around his wrist.¹⁵⁰

Each recruit was issued the following:

- 1 – winter suit of wadding lined with pressed cotton wool
- 1 – brown canvas raincoat that was "nearly waterproof"
- 2 – summer suits of jacket and trousers
- 1 – pr. woolen drawers
- 1 – pr. socks

- 1 – pr. leather shoes, Chinese style (light, flat, unlaced, and supple)
- 2 – pr. boots and puttees (issued in France)
- 1 – waistcoat
- 1 – flannel shirt
- 1 – Shantung felt hat
- 1 – numbered badge to fasten to his shoulder
- 1 – brown, canvas rucksack to leave his hands free to carry other items
- 1 – blanket
- 1 – quilt
- 1 - brush
- 2 – combs
- 1 – towel & soap
- 1 – basin, mug, dish, and water basin
- 1 – pr. chopsticks¹⁵¹

A new wadded suit was issued annually and all other clothing was replaced every six months.

The enlistees remained at the recruitment center until their departure for Europe, housed in barracks with other recruits where they were trained in military discipline and the art of marching.¹⁵²

The first French ship, the *Empire*, departed on July 10, 1916 with 5,000 men, sailing from Taku to Marseilles.¹⁵³ The first British ship was the *Teucer*, which departed Weihaiwei in January 1917 with 1,083 Chinese laborers and 8 British officers.¹⁵⁴ The *Teucer* sailed from Weihaiwei to Singapore to the Maldiv Islands, Durban, Plymouth, Spithead, Ryde and finally to Le Havre. The Chinese then traveled by train to Noyelles-sur-Mer, the headquarters of the Chinese Labor Corps, arriving in April 1917. While the *Teucer* was in South Africa, word reached them that the French ship *Athos* had been torpedoed by a German submarine in the Mediterranean on February 24, 1917, with a loss of 543 Chinese.¹⁵⁵

The transit to Europe was long and dangerous. Some ships sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and up the Atlantic; others took the more direct, but dangerous, route through the Suez Canal and across the Mediterranean to Marseilles, where German submarines patrolled.

Others took an eastward route across the Pacific to British Columbia, and from there they were transported across Canada by train with armed guards to prevent the Chinese from getting off the train before it reached Halifax. From there they sailed across the Atlantic. Others arriving at British Columbia would transfer to another ship that would transport them through the Panama Canal (which had opened August 15, 1914) and then across the Atlantic to France. Transport ships were at a minimum, so the laborers were assigned to whatever ship and whatever route might be available.¹⁵⁶

Once in Europe, the Chinese workers' experiences were as diverse as the passage to France. For example, one group of Chinese had a brief respite before arriving in the war zone. Two thousand Chinese spent their first summer in Folkestone, England, a picturesque seaside vacation spot that was turned into England's busiest transit point during the war. Folkestone handled an average of six large, oceangoing vessels per day in addition to thirty transit ships daily to Calais, Boulogne, Dunkirk, and other French ports.¹⁵⁷ Personnel of at least thirty countries were stationed at Folkestone¹⁵⁸ and it is estimated that more than ten and a half million people passed through Folkestone during the course of the war, including military personnel, civilian aid workers, and prisoners of war.¹⁵⁹ The Chinese were used in the summer of 1917 to build "hutments" out of reinforced concrete to serve as additional housing for the overflowing village.¹⁶⁰

However, the vast majority of the Chinese workers served in France and Belgium.¹⁶¹ They were divided into work groups and each group selected a "ganger" to serve as their leader. The ganger was responsible for interpreting and ensuring the workers carried out their orders. Although the gangers earned slightly more pay, it was a thankless job and many tried to avoid it.¹⁶² The Chinese had segregated camps, separate from both Allied soldiers and laborers from other countries.¹⁶³ They worked 10-hour days, six, sometimes seven days a week. Each had a daily ration of 1½ lb. rice, ½ lb. dried meat or fish, ½ lb. vegetables, ½ oz. tea, and ½ oz. oil.¹⁶⁴

Although the British military was familiar with various native peoples, few were familiar with the Chinese or their customs. Moreover, few interpreters were available at first, so there were misunderstandings, resentments, and antagonisms caused by a lack of communication. Things gradually improved when more interpreters were assigned to negotiate and advocate for the Chinese units.

When the Chinese first arrived in Europe, a common misconception was that they were ignorant, uneducated simpletons with a "lower intellectual standard"¹⁶⁵ It was true many lacked a formal education, but this is not to say the Chinese were unintelligent. This misconception was largely a matter of miscommunication due to the language barrier. At first, the Chinese were divided into work groups and assigned tasks at random. However, the British soon realized that some Chinese had special skills and talents. They began to sift through the ranks of the Chinese to sort out the skilled and semi-skilled workers. By January 1918, the #5 Area Motor Transport Central Workshops had Chinese running their own truck repair shop, smith's shop, molding bay, paint shop and motorcycle repair shop. Many Chinese fitters had their own shop and the Big Tank Corps depot at Aubry-les-Hesdin was serviced almost exclusively by Chinese. Additionally, Chinese almost exclusively maintained important railroad lines between Calais, Zenehem, Dieppe, Boulogne, Audricq, Dannes, Abbeville, Saigneville, Abbancourt, and Soquence.¹⁶⁶

The labor corps had very diverse assignments. Some Chinese were assigned to work on the docks, digging trenches, laying railroad tracks, unloading supplies and munitions, and in other locations considered key enemy target zones. Consequently, even though the CLC were officially non-combat troops, they were often shelled and shot at. They were also subject to gas attacks since they had a reputation for going farthest forward on the lines.¹⁶⁷ Other Chinese troops were assigned manufacturing work in munitions and aircraft factories. The manpower shortage in France was so severe that a number of CLC were assigned to agricultural work. The CLC were able to double the productivity of many farms by using farming techniques from

the Middle Kingdom. They had such phenomenal success that the British planned to use half their allotment of Chinese laborers in agriculture, but these plans were abandoned due to more pressing needs in Europe.¹⁶⁸

The Chinese suffered through the cold French winters. They were housed in large huts in groups of five hundred. Many slept on the cold, often wet, ground resulting in numerous illnesses. Unaccustomed to the cold, damp conditions, the Chinese were particularly prone to tuberculosis, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases. Segregated hospitals were built for the Chinese, the largest housed as many as 1,500 men. In fact, the French were fond of saying that the largest hospital for Chinese was not in China, but in France.¹⁶⁹

No one knows the exact number of fatalities the Chinese suffered from enemy attack or illness and disease. Estimates range from 2,000 to 10,000, maybe more. The mere fact that records were not better kept and an exact accounting of fatalities cannot be reported is an indication of the insignificance with which the labor corps was viewed by military authorities. Another indication was the carelessness with which the Chinese were buried at Noyelles-sur-Mer on the English Channel coast near Abbeville. "At first, they were carelessly buried just like animals and some heads were even left uncovered in the ground because they were buried vertically! Later, the British returned to create the present cemetery in order not to leave an unpleasant impression in the eyes of later generations..."¹⁷⁰ The Chinese laborers are buried in segregated sections of ten military cemeteries scattered throughout France and Belgium, the largest is at Noyelles-sur-Mer where 842 Chinese are buried. According to Chinese culture, it is important that a son not abandon his parents or forget his hometown. To comply with this custom, all Chinese laborers buried in European cemeteries are buried facing the East.¹⁷¹ Each has a headstone inscribed with the laborer's name, identification number, and a brief epitaph.¹⁷²

