

THE SZECHWANESE RAILROAD PROTECTION MOVEMENT: THEMES OF CHANGE AND CONFLICT

CHARLES H. HEDTKE

May 1911 was a turning point in Ch'ing history. Decisions taken then to alter governmental railroad policy amplified political tensions coursing through the preceding decade which had been generated by efforts to modernize the Ch'ing state. The government's new railroad policies accelerated the growth of destructive forces within the ancient empire, since they were freighted with sobering implications for men who already took strong exception to official programs of political change. These policies spurred sharp reaction. The most severe—the Szechwanese Protection Movement—embraced broad and basic controversies troubling the Chinese world. This study of the Movement's history illustrates sources of conflict which contributed to the destruction of dynastic authority and fed China's early twentieth century revolution.

An edict of May 9 nationalized all existing private trunk railroads, gave the government full control over construction of important rail systems, and ordered the Ministry of Posts and Communications—along with the Ministry of Finance—to prepare for the governmental take-over of China's key private rail enterprises. On the twentieth, Posts and Communications Minister Sheng Hsüan-huai signed the final version of the Hukuang Imperial Government Railways Agreement with the representatives of German, British, French, and American banking firms.

The May 9 edict complained that private ventures had caused both confusion in railway affairs and delays in the construction of essential trunk lines which would reach "in all directions...to the borders of the Empire." Effective administration and "centralized authority" required a rail network; in the Throne's judgment, "all vital reforms" were dependent upon railroad development. Frontier defense, troop movements, commerce, and constitutional government demanded swift construction, for which the Hukuang Agreement would provide the indispensable foreign capital.⁽¹⁾

(1) The more extensive inter-and intra-provincial lines were nationalized, but the branch lines—those within *fu* or *hsien* which connected trunks—could still be constructed privately. For texts of the documents, see John V. A. MacMurray, comp. and ed., *Treaties and Agreements With and Concerning China*, (New York, 1921), I, 866-899. "Hukuang" referred to the Hupei-Hunan section of the Canton-Hankow Railway south from Wuchang and the Hupei section of the Szechwan-Hupei line; the final 1911 Agreement, however, included the rail section from Ichang to Kweichow-*fu*, thus directly affecting Szechwanese. See E-tu Zen Sun, *Chinese Railways and British Interests* (New York, 1954), ch. IV, on the history of loan negotiations.

Hunan, Hupeh, Kwangtung, and Szechwan, all affected by these governmental decisions, reacted strongly.⁽²⁾ The fate of the Szechwan-Hankow Railroad Company, which had been planning a Chengtu-Chungking-Hankow link, became the subject of the Szechwanese Railroad Protection Movement (*pao-lu yün-tung*). The Railroad controversy which led to the Ch'ing collapse in Szechwan vividly concluded the Company's tension-filled history, one whose outlines are easily drawn.

The Ch'uan-Han project was organized in 1904 on the initiative of Szechwan Viceroy⁽³⁾ Hsi-liang to spur provincial and national economic activity and to stymie venal foreign quests for Szechwanese rail concessions. For fear that foreigners might gain interests in the Company, all non-Chinese investment was expressly prohibited.

As suited the venture's initially "officially managed" (*kuan-pan*) form, Hsi-liang selected Company officers from among his bureaucratic colleagues and intendant officials within the province. Viceregal control was maintained by personal supervision and selection of Company directors. Shareholders were not allowed a direct voice in the enterprise, but this situation was altered by a March 1907 reorganization which technically gave the Company "merchant managed" (*shang-pan*), limited corporate status. The new designation, however, referred less to management by "merchants" than to control by all shareholders, exercising influence in proportion to the scale of their investment. The reorganization made the firm "private" in distinction to enterprises which were officially managed as extensions of bureaucratic administration, yet anyone (including officials) was eligible to invest. Bureaucratic influence continued in fact, and implementation of the features of "private management" was slow. Shareholders were allowed by Ch'ing Company Law (*kung-ssu lü*) to exercise their power through regular Shareholders' Association meetings, but the first annual one occurred only in late 1909 after the Szechwanese Provincial Assembly took up the question of Company reorganization. At that time the

(2) *Chinese Railways*, pp. 112-113. *Ssu-ch'uan pao-lu yün-tung shih-liao* (*Historical Materials on the Szechwanese Railroad Protection Movement*), ed. Tai Chih-li (Peking, 1959), 65--hereafter SCPL (numbers refer to documents).

