

# The Construction and Changes of Railway Cognition in Manchuria During the Boxer Movement Period

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**Abstract:** *During the Boxer Movement, the railroads were seen as a major object of contention and a place of conflict by both Chinese and Russian Empire parties, but there were significant differences in the perception of the railroads. Foreign countries, especially Russian Empire, viewed the railroads as an important means of transportation with modern technology and expected them to be successfully built and opened to traffic, and the Russian Empire army viewed them as an important force. On the Chinese side, the laborers saw the railroads only as an opportunity to support their families and lacked an understanding of their modern technological value. Qing officials and the Boxers were adamant that the railroads be dismantled, seeing them as detrimental to their own army and rejecting and destroying them as foreign symbols. The Manchuria region's awareness of railroads and modern technology at the time was significantly lower than that of other regions in China that were actively developing modern technology and industry at the same time.*

**Keywords:** Cognition, Railway, Manchuria, The Boxer Movement.

## 1. Introduction

Railroad technology was introduced to China from the West in the middle of the 19th century. There are many studies on the history of railroads in the Qing Dynasty. However, they are mainly from the perspectives of political history, diplomatic history, economic history, social history, etc., with less discussion on the history of scientific and technological thought and philosophy of science and technology. Even if the history of railroads is described from the aspect of science and technology, most important figures such as the chief engineer of the railroads are the focus of the discussion, and the comprehensive research is less. As a matter of fact, the process of spreading and landing railroad technology from the West to China is also worthy of technology and discussion, and from this perspective, it can also show the economic and social landscape at that time, and benefit the research on the awareness and spread of modern science and technology nowadays. This paper discusses the perception of railroads, which refers to the knowledge and perception of different groups and individuals about railroads and the construction of railroads in the Middle East, including the viewpoints of the railroads themselves, as well as the direction of thinking and the way of thinking that extends from the railroads.

This paper takes place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and focuses on the construction and changes in the perception of railroads in the present-day northeastern region of China, known as Manchuria, during this time period. At this time, the first railroad was being built in the region, with Russian Empire and Qing cooperating as the main builders and managers, and Russian Empire wanted to bring the region directly into the modern transportation system and into its own national sphere of influence. At the same time, the outbreak of the Boxer Movement in the Shanghai Pass had created a strong resistance among some of Qing's ordinary people and officials to foreign personnel and projects, and as this conflict was ignited, old and new perceptions collided, were constructed, and changed.

## 2. The Beginning and End of the Boxer Movement in Manchuria

According to *Studies on the History of the Boxer Movement*, "The Boxer Movement Movement was conceived from the anti-foreigner struggle in County Cao and Shan, a single belt in Shandong after 1895, and developed into an anti-imperialist struggling movement with nationwide influence by 1900." (Lu, 1988, p.2) The origin of the word Boxer Movement can be traced back to the "Divine Fist" organization that appeared in Chiping, Gaotang, and Pingyuan in Shandong Province, which was later named the "Divine Fist of Boxer Movement" or "Boxer Fist of Boxer Movement" (Lu, 1988). The name of this organization was later changed to "Yihe Shenquan" or "Boxer's Fist". The object of the Boxer Movement was, in general, the foreign institutions and organizations that had usurious loans in China at that time, and these organizations were mostly active in China in the name of religion at that time. The members of the Boxer Movement were initially peasants who had lost their land and grain harvests due to natural disasters. The Boxer Movement began its activities in the present-day Shandong and Hebei regions of Qing, but its scope of activities gradually expanded and its influence deepened.

In early October 1899, the Boxer Movement emerged in Shandong and Hebei. Later in February 1900, the Boxer Movement began to be spread into the northeast by sea and by land, especially many peasants from Shandong and Hebei entered the Northeast region by boat from Yingkou (Todd & Lei, 1993). Not before long, residents in the vicinity of Yingkou started practicing boxing, and "when asked what the purpose of practicing boxing was, they all said the same thing, they all said that they were preparing to kill and chase the foreigners" (Li, 1959). At the same time, Jinzhou generation of countryside villages, there were also gradually Boxers. In May and June, the Boxer forces spread rapidly throughout the Northeast. Shengjing General Zengqi had posted notices, strictly prohibit "rumors", Jilin General Changshun said the Boxer Movement as "bandits trouble", but the Boxer Movement more and more, "the first three or five gangs, and then and thousands of groups! However, the number of Boxers increased more and more, "initially in groups of three

or five, and then in groups of thousands”, and the state and county officials “were afraid of their power, and did not dare to expel them..... villages and towns and townships, and the head of the Baozheng and the head of the association, were especially afraid of them.” (Li, 1959, 23)