An important element in the lives of the Chinese workers' was the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). They added an interesting dynamic to camp life and their service was invaluable in making the lives of the Chinese laborers bearable during the war. The YMCA

was first introduced to China in 1895. By the beginning of the war, it had developed a successful operation, expanding to a number of Chinese cities, and earning the trust and respect of the Chinese people. Thus, when the YMCA arrived at the Chinese labor camps, they were warmly received by the Chinese laborers and considered a link to their home. In fact, many YMCA officers assigned to the Chinese camps had previously spent time in China and were familiar with their language and customs. In addition, a number of Chinese students studying in the West became YMCA officers to serve their fellow countrymen during the war. The YMCA worked in tandem with various Christian missionary societies, but it went beyond proselytizing and conversion to improving lives and social conditions.¹⁷³

When the Chinese troops first arrived in Europe, few commanding officers spoke Chinese and they knew little about Chinese culture. There were frequent misunderstandings and resentment caused by miscommunication. For example, both British and American officers had negative results when shouting the command, "Let's go!" Unbeknownst to the commanders, "let's go" sounds very similar to the Chinese phrase "Lie sze go" which means "dirty dead dog." The Chinese were deeply offended and refused to work.¹⁷⁴ In another instance, a battalion of Chinese mustered out on the parade ground before dawn one morning. The major in charge was angry and ordered them to return to their barracks. The Chinese were offended by the roughness and rudeness of the major and all of them went on strike. It seems the laborers had grown fond of one of the British officers who knew a little Chinese and treated them respectfully. The officer was being transferred to another camp and, as it is Chinese custom to see a friend off and wish him well when he departs, the laborers had mustered early to show their respect by accompanying the officer to the train station.

There were other problems in the Chinese camps. Some were more easily remedied than others were. The laborers were frustrated at not having enough hot water for tea and they were disgusted at being fed horse meat. Such problems resulted in a demoralized labor corps that was estimated to be working at only fifty percent of its capacity.¹⁷⁵ A steady supply of hot

water for tea, increased portions of rice, and permission to celebrate Chinese holidays did much to improve the morale and productivity of the laborers.¹⁷⁶ Other problems were more serious. There were riots and strikes every few days.¹⁷⁷ The British CLC was confined to segregated camps in the evenings with little to do except gambling, their favorite pastime, which inevitably led to fighting and, on occasion, even murder. Over the course of the war, the British executed ten Chinese for murder.¹⁷⁸ The YMCA did much to improve camp conditions and the attitude of the Chinese laborers.

The YMCA established an extensive network of canteens in the First World War. They provided services for Allied troops in Europe, in Russia on the Western front, as well as at Archangel and Murmansk, in Greece, the Dardanelles, East Africa, Egypt, Meopotamia, India, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.¹⁷⁹ In France alone, they operated 491 wooden huts, 1,045 tents, and 255 rental locations. Yet, both the British and French were hesitant to allow the YMCA into the Chinese camps. The British feared the YMCA would coddle the Chinese and make them even more difficult to manage. The French authorities were suspicious of the YMCA, fearful they would spread anarchism and incite the laborers to strike.¹⁸⁰ Eventually, the YMCA operated 140 canteens devoted to the Chinese laborers, which greatly improved camp conditions for the Chinese.¹⁸¹

Some British officers continued to feel the YMCA made the laborers “soft,” but most appreciated the YMCA’s contributions in placating the Chinese, and keeping them quiet, docile, and cooperative.¹⁸² The YMCA officers lived alongside the Chinese in their camps and became their advocates, translators, mentors, and confidantes.¹⁸³ They provided a variety of services including helping the Chinese write letters, offering educational classes such as English and geography, presenting lectures on topics such as European history and events leading to the war, showing movies and organizing musical and theatrical entertainment.¹⁸⁴ They also organized sports and recreational activities that included both Western baseball, football, basketball, and boxing, and Eastern activities like kite flying, throwing the stone lock, lifting the

double stone wheels, and battledore and shuttlecock.¹⁸⁵ There was such an improvement in camp conditions and in the attitudes of Chinese laborers that many officers clamored to have YMCA canteens established in their camps.

The YMCA is also credited with printing the first Chinese-language newspaper in Europe. Y.G. James Yen, a Chinese student who had graduated from Yale University before joining the YMCA as a volunteer, published the newspaper under the auspices of the A.E.F. (American Expeditionary Forces) and the YMCA. "The Red Triangle for Chinese Laborers Residing in France," was a weekly paper dedicated to providing the Chinese laborers with news from around the world. From a printing of 10,000 for its first issue, after only three weeks its circulation had increased by fifty percent.¹⁸⁶

The YMCA officers were genuinely concerned with the welfare of the Chinese, but they also viewed the Chinese with an eye towards the future. YMCA literature repeatedly referred to the laborers as emissaries that would return to home to tell of their experiences in the West and spread the Christian word. For example, a YMCA booklet on their work with the Chinese laborers in France includes a section entitled "Why the Y.M.C.A. Works for the Chinese Laborers." It answers as follows,

The Chinese laborers form an important part of the fighting forces. To increase and maintain their high morale is, therefore, imperative. They will exert great influence upon China on their return. To help them to imbibe the true Christian spirit is to lay a good foundation for China's future, which means so much to the future of the world...¹⁸⁷

They were not alone in this view. While many in the British military were disparaging and discriminating against the Chinese, some British officials were thinking of the future. They, too, understood that the Chinese laborers would return home to relate their experiences and convey their feelings and attitudes about the British. The British believed the "Westernizing" of the CLC would enhance British prestige in China. They believed the CLC would be "apostles of

British Enlightenment, extolling the virtues of British fairness and efficiency.”¹⁸⁸ Therefore, they supported the YMCA's work in keeping the Chinese content.

The attitude of the Westerners towards the Chinese was an interesting dichotomy. John Griffin describes the superior attitude of the British and their derogatory and deprecating treatment of the Chinese. Moreover, many of the British officers in charge of the CLC were ostracized. Their fellow British officers refused to sit at the same dining table with them, wanting nothing to do with the “chinks” or anyone who worked with them. The officers in command of the Chinese, however, developed a respect and appreciation for the laborers. The Chinese were hard workers. By all accounts they were the best workers of any of the foreign laborers employed during the war. In one instance, the CLC was assigned to rebuild a stretch of railroad track destroyed by German shelling. The Chinese were given a couple of weeks to rebuild the tracks – they rebuilt it in only eight hours! Their hard work and dedication is recounted in numerous anecdotes of how the laborers could haul heavy bags and unload ships in a fraction of the time it took other groups.