(3) For simplicity in this study, I have avoided the brevet designation "acting" for officials holding the viceregal post.

first shareholder-elected Board of Directors was constituted.⁽⁴⁾

Construction was finally started by the Company on December 10, 1909, between Ichang, Hupeh, and Wan-hsien Szechwan. By May, 1911, preliminary work had been done on a sixty-mile section in the rugged border area between these provinces, and sixteen miles of line had actually been put into operation near Ichang. These slight but difficult achievements suffered from the disorders of 1911. Track and equipment rusted, while buildings became barracks for Republican troops. Promotion of the direct Chengtu-Hankow line flagged after the Ch'ing, and Company assets were signed over to Republican politicians in Peking on November 2, 1912.⁽⁵⁾

-
- (4) SCPL, 1-3, 12-14, concern the Company's formation. Roger V. Des Forges. *Hsi-liang and the Chinese National Revolution* (New Haven and London, 1973), ch. 6, discusses the Company's early history and Hsi-liang's views on the enterprise. On criticism and reorganization, see Des Forges, ch. 6; unpubl. diss. (Berkeley, 1968), by Charles H. Hedtke, "Reluctant Revolutionaries: Szechwan and the Ch'ing Collapse, 1898-1911," chs. 2, 4; Tan T'i-yüan "I ch'eng-tu pao-lu yün-tung" ("Recollections of the Railroad protection Movement in Chengtu"), *Hsin-hai koming hui-i-lu* (*Memoirs of the 1911 Revolution*), comp. Chung-kuo jen-min chengchih hsieh-shang hui-i ch'üan-kuo wei-yüan-hui wen-shih tzu-liao yen chiu wei-yüan-hui (Peking, 1962), III, 43-44--hereafter HHKMHL; SCPL, docs. 2, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24; see also below on the Assembly's role. On the "Company Law" promulgated in 1904, see Albert Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization: Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 2; see *Recent Chinese Legislation Relating to Commercial, Railway and Mining Enterprises*, tr. by Ed. T. Williams (Shanghai, 1905), pp. 10-45, for a trans. On voting rights held by representatives in the Shareholders' Association (*Ku-tung hui*), see U.S. Dept. of State, *Records Relating to Internal Affairs of China, 1910-1929*, film 2178 (Washington, D.C.), 893.77/1031, Peking, June 16, 1910, concerning the 1909 meeting--hereafter USDS.
- (5) On construction, see USDS 893.44/1103, 893.77/1114, 893.77/1191, 893.77/1256, 893.77/1283. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 44. Des Forges, p. 69, comments that 60 miles of line were completed; this does not agree with sources from the period. *North China Herald*, Sept. 30, 1910, p. 775; April 22, 1911, pp. 208-209--hereafter NCH. On the impact of the Revolution and subsequent history, see Tan T'i-yüan, p. 67; NCH, June 10, 1911, and Jan. 6, 1912, p. 15; USDS, 893.77/1103, 893.77/1256; China, Maritime Customs, Inspectorate General of Customs, *Decennial Reports, 1910-1911* (Shanghai, 1913), I, 280, and 1912-1921 (Shanghai), I, 243, 255, 262-263--hereafter IGC; MacMurray, pp. 888-899. On the sales agreement, see MacMurray, pp. 896-897. Mid-1912 British reports note that the Company existed "in name only" since its funds were in government coffers and its property at Ichang was of little value; see Great Britain, Foreign Office Archives, Public Records Office (London), F.O. 288/1838, Intel. Report for the Quarter ended Sept. 30, 1912, Chengtu--hereafter FO; Mongton Chi Hsü, *Railroad Problems in China* (New York, 1915), pp. 99-102 and chs. 8-9; Hsü's figures differ occasionally from those I have used. On later periods, see Chang Kia-ngau, *China's Struggle for Railroad Development* (New York, 1943), pp. 45-53. There is today a rail line from Chengtu to Chungking but only indirect rail connections are planned, via Shensi, for Chengtu and Hankow; see Central Intelligence Agency, *People's Republic of China Atlas*, Nov. 1971, p. 47.

The Company's history, briefly treated in published literature,⁽⁶⁾ has attracted less attention than the 1911 Movement, a subject which itself has not been exhaustively studied.⁽⁷⁾ The whole nationalization "problem" has been labeled an "immediate cause of the 1911 revolution."⁽⁸⁾ Some Chinese have cherished the Movement as the first wave of generalized anti-Ch'ing revolt,⁽⁹⁾ while at least one recent analysis has honored it as an effort by "the Chinese people" to destroy the Manchu's "treacherous and autocratic regime" and to injure the dynasty's imperialist patrons.⁽¹⁰⁾ The Railroad crisis has thus been assigned significance as a problem in history and in meta-historical theory as well.