The Russian Empire side also noted the news of the Boxers. According to the 1910 Russian Empire Border Guard Independent Corps Special Outer Amur Command to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the relief of the siege of Harbin Boxers edited and published by the Middle East Railway Guards to participate in the 1900 Manchurian events, the Russian Empire knew that “from the south of China has come a number of rumors to make people panic, that there is a secret society called the Boxer Gang or Boxer Fist, which hated the foreigners and incited Movement among the people..... At the end of April and the beginning of May 1900, some so-called 'Boxers' or 'Boxers' were found in Beijing and Tientsin. They claimed among the people to be members of the 'Great Fist Society' or the 'Great Sword Society', and they openly propagandized, targeting churchmen and foreigners. The result of this propaganda soon became the massacre of Chinese Catholics by armed people led by the Boxers, and then the aggression against the foreigners. Thereafter, this national movement was rapidly transformed into a real conflict of the Chinese official (which seems to have been involved in this movement) against the European powers.” (Golitsyn, Li, & Tian, 1984, p.98)

In order to prevent Russian Empire to use the Boxer Gang as a reason to provoke the border, May 29, the Qing court issued an oracle pointed out that: “recently heard that the boxing people in more than the travelers will be brave bandits mixed among them, to use the end of the wantonly disturbed, and even killing and maiming of the force, burned down the electric pole railroads. Like this unhappy not afraid of the law, it is the same as the people of chaos.” (Wang, 2020, p. 85) Shengjing General Zengqi after learning of this matter, immediately to the jurisdiction of the size of the official passes the message, and asked them to turn to the subordinate one to comply with the implementation. With the development of the Boxer Movement and the change of the situation at home and abroad, the Qing court gradually adjusted its strategy towards the Boxers (Wang, 2020). In June 1900, the Qing court in Beijing suddenly issued an “oracle” declaring ostracism on foreigners, ordering the provincial governors and generals to “set up the Boxer Movement to defend themselves against foreign invasion”. Shengjing eight banners set of discussions, vice president Jinchang force to “against the Russian Empire”. General Zengqi firmly opposed. General Shoushan of Heilongjiang, ordered the city's vice-presidents and the road commanders to prepare to “cover up and deport the Russian Empire people in the territory”. General Changshun of Jilin telegraphic warnings “not to start a provocation in haste”. (Li, 1959, p.23)

The Northeast Boxer Movement initially targeted churches, but later expanded to include all foreign buildings and construction sites. From June 24, 1900 to the following afternoon, the Fengtian Boxer Movement burned down more than 200 British churches, homes and hospitals (Wu & Xue, 2011). In the afternoon of July 1, 1900, the Boxers led by Liu Xilu and Zhang Hai burned down the railroad company in

Fengtian. At the same time a patriotic Qing army launched an onslaught on the Shenyang East Station. Lushun area of the Boxer Movement in the posters put forward “to help protect Qing, expelled from foreign countries” slogan, calling on the masses to “all sides of the railroad” demolition, the potential to fight with the invaders to the end (Shen, 2014, p.50) Fengtian's Boxer Movement, with the cooperation of the Qing army, attacked the railway station, dismantled the railroad, destroyed bridges, cut power lines, and attacked the road guard posts. To the south of Shenyang, Qing officers and men launched an onslaught on Liaoyang station and the Yantai coal mines, and attacked Shenyang station. In early July, the Boxers burned down the Tsirshan coal mine in Liaoyang, which had been forcibly occupied by the Russian Empire. Tieling Nanguan was the place where the Russian Empire army gathered, the Boxers, with the participation of the Red Lantern Shine, burned down the railroad there. (Shen, 2014) In Qiqihar, the Boxer Movement set up an altar to practice boxing, “hate foreigners”, and set up a posting posters. They put forward the slogan of “practicing Boxer's Fist and fighting away the foreigners”. The road construction workers in Furalki (present-day Furalki district of Qiqihar) burned down “markets and houses as well as wooden bridges on the river” of the Russian Empire (Wu & Xue, 2011, p.107). In Aigun, rumors spread that “the Boxers and the Red Lanterns came to the city of Aigun with one or two hundred people, all girls and boys, saying that they came to fight against the Russian Empire soldiers” (Shen, 2014, p.52).