In addition, several Chinese received awards for their bravery and service. On June 6, 1919, near Marcoing, France, Wang Yu-shan noticed a fire near an ammunition dump. He rushed to the fire with two buckets of water to douse the flames, he grabbed a burning British P-bomb and threw it to a safe distance, then continued trying to put out the flames which had spread to the surrounding grass where grenades and shells were lying. For his initiative, resourcefulness, and disregard for personal safety, Wang was awarded the British Meritorious Service Medal.¹⁸⁹

In contrast to the British, the French treated the Chinese laborers more humanely. They did not demand strict military discipline from their laborers. The French CLC had segregated camps, but they were not confined to them indefinitely. They could, on occasion, obtain special passes and spend time in local villages among the French people, many of whom came to accept them and appreciate their hard work. This might explain, at least in part, why three

thousand Chinese laborers chose to remain in France after the war. They formed the nucleus of the Chinese immigrant community in France that today numbers over one million.

Source material on the CLC is interesting, but it should be read with attention to differences in perceptions and agendas to reconcile accounts and ascertain events. In writing about the segregated Chinese hospitals, John Griffin reports that the Chinese hospital was surrounded by armed guards and an eight-foot high barbed wire fence that was patrolled and guarded. He writes that, "The same atmosphere of rigid security, censorship, and suspicion pervaded the hospitals as it did the camps where the Orientals usually lay."¹⁹⁰

This was a rather dour description compared to John Lewis, who also writes of the segregated hospital, but describes it as being pleasant and well kept where the Chinese were treated well. He further describes a detached building surrounded by a barbed-wire fence that housed sixty inmates – all of them insane.¹⁹¹ These are two accounts describing the same hospital. The writers give very different impressions of how Chinese invalids were treated. Lewis and others connected to the YMCA naturally wished to promote the contributions of the YMCA. Their perceptions are sometimes skewed to more optimistic interpretations. For example, Lewis relates how the YMCA occasionally sponsored outings for the Chinese laborers, taking them on weekend trips through the French countryside. He comments on the number of Chinese who exhibited an interest in French history and geography by taking advantage of these outings.¹⁹² Granted, some of the Chinese may well have had an interest in learning more about France. However, it might also be argued that many of these Chinese workers, subject to being shelled or shot at any moment, might have merely wanted a brief respite from the war.

Regardless of whether they served under the British, French, or Americans (who "borrowed" 10,000 Chinese from the French), the Chinese workers performed an invaluable service to the Allied cause. Yet, their contributions are often overlooked and trivialized as attested by the fact that few histories of World War I even acknowledge their participation in the

war. From the beginning of their recruitment, the Chinese were treated as inconsequential. Although they had earned the respect of some Westerners, little had really changed.

At the end of the war, the Chinese were the last to be repatriated. There were a limited number of transport ships available and the priority was in returning American troops to the United States. Besides, according to their contract, the Chinese could be held for six months after the end of the war. But, the “end of the war” was never defined in the contract. Did it mean the day hostilities ended, when peace negotiations began, or perhaps when the peace treaty was signed?

The Chinese were repatriated at an average of about 6,000 workers per month. With approximately 200,000 CLC in Europe, it was a very lengthy process. In the meantime, given the continuing labor shortage in France, the workers were held in camps and required to perform duties such as retrieving unexploded munitions off battlefields, salvaging scrap metal, and re-burial detail.¹⁹³ This was dangerous work and a number of Chinese lost their lives long after the war was over. The Chinese could recognize artillery shells, but they were unfamiliar with hand grenades. More than once, a laborer picked up a grenade, shook it, and then held it to his ear as if it were a conch shell. This cost the life of a number of Chinese. As late as October 1919, fifty thousand Chinese laborers remained in France.¹⁹⁴ The last sixty Chinese were finally repatriated in March 1922. Their final task was inscribing the tombstones of their fellow countrymen laid to rest in Chinese cemeteries in France.¹⁹⁵

Long before the last Chinese laborers were repatriated, the Paris Peace Conference would be completed and the Treaty of Versailles finalized, in which the Chinese would be deeply disappointed. After all their machinations to involve themselves in the war and all the hardships, suffering, and even deaths of thousands of Chinese laborers, the Western powers refused to restore their sovereignty over Shantung. The Chinese public was outraged, feeling disappointed and betrayed by the West.

The Chinese laborers were perhaps not so surprised. In July 1919, W.W. Peter wrote a

revealing story about the war as “seen by oriental eyes.” He describes a Chinese laborer he met in France at the end of the war who was trying to re-grow his queue. Many queues had been cut off as a statement of liberation from the monarchy and support for the modern Chinese republic. However, after experiencing the modern world first-hand with its war, devastation, and ugliness, he was re-growing his queue as a statement of his desire to go back to a peaceful and moral life. Peter reports seeing a number of Chinese in France with foot-long queues.¹⁹⁶ Perhaps they were not as surprised at the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVIL'S HANDWRITING

The Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Versailles are controversial for many reasons. It was less than successful in satisfying all the grievances, and many consider it the root of future hostilities and antagonisms that arose throughout the course of the twentieth century. The “devil’s handwriting,” as George Steinmetz explains, references a phrase used by George Kennan in his book, *American Diplomacy* (1951) referring to the Treaty of Versailles as having “the tragedies of the future written into it as by the devil’s own hand.”¹⁹⁷

By the end of the First World War, China had developed a deep admiration for the United States. The Chinese felt betrayed by the Manchurian Ch’ing Dynasty that kept them in isolation for so long, as well as by Japan and many of the Western nations. The United States filled the void created by past betrayals. Over the years, a bond developed between the two countries. The Chinese were influenced by stories of the American Revolution and principles of freedom, liberty, and justice as told by students returning home from the United States. The Chinese were also impressed with the United States when, in 1909, it began returning its Boxer Indemnity funds for China to use to send more students to study in America,¹⁹⁸ and the United States was the first Western nation to grant official recognition to the fledgling Republic of China.

The bond further intensified as American President Woodrow Wilson began making speeches about the equality of nations, self-determination, and the League of Nations. It is difficult to overstate the extent to which the Chinese came to idolize Wilson. His speeches were printed verbatim in Chinese newspapers, Chinese schoolchildren memorized Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and portraits of Wilson hung in many Chinese homes.¹⁹⁹ Thus, when the war ended in 1918, China was optimistic about its future. It had participated in the war effort and believed it

would be accepted as an equal nation at the peace conference. Further, under Wilson's advocacy for equality of nations, China believed it would have a full and fair hearing at the peace conference. In this, it would be sorely disappointed and made to feel betrayed again.