Robert Kapp's study of post-1911 Szechwan⁽¹¹⁾ assigns the Movement a

- (6) Des Forges, ch. 6, for example. Documentary collections and memoirs deal with Company history, but usually concentrate on the troubled 1911 period. One collection of documents and brief, useful commentary is *Ssu-ch'uan yü hsün-hai ko-ming (Szechwan and the 1911 Revolution)*, ed. Chou K'ai-ch'ing (Taipei, 1964). This work covers much the same ground as the longer SCPL. Memoirs, data in which is often substantiated by materials from the period such as FO, include Chou Shan-p'ei, *Hsin-hai Ssu-ch'uan cheng-lu ch'in li-chi (Personal Experiences Concerning the 1911 Railroad Struggle in Szechwan)* (Chungking, 1957), and the HHKMHIL. There is a body of Japanese scholarship on this general subject which includes the following (see also below): Nishikawa Masao "Shisen horo undō: sono zen'ya no shakai jokyō (The Railroad Protection Movement in Szechwan: Social Conditions on the Eve of Movement)" *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo kiyō* (Mar., 1968), 45, 109-177; Tanaka Masami, "Shimmatsu Shien bōdō no hottan ni kansuru ichi shiken" ("An Investigation of the Origins of the Uprisings in Szechwan at the End of the Ch'ing Dynasty"), *Shichō* (Mar., 1951), 44, 31-41; Nozawa Yukata, "Shingai kakumei no kaikyū kōzō" ("The Class Structure of the Revolution: The Uprisings in Szechwan and the Merchant and Gentry Classes"), *Rekishigaku kenkyū* (Mar., 1951), 150, 84-91; Ōno Mitsumori, "Shisen horo undō to karokai" ("On the Protection Movement in Szechwan and the Kō-lao Hui"), *Tōhōgaku* (July, 1975), 50, 93-111; Ichiko Chuzō, "Shisen horo undō no shunōbu" ("The Leaders of the Railroad Protection Movement in Szechwan"), *Ochanomizu joshi daigaku jimbun kagaku kiyō* (Mar., 1955), 6, 161-73. See Ichiko Chuzō's appraisal of the views of some of these scholars in his "Trends in Modern Japanese Research on the Chinese Revolution of 1911," unpubl. ms presented to The Conference on the Chinese Revolution of 1911, Aug. 22-27, 1965, Portsmouth, N.H.
- (7) Many questions about the Movement remain unanswered; e.g. (1) those concerning its impact upon anti-Ch'ing actions elsewhere (note Chou K'ai-ch'ing, p. 214, regarding Sung Chiao-jen's comments in a Shanghai paper about the national importance of Szechwanese actions for ridding China of her foreign incubus); (2) the nature of social change reflected in the close relationship between commercial and political-intellectual elites evident during the Movement (see Nozawa Yukata and Ichiko Chuzō, "Shisen," as a basis for such a study).
- (8) Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China 1840-1928*, ed. & tr. by Teng Ssu-yü and Jeremy Ingalls (Princeton, 1956), p. 240.
- (9) Yang Shao-ch'uan, "The Revolution in Szechwan, 1911-1912," *The Journal of West China Border Research Society* (1933-1934), VI, 49; Chou K'ai-ch'ing, pp. 1-3.
- (10) Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* (Peking, 1955), pp. 176-177.
- (11) Diss. (Yale, 1970), by Robert A. Kapp, "Szechwanese Provincial Militarism and Central Power in Republican China," pp. 16-21, deals with the pre-1911 period. Kapp's recently publ. work, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic: Provincial Militarism and Central Power, 1911-1938* (New Haven, 1973), pp. 13-14, treats the same subject.

disruptive role. Kapp, who does not touch upon the Movement's history, holds that the provincial viceroy's attempt in September to check the Szechwanese protest by arresting its leaders stimulated the rise of uncoordinated and independent armed units. Along with the collapse of the dynasty's authority and the failure of its successor regime in Chengtu, action by such groups contributed to the fragmentation of Szechwan.⁽¹²⁾

