

1-1999

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Recommended Citation

Delagoza, R.S. (1999) "1. The Boxer Persecution (1890 - 1907)," *Vincentiana*: Vol. 43: No. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentiana/vol43/iss1/2>

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I. Chinese Martyrs

1. The Boxer Persecution (1890 - 1907)

Introduction

What was the Boxer Persecution? "Boxers" was the name given to a Chinese secret society known as "I-ho ch'uan" ("Righteous and Harmonious Fists"). Its members practiced boxing and calisthenic rituals believing that this gave them supernatural powers and made them impervious to bullets. At the start they were against the Ch'ing dynasty, but later they were given encouragement by the Chinese government. By 1899, the Boxers were openly attacking Chinese and Western Christians in many parts of China. The height of the Boxer Persecution happened in 1900 and resulted in the intervention of an International Force and the capture of Peking in August 1900.

The missionaries who were eyewitnesses to the cruel persecution of the Boxers tried to understand who they were and what were their motivations. From their letters and reports, one could gather the following characteristics. It was a secret, fanatic, violent, superstitious and anti-Christian society. They attracted hundreds of thousands of members through their superstitious practices of incantations which led them to a state similar to diabolic possession. In such a state they claimed supernatural faculties which would render them invulnerable. They rampaged throughout the Chinese countryside, including Peking, burning churches and killing western and Chinese Christians with a fanaticism similar to the pagan persecutions of the early Christians.

A French naval sublieutenant, Paul Henry, who died during the siege of Peking wrote a touching letter in favor of the Christian Missions in China: "Do not feel too much sadness," he wrote in his last will and letter to his family in France, "I have died for the most beautiful of causes. I have done, I hope, all my duty. I leave to you the little that I have, and I ask you to set aside from the money that I leave the sum of two hundred francs for the Missions in China, so hard pressed at the moment..." (Martin Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century*, William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, 1997, p. 23).

The martyrs of the Congregation of the Mission are only some of the thousands of Christians who died during the Boxer Persecution but their heroic courage shone in the words of Fr. Maurice Dore who was asked to escape: "No; I won't go away. I'll stay. May God's will be done." A few days later, he died with fifty parishioners inside his burning Church. The story of other martyrs is summarized in the following pages. (Rolando Delagoza, CM)

Martyrs of the Congregation of the Mission

1. **Fr. Jules GARRIGUES, CM**, *Member of the Province of China, born at Saint-Sernin de Gourgoi (France) on 23 June 1840 and died in Peking on 14 June 1900.*

From his youth Fr. Garrigues dreamed of giving his life for the evangelisation of the Chinese. Having arrived in China he devoted himself totally to proclaiming the Gospel even to the extent of sacrificing his life. He was a man of great virtue, mortified in food and clothing. A humble, simple and zealous apostle. He was full of charity towards all, especially the poor. And so he was called "the saintly Fr. Garrigues." The bishop himself, after a visit to Petang, said of him: "I've received a visit from the village saint." And later he would remark to the Sovereign Pontiff: "his heroic virtues would suffice to canonise him even without his martyrdom."

Fr. Garrigues had arrived in Peking in the spring of 1900 appointed parish priest of St Joseph's, one of the most beautiful churches of the city. Soon vague rumours and unaccustomed restlessness broke out in the surroundings of the city and even in the capital itself. Angry crowds then burst out of the pagodas crying death to the Christians.

When the frightened Christians asked him at what time would the soldiers come he used to reply: "Don't be afraid. It's all over in an instant. They can kill the body but not the soul."

During the night of the 13/14 June, towards midnight, a crowd of Boxers surrounded the missionaries' house, shouting death cries: "Kill and burn." The frightened women and Christians had gathered in the church. The Boxers set fire to the building. Fr. Garrigues consumed the consecrated hosts and recommended the Christians to try to get away. He himself escaped from the burning church, but was killed at a short distance from there. Or else perhaps, according to another report, not far from the Lang-fou-seu pagoda near to where he is buried. It was 14 June 1900, and the Feast of Corpus Christi.

2. **Fr. Maurice DORÉ, CM**, *Member of the Province of China, born in Paris on 15 May 1862 and died in Peking on 15 June 1900.*

Parish priest of Our Lady of Seven Dolours in Peking, Fr. Doré was a missionary altogether dedicated to the apostolate and to the welfare of the faithful under his care, although, so it was said, he was rather irascible.

When the persecution broke out, Fr. Doré went to Petang where he felt more secure and remained one night. But the next day he said to one of the servants: "The bishop wants me to return because my duty is to help and encourage my Christians. I'll follow the bishop's orders." He prepared himself for death, then he shaved off his beard so that he should not be recognised by his persecutors and returned to his parish. Invited to seek refuge elsewhere by one of his servants he replied: "No, I won't go away. I'll stay here. May God's will be done." For a moment he had thought of defending himself with

weapons, then reflecting, he said: "Even if I should succeed in killing a Boxer, I'd still die. It is better to conform myself to the will of God. He took the two pistols which he had with him and locked them into a cupboard in his room. He also urged the others not to use weapons to defend themselves.

