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| Boxer Rebellion (Chinese History) |
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| The Boxer Rebellion (November 1899-September 1901) was a Chinese national uprising against what was seen as the corrupting influence of western ideologies and practices. Initiated in Shandong province by a cult called the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, known by foreign nationals as Boxers, the uprising was simultaneously a peasants’ insurgency, an anti-imperialist movement and a blow to the power of the Qing state. In the late 1890s the Boxers believed that foreign missionaries, Chinese Christian converts and foreigners in general were to blame for a series of natural disasters that had struck northern China. Animosity turned into violence as the rebels burned churches and railways and killed Christians. The movement spread, and in June 1900 the Boxers besieged the embassy area known as Legation Quarter in Beijing. The Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), who until early 1900 had tried to suppress the Boxers, now openly supported them with imperial troops. The 55-day siege ended with a defeat of China and a victory of the eight allied nations (Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom and USA), who had sent in 20,000 troops. The final protocol left the Chinese government humbled and financially crippled, with reparations to be paid over the next 39 years. |
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