The first disappointment came in learning that China's contributions to the war effort did not warrant inclusion with the major powers. It was considered a second tier country and allotted only two seats at the peace table. Further, as a second tier nation, it would only be allowed to attend the sessions that directly involved China. It had also hoped to air all its grievances dating back to the Unequal Treaties of the mid-nineteenth century in order to have all past injustices redressed. However, the major powers decided only issues germane to the First World War would be considered. This meant the conference would hear arguments concerning the so-called "Shantung Question" referring to whether Japan should be required to return Shantung Province to China, but the conference would not consider earlier grievances dating back to the Opium Wars. Much to China's dismay and irritation, Japan was included as a major power. This meant Japan was awarded a full five seats at the peace table, as well as inclusion in all negotiations, including the Shantung question in which it was directly involved.²⁰⁰

The next blow came when the Japanese revealed in open session that there had been a secret exchange of notes between Peking and Tokyo in September 1915. In negotiating a loan from Japan, Yüan's administration acquiesced to their demands to acknowledge Japan's rights to the Shantung territory. The Chinese reply was that they "gladly agree" to Japanese demands. This agreement was kept secret until revealed to the Council of Ten at the Versailles Conference in 1919. This came as a shock to everyone, especially the Chinese delegates who had been kept in the dark by their own government. V.K. Wellington Koo, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, gave a passionate presentation of the Chinese case for Shantung. He argued that any agreement China entered into with Japan had been under duress and, therefore, should not be upheld. However, the revelation of the secret notes seriously undermined China's claim to Shantung.²⁰¹

It was further revealed that the British, French, and Italians had signed secret agreements with Japan in 1917, a year before the end of the war. In exchange for Japanese assistance in the war, they agreed to support Japan's claim to Shantung.²⁰² This was yet another shock for the Chinese as they realized the Allies had been giving them off-handed assurances that Shantung would be returned to China while negotiating secret agreements with Japan. They began to realize the deck was stacked against them.

The Chinese then pinned their hopes on American President Wilson, believing he might yet stand up for them and win Shantung back for the Chinese. After all, the American public was sympathetic with China's claims and, when Ambassador Koo met with Wilson in Washington before departing for the peace conference, Wilson personally assured him that the United States supported China's claims. However, the "gladly agree" exchange of notes seriously jeopardized China's case. Moreover, the revelation of the secret treaties Britain, France and Italy had entered into with Japan meant Wilson stood alone in support of China.²⁰³

As it happened, Japan proposed the inclusion of a clause into the constitution of the League of Nations guaranteeing equality among nations and fair treatment of all, regardless of race. Australian Ambassador Billy Hughes was adamantly opposed to this, as it would undermine his policy of a "white Australia." The other nations, including the United States, were fearful of the backlash they would receive from organized labor if they were made to open their borders to an invasion of Asian immigrant workers. After a lengthy postponement of their decision, the League of Nations Commission announced it had rejected Japan's proposal.²⁰⁴

However, Wilson still needed Japan's support to establish a League of Nations, his primary objective at the conference. Wilson made the fateful decision to back Japan's claim to Shantung in return for Japan's support for the League of Nations. He felt this was more important and thought China's grievances could be redressed later in the League of Nations.²⁰⁵ But, his explanation did nothing to assuage the Chinese' feelings of bitter betrayal.

Moreover, not only the Chinese that felt disappointed and betrayed. The American delegation was in stunned disbelief at Wilson's reversal and many petitioned him to change his mind. They reminded Wilson that the United States was legally bound to support China under the "good offices" of the 1858 U.S.-China Treaty, and that the United States had a moral obligation to adhere to Wilson's own principles.²⁰⁶ Both General Tasker Bliss, military representative to the Supreme War Council, and Robert S. Reinsch, U.S. Ambassador to China, resigned over the matter, heartsick at the loss of Chinese goodwill toward America.²⁰⁷

Word reached China in late April that things did not look good. On April 30, 1919, the decision was made to accept Japanese claims for Shantung. The Chinese delegates were shocked and dismayed at the outcome. When word reached China on May 2, the Chinese people were also shocked and angry, and their anger only intensified when they further learned the decision was due in large part to their own government's secret agreement with Japan. This double betrayal left the Chinese reeling.²⁰⁸ Once again, public protests were hastily organized and the protestors demanded the resignations of the ministers involved in the secret agreement. They were also furious with Japan and organized a boycott of Japanese goods.²⁰⁹

Their protests and outcries against Japan and their own government officials, however, were nothing compared to the outrage and betrayal they felt towards President Wilson. To the Chinese, Wilson's betrayal was more egregious because it was a betrayal of his own principles and values as espoused in his Fourteen Points and his call for a League of Nation. Wilson's words now seemed hollow and meaningless. It sent China into mass chaos and huge demonstrations ensued. The Chinese government was besieged by telegrams and petitions from numerous social and civic organizations, all urging the government to instruct the Chinese delegation not to sign the peace treaty.²¹⁰

News of the betrayal hit the young, idealistic students and academics the hardest. They felt completely betrayed and bereft with no one to whom they could turn. Many were now convinced they would have to take matters into their own hands and the only way to save China

was by force.²¹¹ Representatives from numerous student organizations at all the universities and schools planned a mass protest. By 1:30p.m. on May 4, 1919 more than three thousand students had gathered at T'ien-an Gate, (now known as Tienanmen) the Gate of Heavenly Peace, where a rally was held, speeches were made, and copies of a student manifesto were distributed demanding that China not sign the peace treaty.²¹²

The plan was to peacefully march down the boulevard to the business area, hoping the business community would join them in their protest. However, late in the afternoon as they passed the foreign legation, an area restricted to Chinese entry, the temper of the students changed. They demanded access to the foreign legation and found their way to the homes of the American, British, French, and Italian ministers. All were absent, their houses being guarded by police and gendarmes, so they left letters of protest at each house²¹³ Next, someone suggested they go to the home of Ts'ao Ju-lin, one of the government officials who had engineered the "gladly agree" note to Japan. At about 5:00p.m., the students stormed Ts'ao's house, smashing everything and beating everyone they could find, including Ts'ao's paralyzed father. The students found Chang Tsung-Hsiang, another administrator involved in the exchange of notes with Japan, and several other officials in a sitting room. Ts'ao had escaped in disguise with his servants, but Chang, was beaten. Students also destroyed Chang's home in Tientsin that same day.²¹⁴

The police were at first reluctant to get involved, in fact some sympathized with the students, but following several urgent orders from their superiors, the police confronted the students and a fight ensued. There were a number of injuries on both sides. One student died from his injuries three days later. The fighting lasted until about 5:45p.m. with the arrest of thirty-two students. To protest the arrests, the students of Peking staged a strike and refused to attend school.²¹⁵ The government declared martial law and took steps to censor news of the incident by cutting off cable communications between Peking and other countries, but they were outwitted by some students who sent a telegram from a foreign telegraph service to one of the

foreign concessions at Tientsin. On May 5, the information was forwarded to Shanghai, and then disseminated to other parts of China as well as to the world.²¹⁶