On the evening of 14 June he found himself in the church with the Christians he had invited to gather. Towards midnight the Boxers arrived and set fire to the parish buildings. Fr. Doré had time to ring the bell three times. Then he was severely wounded and put to death on the spot and his body was burned in the flames of the church. About fifty Christians died with him. His bishop, Msgr. Favier, CM, bore witness to the death of Fr. Doré and of his resolve to put his life into the hands of God by devoting himself to the service of the Christians confided to him.

- 3. Fr. Pasquale Raffaele D'ADDOSIO, CM, *Member of the Province of China, born in Presicce-Otranto (Italy) on 19 December 1835 and died in Peking on 15 August 1900.***

A very active man, zealous for the salvation of souls, with a strong spiritual life, he was one of the most respected priests among the clergy of Peking. He was much appreciated as a professor of theology as well as a popular preacher.

On the feast of the Assumption in the year 1900 at 5 o'clock in the morning Fr. D'Addosio celebrated Mass and then spoke to the Christians saying: "If anyone has an inclination to become a martyr, then follow me." Thereupon he mounted his donkey and, accompanied by two Christians, he went along to the church of Nant'ang, his former parish. Here he wept at seeing it in ruins.

Towards one o'clock in the afternoon, while making his way to Petang in order to meet the bishop, he was spotted by a band of Boxers who then fired shots in his direction. At the noise of the shots his donkey bucked and threw him to the ground while the two accompanying Christians took fright and fled. Then several pagans emerged from a nearby shop and beat the priest with sticks. One of the soldiers, brandishing his weapon, menaced Fr. D'Addosio who implored his mercy: "I'm a good man. I came to China years ago not like others with various motives but solely to spread the Catholic religion." And, in the hope of softening him, he proffered his watch saying "this is a gold watch." But the soldiers who wanted to receive the promised reward of 50 taels for the capture of "the great devil" as he was called, tied his feet and hands and took him to Zehang-wang-fou palace. What happened there is not known but shortly afterwards he was put to death.

- 4. Fr. Andrew TSU, CM, *Member of the Province of China, born in Yonh-kia-hsien (China) on 3 September 1876 and died in Tche-kiang on 3 October 1903.***

The revolution of 1900 had destroyed everything in the sub-prefecture of Ning-Hai. As a very young priest _ ordained in 1901 _ Fr. Tsu would allow no obstacle whatsoever to hinder his pastoral activity. So he immediately set about bringing the various pastoral works back into life. New centres for the faith were opened. More than 1500 catechumens used to come and pray beside the Christians in their rebuilt chapels.

Fr. Tsu had in the neighbourhood a formidable enemy in the person of an educated man, Ouang-si-ton, who was the principal cause of the disasters of 1900. He thought he had crushed the missionary works, but on seeing them rising more vigorously out of their ruins, his hate reawakened. He called upon his accomplices, gathered several brigands who were attracted mainly by hope of gain, distributed weapons, munitions and flags bearing the slogan: "Death to the Christians."

As a start, on 27 September 1903, Ouang-si-ton had the throats cut of three neophytes from among his neighbours and near relatives. He would never forgive them for having introduced the Christian faith into his village and his family.

Then he had the Christians hunted down by his squads of bandits pillaging and burning their villages. As regards Fr. Tsu himself, he devoted his time, night and day encouraging the Christians in their trials and consoling them in death.

On 1 October, finding himself in Ning-Hai, he witnessed the bandits pillaging, burning and massacring Christians without any measures being taken by the public authority to stop this.

On 2 October he made representation to the mandarins, asking to be protected. But neither they nor the sub-prefect did anything to control these disorders and this violence.

When all hope was lost Fr. Tsu took measures to assure the safety of the archives, the sacred vessels, and the list of Christians. At the same time he placed shelterless Christians in the care of sympathetic pagan families. Then he sent away all the personnel from the residence.

On the morning of 3 October the brigands headed for the town. They stopped to burn our church. With the complicity of the army who allowed this, the brigands entered the town and set fire to the mission buildings.

Then they went looking for Fr. Tsu who had taken refuge inside a neighbouring pagoda where a colonel and his men had promised to protect him but did not do so. Already the bandits were scouring the area. Fr. Tsu fled across the roof and succeeded in reaching the upstairs of a nearby building. Unfortunately he was discovered. Seized and dragged violently into the street, he was soon covered in wounds. With two sabre thrusts his head was opened and his neck deeply wounded. He was half dead and his executioners wanted to finish him off on the spot. But the neighbours opposed this and he was dragged by the feet and the hair along to the pagoda leaving on the paving tiles large stains of blood. They were going to slay him in front of the idols when the sub-prefect signed to bring him further away. So he was dragged to the drilling

ground. It is there that, doubtless already dead, he was beheaded, then cut into pieces with atrocious ferocity. He was literally cut up in bits. They slit open his stomach in the form of a cross, saying: "He was so fond of the cross!" Fr. Tsu was aged 28.