Ichiko Chūzō has written the first interpretation of the Movement, approaching it from the perspective of power relationships and class interests.⁽¹³⁾ For him, questions of power explain both the objectives of the controversy and the from which provincial independence took as Ch'ing authority failed. Ichiko believes that the Movement represented an effort by "gentry and literati," who had gained a "comparatively powerful" role in administrative matters since 1850, to resist imperial centralization and to further their desire for home rule.⁽¹⁴⁾ He contends, moreover, that the Movement's character was affected by concerns of class: although the establishment of provincial independence which ended the Railroad affair amounted to the achievement of a "Szechuan for the Szechuanese," not all social strata shared in this victory.⁽¹⁵⁾ Ichiko claims that members of the "ruling class" used the Movement to promote their own power, not to overthrow the government, and that they finally opted for provincial independence to check anarchy and threat of social war.⁽¹⁶⁾ The Movement, like the late Ch'ing constitutional conflict (discussed below), thus are interpreted as by-products of a "struggle within the ruling class." Independence represented merely the triumph of one contending faction of this class, while "revolutionaries" remained politically weak,⁽¹⁷⁾

(12) Kapp, diss., pp. 16-21.

(13) Ichiko Chuzō, "The Railway Protection Movement in Szechwan in 1911," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* (Tokyo, 1955), XIV, 47-69.

(14) Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 53-55.

(15) Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 55, 57, 59, 69. The social arrangements behind this victory are not clearly explained in his article.

(16) Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 60, 65-66. On p. 50, Ichiko notes that the Movement, dominated by figures holding old degrees and official ranks, also involved wealthy merchants, large landowners, and students as well as gentry.

(17) Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 60, 65-69. "Revolutionaries" here are apparently not only men involved with such groups as the T'ung-meng hui, but also those representing non-or anti-gentry interest and committed from the first to overthrowing the Ch'ing; see p. 64. On the constitutional movement and "constitutionalists" (*li-hsien p'ai jen*) see below; also Chang P'eng-yüan, "The Constitutionalists," in *China in Revolution: The First Phase*, ed. Mary C. Wright (New Haven and London, 1968), his *Li-hsien p'ai yü hsin-hai ko-ming* (*The Constitutionalists and the 1911 Revolution*) (Taipei, 1969), and Samuel C. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China* (New York, 1965).

Essentially, Ichiko's interpretation is that the Movement demonstrates patterns of internecine warfare among ruling elites.⁽¹⁸⁾ The significance of this event is thus slurred, for it can reveal much more about the central processes of late Ch'ing history. The data which Ichiko utilizes for his analysis can support a different interpretation, one in which the Movement illustrates the dilemmas of transforming basic Chinese institutions.⁽¹⁹⁾ In this, questions of interests and competition for power become incidental to the larger drama of which the Movement was a part.

Political considerations influencing caution among the Movement's leaders (which Ichiko uses to suggest gentry manipulation for gentry benefit)⁽²⁰⁾ manifested the parameters of an experimental calculus of power. Themes which the Movement's leaders utilized in the protest betrayed the nature of this calculus and the difficulty of perfecting it. These themes mirrored the troubles which plagued the Manchu Reform and, by rehearsing its recurrent conflicts,⁽²¹⁾ defined the Movement's place in history.

In the Summer of 1911 Szechwanese leaders fashioned a program for protesting governmental policies and an instrument for defending not only the Railroad, but also what they cherished as their particular rights. Their defense was linked to many broad questions of late Ch'ing history. The rhetoric of old grievances suffused the nationalization protest, and Szechwanese leaders used

(18) Ichiko's perspective on this period and the significance of such events generated his article, "The Role of the Gentry: An Hypothesis," in *China in Revolution*. See my comments in fn. 20.

(19) Ichiko, "Railway," e.g., pp. 51-52, items *i* and *ii*, leave many related ideas unexpressed; these would open exploration of the Movement's relation to changes in the last years of the Ch'ing.

(20) Ichiko's interpretation, elaborated in his "Hypothesis," stresses the "gentry's" co-optive actions which enable this "class" to dominate major movements and to seize the leadership of change in order to keep political influence and social pre-eminence. Ichiko asserts the result of actions such as the overthrow of the Ch'ing amounted to "nothing but a dynastic revolution...." While his hypothesis has merit, it may too lightly dismiss the novel features of late Ch'ing history and too readily "class-"ify the gentry. Although perhaps not true for the whole "gentry," the elites--men of influence, despite their background--who participated in the new political institutions and advocated new political philosophies in that period played a role which signified more than mere adaptation for the sake of survival. Their position regarding the events of their age provides a measure not only of the fact that conditions were changing (questions about "self-interest" may be most relevant to this); it also provides a means of assessing the pattern of change--and its complexity. This elite's role in the "dynastic revolution" was incidental to the latter, the taproot of much post-Ch'ing political turmoil.