Once word got out, the government was inundated with telegrams protesting the treatment of the students, insisting they had been acting out of patriotic sentiment. Under great pressure, the government released the thirty-two students on May 7. This ended the student strike, but the organizing, rallying, and demonstrating only intensified. A citizen's meeting to discuss the situation was held the same day with as many as 20,000 in attendance. A new student union was established on May 11 by twelve thousand students from sixty-one colleges and schools.²¹⁷

Thus, the May 4th Incident became the May 4th Movement which continued until the end of June. On May 6, the government issued a strict mandate to immediately arrest and punish any group of people gathered in public who refused to disperse. Another stricter mandate was issued two days later. In response, the students made plans to stage a general strike beginning May 19 in conjunction with a strict boycott of Japanese goods. The merchants and business community also joined the protests.²¹⁸ The Peking Chamber of Commerce had met on May 6 and decided that none of its members would purchase Japanese goods, all industrial and commercial relations with Japan would be terminated, and all the Chinese traitors and oppressive officials should be punished.²¹⁹ The general strike soon spread to other cities. The businessmen and merchants of Shanghai were particularly passionate about the protest, joining the general strike and the boycott of Japanese goods.²²⁰

The students continued to organize, hold rallies and demonstrations, circulate petitions, and make street speeches. They stood on street corners and gave speeches to whomever happened to be passing by. If the police came along, they simply dispersed and moved on to another street corner. This continued until June 2, when the government once again decided to begin arresting students. Seven students were arrested that day and the following day nine hundred students were in the streets making speeches. One hundred and seventy eight were

arrested and held in the Law School of Peking University, which had been turned into a temporary jail. On June 4, four hundred students were arrested and held in the Institute for Translation of Peking University, another temporary jail. The more students arrested, the more reinforcements were sent out on the streets. On the morning of June 5, more than five thousand determined students were in the streets, prepared to go to prison. Many stuck a toothbrush in their pocket, strapped bedding to their back, and packed food into a rucksack in preparation for arrest.²²¹ The arrest of so many students caused indignation throughout China. For the first time in China's recorded history, seven hundred female students assembled and marched to the president's palace demanding the release of the male students.²²²

The government, once again facing a groundswell of public outrage, backed down. They withdrew all troops and police from the school buildings on the afternoon of June 5, but the students turned the tables on the officials and refused to leave until their demands were met.²²³ The students now had the upper hand and demanded that the three 'traitorous officials' be dismissed; that students be guaranteed freedom of speech; that they be allowed to parade through the streets of Peking; and that the government should issue an apology for their arrest. After two days, the government gave in and issued apologies. The students walked out of the school prisons in triumph on June 8, greeted by cheers and a celebration of fireworks. They had turned the government into a laughingstock.²²⁴

The public continued to pressure the government not to sign the peace treaty and the general strike continued until June 12, when the three officials in question resigned.²²⁵ However, a complete victory did not come until the end of the month. In spite of public protest, the Chinese government sent a telegram to the Chinese delegation in Paris instructing them to sign the peace treaty. The following day a second telegram was sent to Paris instructing them *not* to sign, but the second telegram did not reach the delegation before time for the ceremony. Some believed the government officials knew the second telegram would not reach the delegation in time and that this was an intentional ploy to avoid responsibility for signing the treaty.²²⁶

The Chinese delegation in Paris was flooded by telegrams demanding, urging, pleading, and begging them not to sign the treaty. The delegation received over seven thousand telegrams. There were a number of Chinese students in Paris at the time and many of them surrounded the Hotel Lutétia, where the Chinese delegates were staying, vowing to prevent them from attending the ceremony.²²⁷ This, however, proved unnecessary. Despite instructions from Peking to sign the treaty, the Chinese delegates had unanimously decided not to sign. When the ceremony at Versailles began, there were two empty chairs at the peace table.²²⁸

This was a significant moment for the Chinese. It was the first time China stood up for itself against the Western nations. But, what would it do next? The perceived betrayal at Versailles turned China away from the West and away from Western democracy. It began to look in other directions for guidance and inspiration in creating a new China.²²⁹

A small socialist movement had existed in China since the early 1900s. Disillusioned with the West, a number of Chinese began to consider socialist alternatives. Many could relate to Russia's October Revolution and the uprising of the common people. The Chinese felt a geographic and cultural kinship with the people of Russia, both being agricultural and communal nations.²³⁰ Chinese intellectuals were initially tentative about Marxism. Arif Dirlik notes in *Origins of Chinese Communism* that the Chinese learned Marxism from the Japanese whose own interpretation focused on its philosophical underpinnings with little attention paid to political practicalities. Dirlik further notes that Chinese Marxism did not "benefit in origin from an original thinker."²³¹ Rather, the Chinese interpretation of Marxism was third generation removed from the original.

The first socialist study group was organized in Shanghai in 1911,²³² followed by a number of others, each with its own interests and interpretations. Not until July 1921 was the Chinese Communist Party officially established at the First Chinese Communist Congress, but there was no consensus on philosophical interpretation or purpose. Half the founding members left the Party²³³ and only three of the thirteen representatives at the first congress attended the

second congress.²³⁴ There was much to be sorted through and decided upon before China would become a Communist nation, but China's perceived betrayal by Wilson and the West had turned it in that direction.

One person attending the First Chinese Communist Congress was Mao Tse-tung,²³⁵ who would later lead the Chinese down the road to Communism. As a young student during the First World War, Mao wrote that China looked to the West for truth.²³⁶ If things had turned out differently at Versailles, Mao may very well have lead China down the road to democracy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The contributions of the Chinese Labor Corps in the First World War did not result in China immediately regaining sovereignty of Shantung Province. This would occur, at least in part, in 1922. As part of the realignment of naval powers in the Pacific at the Washington Naval Conference, Japan returned sovereignty of Shantung Province to China, but retained economic control of it. It would take further wars for China to achieve complete autonomy and sovereignty, including economic control, of its territory.

The story of the Chinese Labor Corps in the First World War is significant in its portrayal of a nation trying to emerge from centuries of isolation to transform itself into a modern nation, engaged in world events and accepted as an equal among nations. It includes elements of nationalism, internationalism, and transnationalism. China was emerging from the shadows of the isolationist Ch'ing Dynasty, struggling to create a national identity in a modern, western-centric world. It is interesting that of all the Western nations, China viewed Germany as the most egregious in establishing the Kiautschou leasehold in Shantung. Germany was one of the youngest nations in Europe, unified only since 1871. Both China and Germany were attempting to create national identities in the face of established European nations, which were intent on maintaining their positions of power and control.

Internationalism is also an important element in the story. If it were not apparent prior to the war, the events of the First World War, including the participation of the Chinese laborers, certainly demonstrated that internationalism was a permanent fixture. No longer could nations exist or events occur in isolation. The world was interconnected and events occurring in one area of the world were recognized as having repercussions throughout the world.

Transnationalism is a more recently identified concept. Elements of it are evident in the story of the Chinese Labor Corps. A number of definitions for transnationalism have been advanced, but it can be defined as a relationship transcending nations, national governments, and national boundaries. The YMCA would be included as a transnational organization. In the First World War, the YMCA operated under the auspices of various militaries, but it was itself an NGO (non-governmental organization). It operated across national borders, serving both combat and non-combat troops of many nations.