On June 28, 1900, the Chief Engineer of the Middle East Railroad issued an order recommending that all Russian Empire employees with their families and road guards be evacuated from the railroad construction zone (Nilus, 1923, p. 184-186). On the same day, the Boxers launched to Harbin, the central city on the Middle East Railway line. The Boxers first dismantled the communication facilities in the suburbs of Harbin and destroyed the surrounding railroads and bridges. On July 22, some Qing troops and the Boxers concentrated on Harbin. The eastern road decided to divide into three general attacks, that is, the Qiqihar side from the southwest across the Songhua River, the Hulan side from the north across the Songhua River, Shuangcheng and Alchukha (now the A-cheng area) side from the south and southeast along the railroad, to cut off its connection with the outside world. The Russian Empire side, under the command of General Superintendent Worker Yugovich and Commander of the Road Protectors Grogros, guarded Daoli, Beijiangzi, Nangang and Xiangfang with 3,500 men. (Wu & Xue, 2011, p.107)

At the beginning of July, the director of the Middle East Railway, Yogovich, and the commander of the road guards, Grogros, urgently wanted to call for help from the Minister of Finance, Witte, and the commander of the troops along the Amur, and at the same time, they issued an order to all the Russian Empire employees of the Middle East Railway and the road guards to retreat quickly with important books, documents, papers, money, and valuable instruments and tools. In the first half of July, the Russian Empire declared that the Russian Empire armies guarding the border between Qing and Russian Empire were in a state of conflict. On July 9, the Russian Empire decided to send troops to suppress the Boxer Movement and protect its interests in Qing, mobilized 12 districts, deployed 128 battalions of infantry equipped with

artillery and engineers, 78 companies of cavalry, 340 cannons, a total of more than 170,000 people, in Kurubatkin's deployment, the Russian Empire army into northeastern Qing in seven ways. By mid-July, "Fengtian province north to Kaiyuan, south to Haicheng, counting 500 miles, all the Russian Empire railroad bridges put are demolished by the people" (Li, 1959, p.23). And at that time has not yet been combined with the track of the Middle East Railway other construction areas, in addition to Brigade, Harbin and Yingkou, almost all destroyed.

In the early morning of July 25, the Boxers' general attack on Harbin began. North Road Qing troops and the Boxers captured the back of the river after a day and night. The next day, the southwest troops across the Songhua River, captured the brick factory; then divided into two groups, all the way to run to Daoli, to meet the occupation of the back of the Jiangzi troops across the river. Boxers and the Qing soldiers from Jilin and Acheng totally more than 200 people, occupied the Russian Empire stronghold in Xiangfang in Tian's distillery, but the loss of serious, failed to realize the plan with the South Road, Southeast Road attack on Harbin, the other way straight to the Songhua River station. Boxers from Qiqihar, Hulan with Qing officers and soldiers, attacked the Russian Empire army on the north bank of the Songhua River in the forward position of the dockyard for three days and nights, control of the Jiangnan dock, attacked Harbin five streets. At the same time, there are Shuangcheng, Acheng and the north of the river over the Boxer Movement and more than 5,500 soldiers and officers and men attacked Guxiangtun, captured the Russian Empire stronghold of the railroad brick factory, Jiyuan distillery, and advancing to the Harbin station, destroyed the station and the existing locomotives. The total attack on Harbin, was the Boxer members from northeast, but due to the south group and southeast group of the Qing army and Boxer Movement can not get timely reinforcement, the form of a sharp turn. In August, Russian Empire reinforcements led by Sakharov arrived via the Songhua River waterway and lifted the siege of Harbin. The Boxer Movement in other regions of Heilongjiang province had gradually failed. On August 27th, the Russian Empire army invaded Qiqihar, and the Northeast Boxers entered a low tide. (Wu & Xue, 2011)

In Fengtian, the remnants of the Boxer Movement and part of the Qing army in the southern line between Shenyang and Dalian constantly attacked. Mainly composed of farmers, hunters, workers, the remnants of the Boxer Movement, small traders and routed soldiers in Liaoning and Jilin with 200,000 people of the "Loyalist Army", put forward the "Russian Empire invaders, the restoration of the country", "destroy the railroad, attack Shenyang "They attacked the Russian Empire army everywhere. Among them, the loyalist army under the leadership of Wang Heda, the volunteer army under the leadership of Liu Yonghe, and the Zhendong army under the leadership of Tang Dengrong and Yang Yulin were relatively large in scale. Although the Loyalist Army failed, the fight between the people in the northeast and Russian Empire did not stop. (Wu & Xue, 2011) However, they failed in preventing railway's construction. In early October 1900, the Russian Empire army successively occupied major cities and railway lines in northeast China, and the Boxer Movement was suppressed. At the end of 1900, the Middle East railway

project resumed work (Shen, 2014). In July 1903, the main line of the Middle East Railway was completed and opened to traffic. (Nilus, 1923)