(21) On the Manchu Reform, see *China in Revolution* and Meribeth E. Cameron, *The Reform Movement in China, 1898-1912* (Stanford, 1931). Also below.

the Railroad affair to pursue political objectives which had formed the core of persistent controversies. These objectives were more than the urge of opportunity, to secure concessions for "class." They embodied a formula for political change antagonistic to that which the government promoted.

The dynasty's fate was determined in the end by a duel over designs for China's new political order, and the government's experiment—with which China entered the twentieth century—failed. The Movement signified the difficulty of political re-orientation. Its development in the Spring and Summer of 1911 illustrated the political sensitivities which undermined Ch'ing authority and were to complicate China's later reconstruction.⁽²²⁾

THE PROTECTION MOVEMENT

The nationalization edict was received by Viceroy Wang Jen-wen. He, the Company directors and manager (*ching-li*),⁽²³⁾ Assembly President P'u Tien-chün, and Vice-president Lo Lun met to ponder this serious governmental action. They planned a convention of Szechwanese dignitaries residing in Chengtu and decided that the Assembly, in line with its designated responsibility for provincial interests, should join in developing a response to this attack on Szechwanese rights.⁽²⁴⁾

A meeting of several hundred shareholders at the Company's general offices in Chengtu on May 12 resulted from these deliberations. The new policy was made known and it was decided that the Company would convene a special session of the Shareholders' Association. This meeting of 28th was attended by

(22) Kapp does not explore this "preview" as a forerunner of latter difficulties in developing political relations between Szechwan and the central power, although he does comment that such difficulties stemmed from the Ch'ing collapse which destroyed both the "Imperial system" and "most of the integrating values and institutions which emanated from it"; Kapp's *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, p. 1.

(23) On this officer, see SCPL, 24, ch. 2, art. 16.

(24) Chang Hui-ch'ang, "Li-hsien-p'ai jen ho Ssu-ch'uan tzu-i-chu" ("Constitutionalists and the Szechwan Assembly"), HHKMHIL, pp. 159-160. These people were probably the shareholders' representatives; see Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 7. Art. 21, Sec. 1, Provincial Assembly regulations gave the Assembly the right to decide upon or to veto matters concerning profits and rights of the province; see SCPL, 103. Note FO 371/1081, No. 42757, report in Encl. 1 in No. 1, Brown to Jordan, Chungking, Sept. 22, 1911, about a member of the Chengtu "gentry" who discussed the development of the confrontation. He claimed that the Assembly supervised procedure for shareholder meetings in the early phases of the trouble but did not participate in discussions. P'u, it is said, did not attend such meetings "nor address them or intervene in any way." See below. This claim reveals the relations between parts of the Szechwanese infrastructure, but it also may reflect efforts to build a case regarding official injustice toward P'u.

some seven hundred, including the Assembly's Resident Members, representatives of the educational, commercial, industrial, and agricultural, organizations in Chengtu, and shareholder delegates. Anxiety was obvious, but since little was yet known about the new policies and the foreign loan, individual opinion was fragmented. Desires to preserve the privately managed venture were combined with conditional support for nationalization: the Railroad must remain financially unencumbered; it could not become security for foreign loans; and Company funds must be returned to investors.⁽²⁵⁾ Some expressed fundamental opposition to both nationalization and a foreign loan, and objected that the National Assembly had been denied a voice in new policy decisions; however, they were willing to accept what was accomplished fact, and even foreign credit was tolerable if it would facilitate the Railroad's construction which was so vital to the nation.⁽²⁶⁾

Begrudging toleration did not replace criticism, and provincial organizations quickly took firm positions. As early as May 16 the Company telegraphed the Ministry of Posts and Communications opposing nationalization and urging continuation of the private venture.⁽²⁷⁾ By late May Company directors were complaining that Peking had grievously impaired "public trust" by its actions.⁽²⁸⁾ The Assembly sided with the Company. Citing a flood of telegrams from "gentry, merchants, and commoners" (*shen shang jen-min*) which requested it to act against nationalization, the Assembly in mid-May urged Wang Jen-wen to memorialize the Court on its behalf. It demanded private management and ownership, total avoidance of foreign money, and governmental recognition that policy must be formed in accordance with public opinion as manifested by the new self-government institutions.