The Chinese Labor Corps was significant in other respects. It was part of China's first attempt to emerge from its isolation. Beginning in 1872, when Chinese students first traveled to the West to pursue their studies, followed by China's participation in the Geneva Convention and the Hague Conferences, and in its taking the lead in an international anti-opium campaign. China was attempting to engage with the world as an active participant, anxious to contribute to its betterment. It desired to be accepted by the world as an independent and equal nation. Although China had an ulterior motive in joining the war effort, the Chinese Labor Corps' contributions were nevertheless significant in achieving an Allied victory.

In a number of ways, the Chinese laborers were pawns. They were first pawns of their own government, which believed that Chinese participation in the war would result in having its sovereignty restored. They were also pawns of the major powers. The British, French, and American forces used the laborers to their own advantage, often with little regard for the welfare of the CLC. The Allied powers were even disinterested in seeing the Chinese repatriated in a timely fashion, concerned only with how much clean up and salvage work the laborers could complete before leaving Europe. The YMCA volunteers were often the only positive element to an otherwise dismal existence in Europe during the war; nevertheless, the YMCA, too, had an agenda of its own. It was anxious for the Chinese to return home to spread Western Christianity to the rest of China.

There was yet another significant and unanticipated consequence. China's government

believed it was placing the country on a path to being accepted as an equal by the Western nations. They reveled in Wilson's proclamation that "the awakening of the People of China to a consciousness of their possibilities under free government is the most significant, if not the most momentous event of our generation." However, China's treatment by Wilson and the Western world at the peace conference opened its eyes to the fact that the Western nations still viewed China as inferior and not worthy of fair treatment. In a tragic sense, the Chinese leadership that used the Chinese laborers as pawns to regain its sovereignty from the West understood that it was itself an inconsequential pawn of the Western world. This was a profound disillusionment that ultimately turned China away from the West.

China's participation in the First World War is largely forgotten or viewed as inconsequential by the West, but for China it was an important step in being accepted by the world. Today, as the West attempts to improve relations with China, it is important to have an awareness and understanding of past events. As a case in point, following the devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province on May 12, 2008, which killed at least 68,000 people, the Chinese were desperate for aid and supplies. Japan offered to have its SDF (Self-Defense Forces) airlift supplies to Sichuan. As irrational as it might seem, the idea of Japanese military aircraft appearing in Chinese skies harkened back to the terror Japanese planes inflicted on the Chinese in a much earlier time. The Chinese denied permission for the SDF to enter Chinese airspace, requesting instead that the Japanese use commercial aircraft.

The Chinese Labor Corps deserves to be remembered for its contributions to the Allied war effort, and its members deserve to be recognized for their dedication, valor, and bravery. Perhaps the Chinese did not exactly "save Western civilization," as Professor Xu is fond of saying, but they certainly made a significant contribution to winning the war.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ The total number of Allied nations in the First World War varies according to the date of the source and whether its author is including colonial territories such as India and Egypt, which gained their independence at a later date, as part of the British empire or as independent nations.

² Xu, Guoqi, *China and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See "On the Numbers Issue," 126-131. The number of Chinese laborers varies, but is usually reported as between 100,000 and 200,00. Determining the total number is complicated by the fact that the British and French had conducted separate recruiting programs, and the French used multiple recruiting subcontractors. Many sources cite 100,000 as a total, but recent scholarship suggests this number refers only to British contracted laborers, and does not include those contracted by the French.

CHAPTER 1: GERMANY & THE KIAUTSCHOU LEASEHOLD

³ Gustave Gouin, *The Shantung Question: Why China did not Sign the Peace Treaty* (Paris: Publishing Office of "La Verite," 1919) 24-8; "China's Hands Tied by Chiang Treaty." *New York Times* (New York, NY) 01 Oct. 1919 Online Archives <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9F00E3D61338EE32A25752C0A9669D946896D6CF>

⁴ Geroge Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Ch'ingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 33.

⁵ Djen Djang Feng, *The Diplomatic Relations Between China and Germany since 1898* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, LTD, 1936) 1-2; Hsü, Immanuel C.Y., *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 122-4; Steinmetz, 377.

⁶ Hsü, 133-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 133-9; Steinmetz, 364-5.

⁸ Steinmetz, 372.

⁹ Hsü, 130.

¹⁰ Steinmetz, 361-431, "German Views of China before Kiautschou."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 385-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 389.

¹³ Feng, 2.

¹⁴ Steinmetz, 403.

¹⁵ Hsü, 124.

¹⁶ Ibid., 189-93

¹⁷ Ibid., 237.

¹⁸ Ibid., 258-60.

¹⁹ Steinmetz 403-04.

²⁰ Schrecker, 2.

²¹ Ibid., 3-4.

²² Ibid.; Ralph A. Norem, *Kiaochow Leased Territory* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1936), 3.

²³ Schrecker, 5, 16-17; Norem, 4; Hans-Martin Hinz and Christoph Lind, eds. *Tsingtau: Ein Kapitel deutscher Kolonialgeschichte in China, 1897-1914* (Eurasberg, DE: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1998) 72-75.

²⁴ Schrecker, 5.

²⁵ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980) 465.

²⁶ Suzanne Marchand and David Lindenfeld, *Germany at the Fin de Siècle: Culture, Politics, and Ideas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004) 1.

²⁷ Schrecker, 6-9; Keown-Boyd, Henry, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony: A History of the Boxer Uprising in China in the Year 1900* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991) 17.

²⁸ Schrecker, 6-9.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 9. In 1895, the British had the greatest tonnage with 20,500,000 tons, Germany was second with 2,400,000 tons, and Sweden ranked third with 400,000 tons.

³¹ Ibid., 11. In 1895, the British had 361 firms in China, the Germans had 92 firms, and the Japanese were third with 34 firms.

³² Ibid. There were more French and Americans in China than Germans, but many were involved in missionary work, not in business.

³³ Norem, 15.

³⁴ Schrecker, 6.

³⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

³⁶ Ibid., 17-8.

³⁷ Ibid., 16-7.

³⁸ Paul S. Reinsch, "Spheres of Interest" in *Colonial Government: An Introduction to the Study of Colonial Institutions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926) 95-108.

³⁹ Schrecker, 18-27.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 20-7; Norem, 3-5, Richthofen is credited with influencing both Hsü and Tirpitz in their selection of Chiao-chou Bay, but according to Norem, Richthofen never traveled to Chiao-chou Bay. Instead, he used the writing and maps of a missionary he met in Chefoo, Rvd. Alexander Williamson, to write about Shantung Province in famous volumes on China.

⁴¹ Schrecker, 27; Norem, 16-7.

⁴² Schrecker., 14-6.

⁴³ Ibid., 27-32; Norem, 27-34.

⁴⁴ Schrecker, 31-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 33; Norem, 7.