### 3. Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Railroads Among the Parties

During the Manchuria Boxer Movement, the various groups' perceptions of railroads were constructed and adapted, and in keeping with this seemingly shifting, but nevertheless inextricable context of each group's own perceptions, the various parties acted differently with regard to railroads.

#### 3.1 Perceptions and Actions of the Foreign and Russian Empire Sides

The largest foreign group in the Northeast during the Boxer Movement was the people associated with the construction of the Middle East Railway, including railroad company employees, engineers, laborers, road guards, and their families and relatives, most of whom were of the Russian Empire. The understanding that the construction of the Middle East Railway was "a creation of human civilization" was their consensus at the time (Wolff, 2009). Nilus (1932), who was a member of the board of directors of the Middle East Railroad Company, also wrote in the introduction of his book about the construction and operation of the Middle East Railroad that "this railroad, laid between 1898 and 1900 in what was then an uninhabited region, like the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, which linked some of the oceans, made it possible to bring about a direct exchange between different cultures in the East and the West. The railroad also awakened the whole of Manchuria and contributed to the dynamic economic development of a region that until recently had been virtually untouched..... It brought the new land and its people together in the service of modern creative work for the benefit of all mankind." (p.1) As one of the heads of the railroad project and a major engineer, Gershoff contributed his efforts to the railroad and died of illness in the railroad's hub city of Harbin, after suffering from a cumulative illness even before the railroad was completed (Nilus, 1932). Through the oral records of many railroad engineers, they encountered many difficulties such as cold, sickness, loneliness, and lack of instruments and laborers during the construction of the road, but they all remained optimistic and took charge of their tasks. (Nilus, 1932) It is easy to see that they had love for their cause and recognized its value. During the Boxer Movement, almost all of the craftsmen were forced to evacuate the site because of the riots. When Harbin was plunged into chaotic circumstance, the experts in caisson engineering, who were responsible for building the railroad bridge over the Songhua River in Harbin, were protected because it would be difficult for others to take over their work in the event of their misfortune. The engineers were risking their lives to participate in the construction task. After the Boxer Movement, they returned to the construction site, which had been almost completely destroyed, to complete the work more efficiently. (Nilus, 1932)

Russian Empire troops and political circles have added geopolitical factors to the recent past when it comes to the Middle East railroad construction route. Especially with the defeat in 1856, Russian Empire realized the huge role of railroads, a modern transportation system, in emergency (Tan,

2016). Therefore, Russian Empire vigorously pushed forward the construction of the Middle East Railway, and in the initial period when it heard the news of the Boxer Movement, the Russian Empire central government did not take it seriously, thinking that it was just a small portion of vandalism by the general public, but then the Boxer movement gained momentum, the forces that hindered the construction of the railroads strengthened, and the investigation found that there was a large amount of vandalism of railroads by the Qing government troops, who were supposed to protect railroad construction, and were mixed with the Boxer movement, destroying the already constructed They were involved in the Boxer Movement, destroying constructed railroad lines and stations (Golitsyn, Li, & Tian, 1984). In Manchuria, at the beginning of the Boxer Movement, Russian Empire communicated separately with the three Manchurian generals, seeking them to send troops to ensure that the railroads were being built, to protect the railroad construction crews, and to threaten the Qing officials with financial compensation; however, later, after it became known that official Qing troops were intervening in the events and sabotaging the railroads, the Russian Empire government in St. Petersburg hesitated to give up on the finance minister's demand for financial compensation, and supported the army minister's request for financial compensation by sending a army force to be stationed in the Baikal region. Russian Empire troops stationed in the Baikal region into Chinese territory to suppress the Boxer movement and ensure the construction of the railroad, and took the opportunity to station regular troops rather than hired railroad escorts in China. (Zhang, 2015) The Russian Empire army and political establishment placed the highest value on the strategic value of the Middle East Railway and believed that control of the railroad could be used as a pretext for colonial and economic aggression. The railroad was officially seen by Russian Empire as part of the country's armed forces.