The Assembly's position was elaborately argued. The sceptical Assembly

(25) Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 7-8. Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 159-160. SCPL, 75, 85. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 45. Note a similar elitist organizational pattern developed during the protest efforts in Changsha, involving self-government societies, local governmental, educational, provincial railroad associations, and the chamber of commerce--"the very cream of Hunan social life." NCH, May 27, 1911, p. 538. On the term "Resident Member," see H. S. Brunnert, V. V. Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, tr. A. Belchenko and E. E. Moran, rev. N. Th. Kolessoff (Shanghai, 1912), No. 169. The Assembly expressed concern that: "If we used the Ch'uan-Han Railroad for security, it would be like taking things from close relatives and giving them to enemies. Wise people do not do things like that." SCPL, 70.

(26) SCPL, 54 and addendum.

(27) SCPL, 56.

(28) SCPL, 72.

believed that the new policy represented a turn in the wrong direction. Not only was its formulation without consultation with the Provincial and National Assemblies contrary to the government's avowed commitment to constitutional procedures, but it was also contrary to China's best interests in several ways. One was that nationalization, which institutionalized official controls over commerce, might promote the same troubles over financial management and construction which official interference in the Company had caused. Another was that government ownership could result in the dangerous practice of mortgaging the Railroad to secure a foreign loan. This must be avoided, despite the short-term economic benefits of foreign credit, for "it was better to remain thirsty than to drink poisoned wine!" Private management, on the contrary, was an antidote to foreign involvement in Chinese affairs. The origin of the privately managed Railroad had been linked to efforts to recover Chinese rights and to anticipate actions of foreign rail concessionaires by independent Chinese construction. In reference to matters of profit, foreign danger, and official power, scholars who had studied the advantages and shortcomings of the private enterprise (*min-yu*) system considered it best.⁽²⁹⁾

Many serious questions arose about the government's policies. One concerned the financial impact of nationalization, and from the first there was widespread suspicion that it would prove costly to investors. Company spokesmen demanded full compensation in currency for the sixteen million taels which the venture had accrued by 1911. They sought reimbursement for construction and promotion costs, restitution of capital on deposit, and compensation for four million taels lost because of mysterious disappearances and the Shanghai financial crisis of 1910.⁽³⁰⁾

Two decisions concerning the Company's financial affairs caused strong reactions. One, reported by an edict received in the province on May 22, halted

(29) SCPL, 70, on the above. Note also the sceptical comment that nationalization might bring problems such as those the Company experienced under official management; SCPL, 54 addendum.

(30) SCPL, 55. Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 159-160. Tan T'i-üan, p. 45. Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 8-9. Ch'üan Han-sheng, "T'ieh-lu kuo-yu wen-t'i yü hsin-hai ko-ming" ["The Questions of Railroad Nationalization and the 1911 Revolution"], *Chung-kuo hsien-tai shih ts'ung-k'an* (1960), I, p. 231. Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 49, 56. On the 1910 Shanghai scandal, where Company capital was lost, see Marie-Claire Bergère, *Une crise financière a la fin de l'ancien régime* (Paris, 1964). See USDS 893. 77/1114, p. 2, for specific amounts lost in various ways.

collection of rent shares (*tsu-ku*). The other, framing procedures for liquidating Company assets, was set forth in a joint telegram of June 1 from Sheng Hüan-huai and Tuan-fang. These two communiques magnified pessimism about the fate of demands to preserve the privately managed Company and about the possibility of finding a formula for compensation acceptable to Szechwanese.⁽³¹⁾

Termination of the rent share system provoked an immediate outcry. Rent shares, of major financial importance to the Company, had been collected since 1905.⁽³²⁾ These were payments in money required of landowners whose annual rental income (or crop value for owner-cultivators) exceeded ten piculs. Payments were installments toward the purchase of shares, and share certificates were issued to contributors for every fifty tael increment. Investors earned six per cent on both their installment funds and their full shares. The interest from installments was applied toward further annual rent share levies, and interest from shares could be applied against tax obligations.⁽³³⁾

While the system had previously been denounced, as is discussed in the final section of this paper, it was now defended because it symbolized private management and non-governmental ownership and control,⁽³⁴⁾ and because it was financially vital to the enterprise. Szechwanese feared that the government believed rent shares were really tax "contributions" (*chüan-k'uan*)—voluntary payments for special financial purposes—rather than installments on shares, and thus might simply absorb money from this source.⁽³⁵⁾ There were also worries

(31) The telegram was also received on June 1; see Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 44-45. A tr. appears in FO, No. 37172, Encl. No. 3 in Wilkinson's No. 39 of July 5.

(32) The system, proposed by Hsi-liang, was based on practices in Hunan; SCPL, 14, art. 23. See note 33 on its financial importance.