⁴⁹ Schrecker, 11-13; Feng, 36-41.

⁵⁰ Ibid.; Steinmetz, 416-8.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.; See Steinmetz for more on Anzer's Sinophobic tendencies in context of his missionary work. Anzer describes China as "an empire of Satan" where "the Devil's domain is far greater than in the Christian countries."

⁵³ Schrecker, 11-13; Feng, 39-41, see Feng for more on the murder of the two missionaries as told by George M. Stenz, the third, and only surviving priest present at the time of the attack.

⁵⁴ R.G.Tiedemann, "The Church Militant: Armed Conflicts between Christians and Boxers in North China," in *The Boxers, China, and the World*, edited by Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 20-2.

⁵⁵ Schrecker, 34.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 37-42; Feng, 47-59.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Schrecker, 38.

⁵⁹ Feng, 57-64.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 60-61; Norem, 55.

⁶¹ Hsu 519-523. Lewis, John Fulton, *China's Great Convulsion 1894-1924: How Chinese Overthrew a Dynasty, Fought Chaos and Warlords, and Still Helped the Western Allies Win World War One*, (Heathsville, VA: Sun on Earth Books, 2005), 39.

⁶² Lewis, 83.

⁶³ Norem, 103-4; Tirpitz was promoted to Secretary of the Imperial Naval Department and returned to Berlin in 1897. He was instrumental in both acquiring the Kiaochow leasehold and insuring it was placed under control of the Department of the Navy rather than the Colonial Department of the Foreign Office.

⁶⁴ Schrecker, 34; Norem, 112-4.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 217.

⁶⁷ Karen Mai Eng, *German Colonialism in China: A Literary and Cultural Study* (PhD Diss: Georgetown University, 2003) 194-195; Woodruff D. Smith, "The Ideology of German Colonialism, 1840-1906," *The Journal of Modern History*, V.46, No.4 (Dec. 1974) 641-662.

⁶⁸ Schrecker, 61-2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 74-8.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 15-6, 104-30.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 59-60.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 43-4.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 45.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 45-48.

⁷⁷ Hsü, 423-59.

⁷⁸ Schrecker, 93.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 50-2, 93-4.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 112-24.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 139.

⁸³ Feng, 16-17; Allen S. Will, *World-Crisis in China, 1900* (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy Company, Publisher, 1900). This is a brief account of the Boxer Rebellion and events leading up to it. Interestingly, the period following the Opium Wars, generally referred to as a time of "foreign influence," is instead referred to as "The Era of Foreign Interference," in chapter by that title.; Henry Keown-Boyd, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony: A History of the Boxer Uprising in China in the Year 1900* ((London: Leo Cooper, 1991), Keown-Boyd's account of the Boxer Rebellion is updated and thorough, but decidedly pro-British, gives little credit to the Germans.

⁸⁴ B.L. Putnam Weale, *The Reshaping of the Far East* (New York: MacMilland and Co., Ltd., 1905), 314-87. A travel diary written by a British traveler in Asia in 1905, Weale devotes three chapters to German Kiaochow. An excellent descriptive writer, Weale paints a wonderful picture of a small, Bavarian village transported to China, while at the same time revealing the anti-German sentiment of 1905.; R.F. Johnston, "German Influence in Shantung" in *Remarks on the Province of Shantung* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1905) This is an account of Shantung Province by R.F. Johnston, British Secretary at Weihaiwei. His chapter on German activities includes a progress report on railroad construction and mining activities, but reflect the increasingly anti-German sentiment of the British.

⁸⁵ Schrecker, 148-9.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 246-8.

CHAPTER 2: THE SICK MAN OF ASIA

⁸⁸ Reinsch, Paul S., *Colonial Government: An Introduction to the Study of Colonial Institutions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926) 106.

⁸⁹ Xu, Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 22-26.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 8.

⁹² Iriye, Akira, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," *Diplomatic History*, 3:3 (1979): 115.

⁹³ Xu, 6-8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

⁹⁵ ChowTse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1964) 25.

⁹⁶ Xu, 37-38.

⁹⁷ Roberts, J.A.G., *A Concise History of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) 220.

⁹⁸ Xu, 50.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁰¹ MacKinnon, Stephen, "Toward a History of the Chinese Press in the Republican Period," *Modern China*, 23:1 (January 1997), 6.

¹⁰² Xu, 50-51.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 63-64

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

¹¹⁵ Lodwick, Kathleen L., *Crusades against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 6.

¹¹⁶ Xu, 81.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 84-86.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

¹²⁷ G Zay Wood, *The Twenty-One Demands: Japan vs. China* (NY: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1921) 39-78, digitized, online version:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/twentyonedemand01woodgoog>; Claude A. Buss, *War and Diplomacy in Eastern Asia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941) 160-161.

¹²⁸ Xu, 95-97.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹³¹ Michael Summerskill, *China on the Western Front: Britain's Chinese Work-Force in the First World War* (London: Michael Summerskill, 1982) 31.

¹³² Xu, 109-110.

¹³³ Summerskill, 38.

¹³⁴ Xu, 116.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 117-118.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 118-119.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 123.

¹⁴² Ibid., 123-125.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 125.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: THE CHINESE LABOR CORPS IN EUROPE

¹⁴⁵ Xu, 120.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 120-122.

¹⁴⁷ Griffin, Nicholas John , *The Use of Chinese Labour by the British Army, 1916-1920: the "Raw Importation," Its Scope and Problems* (University of Oklahoma, unpublished dissertation, 1973) 63.

¹⁴⁸ B. Manico Gull, "The Story of the Chinese Labor Corps: A Highly Efficient British Organization to Protect the Personal and Financial Interests of the Chinese' Coolies Laboring Behind the Lines In France," *The Far Eastern Review*, V14 (1918) 125-135.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.; Dr. John Jones, Personal Diary, July 3, 1917 entry describes the tattooing of the CLC rejects. Jones was a doctor with the Baptist Missionary Society in Chowtsun, Shantung when he was to assist with the medical screenings of CLC recruits at Tsingtau. He was stationed there from April 1917 through March 1918, when the last shipload of Chinese laborers departed for Europe.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Gull; Summerskill, 55.

¹⁵² Gull.

¹⁵³ Summerskill, 24.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 2. The British officers wore civilian clothes so as not to alarm the Chinese workers and to reinforce the notion that the Chinese were civilian workers.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 4-5; Laurence Salisbury, "Chinese Coolies and the War," *The Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 25, 1919; *Young Men's Christian Association with the Labor Corps in France*, (Paris: Herbert Clarke, 1919).

¹⁵⁷ John Charles Carlile (ed.), *Folkestone During the War: A Recording of a Town's Life and Works* (Folkestone: F.J. Parsons, Ltd., ca. 1920, not in copyright) 195.

¹⁵⁸ Carlile, 85.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹⁶¹ Wang, Peter Chen-Main, "Caring Beyond National Borders: The YMCA and Chinese Laborers in World War I Europe," *Church History*, 78:2 (June 2009) 327-349. In addition, a minimal number of Chinese were employed in Britain throughout the course of the war, and some served as seamen on merchant ships.