### 3.2 Perceptions and Actions of Chinese Officers

Manchuria during the Boxer Movement was governed in part by General Zengqi of Shengjing, General Changshun of Jilin, and General Shoushan of Heilongjiang, each of whom was subordinate to Beijing during the Boxer Movement of the Qing Dynasty. In the early days of the Boxer Movement, because of pressure from Russian Empire, Beijing gave the three generals instructions to protect the construction of the railroads, to fulfill their promises to Russian Empire, and to avoid financial compensation to Russian Empire for the destruction of the railroads. Subsequently, however, Beijing saw the destructive power of the Boxer Movement and wanted to use it to drive out foreigners in China. Therefore from June 21, 1900 Beijing issued an order asking the three generals to pacify the Boxer regiments and prepare for emergency together to prepare for the expulsion of the Russian Empire (Zhang, 2015).

Although all three generals received orders from Beijing, they had different attitudes toward the Boxers and Russian Empire. General Zengqi of Shengjing prevented the Boxers from destroying the railroad before receiving the order, and after receiving the order, he did not strongly support the activities of the Boxers, and immediately disassociated himself from the Boxers when the Boxers were in a position to lose;

General Jilin kept delaying his actions, whether it was protecting the railroads before receiving the order or cooperating with the Boxers; and General Heilongjiang kept sympathetic to the Boxers and actively participated in the Boxer movement after receiving the order and died in a martyr's death after the Boxer movement was suppressed, died a martyr's death. (Zhang, 2015; Wang, 2020)

Regarding the railroad, General Shengjing thought that "the Russian Empire were building a train under false pretenses, and their intention was really malicious, and as the road ran through three provinces, once it was completed, it would be difficult to defend against the danger. Moreover, all the stations were very wide and strong, and there were firearms everywhere, and the trains were made of iron plates, so that most of the shots could not hit them, and it was obvious that they were planning to use the trains for future invasion purposes" (Wang, 2020, p.85). General Jilin put forward "Russian Empire since the repair of railroads, Jilin hinterland section of the arrangement of guards, and the Ningguta side of the side of the train, has been marching freely for a long time, once something happens, to the outside world is very easy, and please the more difficult to the internal trouble." (Wang, 2020, p. 86) Heilongjiang general that insisted that "the border defense so the foreign, own railroad a section, and must prevent internal. And Yakling, Zhalantun, Furalki and Harbin, all according to my heart, when I have a dangerous pass." (Wang, 2020, p.87) Thus it can be seen that regardless of whether the three generals supported the Boxer Movement or not, and to what extent, as the highest administrative and governor of Manchuria, they did not have any idea of wanting to keep the railroads, in their view, the railroads were the reason for foreigners to occupy the strongholds, and the railroads themselves were a great threat to be eliminated rather than utilized. Lacking an understanding of the railroads, the Qing dynasty not only failed to expel Russian Empire power from Manchuria, and did not take control of the Middle East Railroad, which boosted Manchuria's economy, but also had to pay financial compensation for the destruction of the Russian Empire railroads.

### 3.3 Perceptions and Actions of Chinese Boxer Members

The outbreak of the Boxer Movement was partly due to an extraordinary drought, which left the Shandong and Hebei regions with severe crop failures, leaving a large number of peasants without food, and the outbreak of pent-up tensions between foreign missionaries and their Chinese henchmen who took advantage of the situation by practising usury and seizing the peasants' land (Lin, 1991). Thus Boxer slogans included many references to driving out the foreigners and the drought would be lifted, as did Boxer propaganda in the Northeast. One such Boxer poster slogan reads, "The Boxer Movement unveils: Catholicism and Christianity have slandered the Holy Spirit, deceived the Chinese rulers and ministers, and oppressed the Chinese people, so the gods and men are furious together, and have sent out their divine armies to expel the foreigners. Swords and soldiers are rolling in front of us, and the people of Qing cannot have peace. Boxer is a believer of heaven, which can help the court and the people. Those who get this posting and do not pass it on to others will be in great danger. Those who pass it on to others will be spared; those who distribute ten posters will be spared

for the whole family; those who distribute fifty posters will be spared for the whole village. If you don't drive the foreigners away, no rain will fall from the sky. All merchants and villagers in the country must know this. Whoever destroys this posting is a thief and a whore" (Golitsyn, Li, & Tian, 1984, p. 99-100).