(33) SCPL, 14, ch. 3, for a full description of the system, and 15. *Tsu-ku* is a contraction of *ch'ou tsu chih ku*. See SCPL, 14, 17, 24, 70 for comments on the system's value to the Company. Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 42-43, discusses other capitalization systems. Des Forges, pp. 64, 67, notes Hsi-liang asserted that rent shares would amount to no more than 40 per cent of Company capital; USDS 893.77/1114, p. 2, and 893.77/1142, state it provided about 50 and Ichiko, "Railway," p. 56, estimates as much as 60. Rent shares contributed a total of about 2 mil taels ann. SCPL, doc. 24; shareholders in Chinese railroads received interest on investments prior to construction; see USDS 893.77/1031. In Szechwan land was traditionally assessed in terms of *shih* of seed sown, but *shih* (piculs) in computing rent shares apparently refers to crop yields since the levy was figured after harvest; see Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 115-116, and SCPL, 15, art. 6.

(34) SCPL, 66, 68, 71.

(35) SCPL, 75, 79, 81. On contributions, see FO 371/1081, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364 of Sept. 18, 1911, Wilkinson's tele. to Jordan, Aug. 26.

that this capital might disappear into official coffers as did funds raised at the turn of the century by sale of sincerity (*chao-hsin*) bonds and mining shares.⁽³⁶⁾ Wang Jen-wen reported to Peking that the people now feared their money would be treated by the government as its own and that rent share investments would be lost, along with hope of profiting from the enterprise.⁽³⁷⁾

Anger was provoked by the telegram from Sheng and Tuan-fang which, in addition to brief comments upon the Hukuang loan, set forth the formula for liquidating Company assets. This plan, the Company charged, evidenced governmental intentions to deprive Szechwanese of their money as well as their Railroad.⁽³⁸⁾ The telegram rejected demands for reimbursement of funds which had been squandered, misused, or lost through misfortune; it also established a system for conversion of investment capital.⁽³⁹⁾

The Ministry of Posts and Communications, following the decision of the Ministry of Finance, offered several types of shares and bonds in exchange for Company assets on deposit and used for construction or other legitimate purposes. These were National Railroad Shares, Guaranteed Interest Bonds, and No-Interest Bonds. The first two would pay six per cent, but would not mature for five years and payment commencing at that time would be made in fifteen annual installments. The No-Interest Bonds, to be issued in exchange for several hundred thousand taels of "miscellaneous expenditures," would pay interest from "surplus profit" of the line after operations had commenced, and then only for a maximum of ten years.

Sheng and Tuan-fang did not insist on mandatory conversion, nor did they state that reimbursement could only take the form of government debentures. Nonetheless the telegram failed to satisfy the Szechwanese, and they were also disturbed by their discovery that investors in Hupeh, Hunan, and Kwangtung—whose railroads were also affected by the new policies—were apparently to be fully compensated for their investments. The Szechwanese thus asserted that they were not being treated equitably. They were not soothed by proposals that capital on deposit could be put to use for projects within

(36) On the bonds, see Feuerwerker, p. 45; SCPL, docs. 75, 79; Hsiang Ch'u, et al., comp., *Pa hsien chih* [*Pa hsien Gazetteer*] (N. p., 1939), ch. 21b, 54. On mismanagement, see Wang Chien-ch'ing, Shih Chi-yün, et al., *Hsu hsiu Fu-chou chih* [*Up-dated and Revised Fu-chou Gazetteer*] (N. p., 1928), ch. 6, "Fu-k'o" sec., 8; Ichiko, "Railway," p. 59.

(37) SCPL, 81.

(38) Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 9, 44.

(39) On the contents of the telegram, see SCPL, 83.

Szechwan, any more than by the plan for conversion.⁽⁴⁰⁾ One particular comment in the tegleram caused exasperation: if shareholders wished cash refunds rather than new debentures, further foreign money would become necessary for which Szechwanese revenues under the Ministry of Finance's control would be offered as collateral (*hsü-ti*)!⁽⁴¹⁾

The new policies gradually provoked an active and vociferous Szechwanese resistance, the core of which was the large body of shareholders who numbered between one and ten thousand in each of the province's one hundred twenty-three *chou* and *hsien*.⁽⁴²⁾ This group responded quickly to the government's various actions. For example, the Ministry of Post and Communications' June 9 order that local telegraph offices were not to accept messages related to railroad affairs drew protest from "shareholders of every class."⁽⁴³⁾