(These facts are known to us from a letter of Msgr. Reynaud, CM, Vicar Apostolic of Tche-Kiang, published in the (French) Annals of the Congregation of the Mission, 1904, pp. 186-193).

In the Annales of the Propagation of the Faith of March 1904 we read: "This is a new page to add to the glorious Chinese martyrology. Tche-Kiang, where no missionary had yet enjoyed the privilege of offering God the supreme testimony of love, now offers heaven its first martyr. No doubt Fr. Tsu's shedding of his blood will bring precious blessings on this beautiful mission."

5. Fr. Jean-Marie LACRUCHE, CM, *Member of the Province of China, born in Cunlhat (France) on 15 May 1862 and died in Nan-tchh'ang on 25 February 1906.*

It all began on 22 February 1906 when a mandarin who had been in difficulty with his superiors committed suicide in the missionaries' house in Nan-tchang where Fr. Lacruche was living. But a calumny immediately spread in the neighbourhood that the missionaries had assassinated the magistrate. Notices spreading all sorts of allegations and insults against the missionaries were posted up on the walls; and numerous tracts were distributed calling for an uprising. A meeting was organised for the following day and the death of the missionaries was called for. Disturbances quickly broke out.

Frs. Jean-Marie Lacruche and Joseph-François Martin, the two missionaries present, were in their room awaiting the time for particular examen. A raging crowd stormed into the residence by breaking through the main door. The two had barely time to escape into the garden before the assailants entered and pillaged their bedrooms. But already one end of the garden was invaded. Fr. Martin, although slightly wounded by flying stones, succeeded in escaping.

Fr. Lacruche was in the occupied part of the garden. It occurred to him to go towards the nearby Blessed Sacrament chapel, just behind a garden gate, to bring away with him the Reserved Sacrament in order to save it from profanation. He succeeded in reaching the tabernacle but at the last moment he had to give up because his attackers had already arrived there. However, according to another version of the facts, some pagans who witnessed his death said they had seen him, just before he died, withdraw from under his clothes a round object which some had taken to be a watch, and that he had consumed what could well have been the Blessed Sacrament which he had taken with him and kept until the final moment.

On leaving the Blessed Sacrament chapel Fr. Lacruche, while trying to escape, found himself immediately in the presence of several of the attackers who saw him and threw stones at him, wounding his head. His aggressors grabbed him and thrust him into a mill to which they set fire. But there was a back door to this mill and it was through this that Fr. Lacruche got out of this new danger. But he was recaptured straight away. At the sight of the missionary there were shouts and excitement and he got battered on the head and shoulders with cruel wounds. He was made prisoner of a ferocious mob. Seminarists living in the house and who had succeeded in escaping told how they had seen Fr. Lacruche painfully staggering and tottering, his face covered with the blood of this painful calvary.

It was about midday when, reaching the public roadway, he was struck so violently with a stick that from then on the pain paralysed his legs and allowed him to move with only shuffling steps. He tried to take refuge in the house of rich and respected pagans who were friendly. The head of the house pleaded with the mob clamouring for their victim. But the over-wrought crowd demanding his death broke into the house, seized him and dragged him forcibly away. That was when he received a kick in the stomach which knocked him down never to rise again.

It was at that moment the pagans noticed him taking from his breast and swallowing something which would appear to have been the Blessed Eucharist.

Overwhelmed with insults and showered with blows, he was still breathing when his murderers dragged him by one foot along to the Pe-hou-Kiou pool where he expired. It was one o'clock in the afternoon. His remains were subsequently pulled out of the water and stripped of their clothing by the assassins who shared them out along with his watch and the money found on him. Then towards evening they took the missionary's body to expose it in a pagoda.

6. **Fr. Antonio CANDUGLIA, CM**, *Member of the Province of China, born in Aversa (Italy) on 13 June 1861 and died in Ta-ho-ly on 25 September 1907.*

He left for China in July 1884 immediately after his priestly ordination. It was the period when the Boxers were seeking to put Christians to death. Twice urged to seek security by leaving the town, he replied each time: "My life doesn't matter. Above all protect my Christians. Have you forgotten that a pastor should give his life for his flock? ... We're not worthy of martyrdom; but see what graces God can give us to do his will in all things!"

On 25 September 1907, seeing a crowd of 10,000 Boxers approaching who were setting fire to the Christian villages, Fr. Canduglia tried to escape with a group of Christians. But the Boxers ran at them attacking with long spears, killing several Christians and wounding Fr. Canduglia with four spear thrusts. The missionary crumpled up convulsively, but immediately a scimitar sliced off his head. This happened in the village of Ts-ho-ly where he had exercised his apostolate for 22 years. He died as a result of not wanting to abandon his flock.