The Boxer propaganda of Manchuria, apart from its mystical overtones, was characterized by hatred of foreigners, but it did not include an awareness of the railroads, which they destroyed, as well as all the foreigners' constructions, without distinction and without any attempt to reuse them. They wanted to maintain the status quo ante and did not understand or want to accept the products of modern technology. Railroads, in their view, were just threatening obstacles placed by foreigners in their own land, and they had no positive value for them. Throughout the Boxer Movement, hatred of foreigners and conflicts with foreigners denied them the opportunity to learn more about railroads and other products of modern science and technology that had spread from the West.

### 3.4 Perceptions and Actions of Chinese Railway Laborers

In the book of Nilus (1932), a former member of the board of directors of the Middle East Railway, he repeatedly cited oral histories of road construction engineers and his own experiences to describe the cooperation between Chinese laborers and Russian Empire workers. Initially, because of the lack of labor at the road construction site, the Russian Empire construction crew recruited a large number of Chinese laborers, but because of the different language and different working habits, the initial cooperation was not very smooth. For example, the Chinese laborers and the Russian Empire engineers did not agree on how to dig the earth and transport the gravel, but in the end, the engineers thought that the Chinese laborers' method was simpler and more suitable for their work and the needs of road construction (Nilus, 1932, p. 53). This shows that the Chinese laborers were actively using their previous experience in road construction to solve the problems of railroad construction. During the Boxer Movement, most of the laborers left the construction sites because conflicts were frequent in the railroad construction zones and the Russian Empire were not responsible for the safety of the Chinese laborers.

After the end of the Boxer Movement and the turmoil, the Chinese laborers spontaneously returned to the construction sites, and Nilus clearly wrote: "As soon as the Boxers gave up their actions, the Chinese workers were happy to return to the construction sites" (1932, p. 66). The Russian Empire engineer Offenbergl also lamented: "If it had not been for the influx of thrifty Chinese into the work areas, the resumption of the work would have been unthinkable..... The work everywhere was gradually getting back on track, and all efforts were made to recapture lost time, and the work progressed much faster than it had been before the Boxer riots." (Nilus, 1932, p.59-60) The work of the Chinese laborers was recognized by the Russian Empire staffs. They did not see the railroad as a foreign symbol to be destroyed, but neither did they praise their work. There are documented conflicts between Chinese laborers and the Russian Empire side, which started as a result of unpaid wages (Lu, 1988). For

the Chinese laborers, building railroads was their job, and the work of building railroads might not seem different to them from building houses or planting fields. They did not have a new and disruptive understanding of railroads as a new mode of transportation in the modern technological industry.

## 4. Conclusion

Both Chinese and Russian Empire parties saw the railroads as the main object of contention during the Boxer Movement, and the railroad lines as the main theaters of conflicts. However, their perceptions of the railroads were not identical.

The foreign parties (mainly Russian Empire, at that time Japan did not have enough influence in Manchuria, not at all as much as its influence in South Manchuria and the whole of Manchuria afterward), upholding the railroads as the forward transportation of modern technology, both the railroad company parties, the Russian Empire army and the officials, hoped that the railroads could be successfully constructed and opened to traffic. At the same time, the Russian Empire army was clearly aware of the importance of the railroad as a conflict point.

On the Chinese side, the Chinese laborers on the front lines of the railroads did not have a sense of honor in their work. Whether they revolted against the railway company because of unpaid wages or left the construction site because of the conflict, their perception of the railroads may have been that they provided an opportunity to support their families, but there is no historical evidence that they had any understanding or imagination of the construction of the railroads or of the modern technology that would be brought about by the railroads once they were built. Officials of the Qing Dynasty and the Boxer Movement believed that the railroad had to be completely and totally dismantled. Based on the location of the railroad, and for the reason that Russian Empire might use the railroad to advance, the officials thought that the railroad was not good for the future of their country, and they did not have any idea of seizing the railroad and making use of it by themselves, even though the contract for the construction of the Middle East Railroad stated that Russian Empire would withdraw from the railroad and hand over the management of the railroad to Qing under certain conditions. The Boxer Movement masses also did not have any idea of how to use the railroads, they had negative perceptions of the railroads, they saw the railroads as a symbol of a foreign country and totally rejected and destroyed them, and the Chinese community in Manchuria, both the officials and the people, did not have any aspirations for the railroads and the modern technology behind them during the Boxer Movement. During the same period, some Chinese officials and educated people in other parts of China were working hard to develop modern technology and industry in the hope that it would strengthen the Chinese state (Lei, 2022). In comparison, the awareness of the Chinese side in the Manchuria region about the railroad and modern technology and industry is very low.

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