¹⁶² Gull; Griffin, 194.

¹⁶³ Griffin, 85. When the Chinese arrived in France, there were already 1,000 Cape Boys (mixed race), 10,000 South African natives, 1,000 Portuguese natives, 100 Fijians, and both East and West Indian natives. All were considered part of the Imperial Force.

¹⁶⁴ Gull; Griffin, 191.

¹⁶⁵ Griffin, 92.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 177; *Young Men's Christian Association with the Labor Corps in France*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, 112-113.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Alec Hill, translator, *Weihaiwai under British Rule* (Jinan City, Shandong, China: Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 2006) 137.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 141.

¹⁷² John Griffin, "Britain's Chinese Labor Corps in World War I," *Military Affairs* 40:30 (Oct. 1976) 102-108.

¹⁷³ Lewis., Chap. 2, "The Social Gospel and the YMCA in China," 44-63; see also Jun Xing and Chun Hsing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China: 1919-1937* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996) for a discussion on the history of the YMCA in China.

¹⁷⁴ Wang; Elliott, Walter Scott, "Wang Gin-Guay," *Association Men*, Aug. 1922.

¹⁷⁵ Griffin, 191.

¹⁷⁶ Wang; Griffin, 191; O.D. Austin, "From Far Cathay and Back Again," *Canadian Manhood*, Nov. 1919, 110.

¹⁷⁷ "With the Allies in France," Summary of World War Work of the American YMCA (International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1920) 365.

¹⁷⁸ "Friends for the Chinese in France," *The Continent*, Nov. 7, 1918, 49:45; James, Gregory, "Murder and Mayhem in the Chinese Labor Corps." Paper presented at the International Conference on Chinese Labor Corps during the Great War, September 17-19, 2008, Weihai, China and published in the Collection of Essays from the conference.

¹⁷⁹ Hopkins, C. Howard, History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America (New York: Association Press, 1951) 490-491.

¹⁸⁰ Wang.

¹⁸¹ Hopkins, 490-491; International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association. Summary of World War Work of the American YMCA (New York: Association Press, 1920) 60.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "With the Allies in France," 365.

¹⁸⁴ *Yearbook of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, Association War Work, subsection III, Overseas.* (NY: Association Press, 1921) 68; Edwards, Dwight W. "The Chinese Laborer in France in Relation to the Work of the Young Men's Christian Association, Report to the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association of North America, 1918." Kautz Family YMCA Archives, YMCA and the Chinese Laborers in France. Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN.; *Young Men's Christian Association with the Labor Corps in France*, 10-14.

¹⁸⁵ Griffin, 213-224.; "With the Allies in France," *Summary of World War Work of the American YMCA* (International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1920) 367-368.

¹⁸⁶ "Education Department Issues First Chinese Paper ever Published in France: Makes it possible for Many Chinese Laborers to Get the News of the World," *Red Triangle Overseas*, Feb. 22, 1919.

Faris, Paul Patton, "Preparing the Red Triangle for China," *The Continent*, May 8, 1919; *Young Men's Christian Association with the Labor Corps in France*, 6-7.

¹⁸⁸ Griffin, 225-226.

¹⁸⁹ Xu, 142.

¹⁹⁰ Griffin, 193.

¹⁹¹ Lewis 126. quoting W.W. Peters' *Occasional Report: YMCA France*. See footnote 44.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁹³ Summerskill, Chap. 20, "The Return to China," 195-204; William H. Taft, et al, eds., *Service with Fighting Men; An Account of the Work of the American Young Men's Christian Associations in the World War* (NY: Association Press, 1924) V II, Part V, Ch LV, 364-368.

¹⁹⁴ Xu, 143.

¹⁹⁵ Griffin, "Britain's Chinese Labor Corps in World War I," *Military Affairs* 40:30 (Oct. 1976) 102-108.

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVIL'S HANDWRITING

¹⁹⁶ Peter, W.W. "Mr. Chang Goes to War: And having seen it and comparing Western Civilization with his own, decides to Grow his queue again – A new view of the war as seen by oriental eyes," *World Events*, July 1919, 273-75.

¹⁹⁷ Steinmetz, xvi.

¹⁹⁸ Chow 26. The Boxer Rebellion was an attempt to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty by a radical anti-foreigner group, The Chinese Society of Right and Harmonious Fists, or simply "Boxers" because of their practicing martial arts. The Boxer campaigns occurred primarily in rural areas, but in June 1900, the Boxers invaded Peking and killed 230 foreigners, including diplomats. The Boxers laid siege to Peiking until a coalition of Western nations sent troops in to rid the city of the rebels in mid-August. The Boxer Indemnities were payments the Chinese government was forced to pay the Western countries for coming to their assistance.

¹⁹⁹ Manela, 99-107.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 177-179.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*; Chow 87.

²⁰² Manela, 181; Chow, 86-87.

²⁰³ Manela, 179-181; Chow, 87

²⁰⁴ Manela, 181-182

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 184-186; Bernadotte E. Schmitt and Harold C. Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible, 1914-1919* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984) 472-473. Earlier histories such as Schmitt and Vedeler's maintain that Wilson was trying to shield China from Japan, but he simply had no choice; he did the best he could and he believed the Shantung questions would be remedied at a later date. Japan returned Shantung to China at the Washington Conference in 1922, but retained economic control of the Province.; Israel, Jerry, *Progressivism and the Open*

Door: America and China, 1905-1921 (Pittsburgh; University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971) 167-170.

²⁰⁶ Manela, 180.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 184; Pugach, Noel H., *Paul S. Reinsch: An Open Door Diplomat in Action* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1979) 260-268.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 185-186; Chow, 92; Roberts, 219-222; See also Franke, Wolfgang, "The Cultural Revolution: The May 4th Movement of 1919" in *A Century of Chinese Revolution, 1851-1949*, Stanley Rudman, trans. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1970) 85-118.

²⁰⁹ Chow, 119-122; Lewis, 183-184.

²¹⁰ Chow, 99-100; Manela 187-188.

²¹¹ Manela, 186-191.

²¹² Chow, 105-106; Manela, 187.

²¹³ Chow, 109-110.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 111-112; Manela, 187.

²¹⁵ Chow, 115-120

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151-157.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-129, 151-157; Lewis, 184-185.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Lewis, 184.

²²³ Chow, 151-157; Lewis, 185.

²²⁴ Chow, 159-160.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 163

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

²²⁷ Lewis, 179.

²²⁸ Chow., 166.

²²⁹ Franke, 113-118; Lewis, "Seeds of Unending Revolution" in *China's Great Convulsion*.

²³⁰ Arif Dirlik, "A Revolution Perceived: The October Revolution through Chinese Eyes," Chap. 2, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 23-42.

²³¹ Dirlik, 97.

²³² *Ibid.*, 33; Roberts, 222-228.

²³³ Dirlik, 156.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

²³⁶ Xu 85.

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