Given the somber frame of mind of many Szechwanese, the reaction to the text of the Hukuang Agreement which was discovered between June 11 and 13 was certainly understandable.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Preliminary information about the loan's terms had generated suspicion, but the full text caused great distress. The Agreement, for one thing, covered the rail section between Ichang and Kueichou-fu, Szechwan, and the Szechwanese believed this meant that foreigners were, as Wang Jen-wen phrased it, getting a grasp on the province's "throat"—its narrow eastern portion—for the first time.⁽⁴⁵⁾

(40) Debentures were the *kuo-chia t'ieh-lu ku-p'iao*, *pao-li ku-p'iao*, and *wu-li ku-p'iao*. On conversions, see Ch'üan Han-sheng, p. 225; Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 8-9; Ichiko, "Railway," pp. 56-57; SCPL, 122, 328, and 24 ch. ii arts. 11 and 13. FO 371/1081, No. 39524, Encl. No. 2 in Jordan's No. 370 of Sept. 21, 1911, tr. of edict of June 17, which ordered full redemption of shares of the various private companies with government bonds; it comments that Hunanese—and Szechwanese—shares from different sources should be fully exchanged. Szechwanese scepticism remained, however. Note that violence in the Fall stimulated governmental offers of modest compromises. Some 10 mil. taels were on hand, incl. 7 mil. at Ichang and 2-3 mil. from current collections in Szechwan. USDS 893.77/1147, Chungking, June 23, 1911, deals with the June 22 shareholders' meeting over the subject of inequitable treatment.

(41) SCPL, 83, 128.

(42) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 22. See below on Chao Erh-feng's comment that 70 mil. had some type of financial interest in the Railroad, a reference to Szechwan's population.

(43) SCPL, 95, 101. Similar restrictions were issued Aug. 25; see doc. 202. Hu Jung, head of the Szechwan tele. system and brother of the Company's first director, who was arrested with other leaders on Sept. 7, resigned in opposition to the June 9 attempt to stem the protest by censorship; see FO No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Sept. 16, 1911.

(44) Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 9-10, 44. SCPL, 100, indicates the Agreement's terms may have been known several days earlier.

(45) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 14. *Chinese Railways*, pp. 106, 116-117; this section was not included in the 1909 Hukuang proposals which did not touch Szechwan.

Wang had originally believed that both nationalization and foreign capital for the Railroad's construction would strengthen China, but the Agreement's terms shocked him. He stated that giving "national and railroad rights" to the four loan powers would cause "rebellion, foreign aggression, and inconceivable calamities." He memorialized against the Agreement, requesting that Sheng Hsüan-huai be punished for endorsing it, taking advantage of the Throne, and injuring the state.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The impact of the loan terms upon Wang's provincial subjects was even more severe. The text consolidated Szechwanese opinion. Those who had initially maintained a "wait and see" attitude now altered their course. The constitutionalist Teng Hsiao-k'o, for example, jettisoned his original moderation when he saw the Agreement. He became an outspoken opponent of governmental policy and denounced Sheng Hsüan-huai in the *Szechwan News* (*Shu-pao*) for his traitorous acts.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Public outrage concerning the terms resulted in protest rallies attended by several thousands, and a petition of 2,400 signatures was prepared for Peking.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Szechwanese also organized for pursuit of their objectives. Decisions by a large number of people, who met at the Company headquarters to discuss actions against Sheng for "stealing the line" and "selling" it, led to the organization of the League of Comrades to Protect the Railroad (*pao-lu t'ung-chih hui*). This vehicle for building a province-wide opposition was formally constituted on June 17 and its operational departments (*pu*) were functioning by June 25.⁽⁴⁹⁾

(46) Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 12-16, gives Wang's memorial listing Szechwanese objections; compare items with Agreement terms in MacMurray. SCPL, 81, regarding Wang's earlier views that the Assembly should be allowed to approve or disapprove the new Railroad policy because of its role in matters of provincial rights and profits, and that a delay in nationalization pending the re-convening of the several assemblies was warranted. Both conditions, he believed, were necessary if government were to be conducted in accordance with the new laws and in respect to public opinion.

(47) On Teng's earlier opinion, see SCPL, 54, 75. He was editor of the *Shu-pao*. Teng, a constitutionalist associate of P'u, was the brother of Company director Teng Hsiao-jan; NCH, Jan. 6, 1911, p. 43, and Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 159-160. On Teng's position in the League *Report* (discussed below), see Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 47-48. FO 371/1081- No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1, notes "Little thought Sheng...that in one day he would rejuvenate the seventy millions of Szechwanese"--a reference to the consolidation of opinion in the province in the *Report*, June 26. See also SCPL, 100. Accusations like "selling the nation" were common during the protest; see SCPL, doc. 50, and FO No. 37172, Encl. No. 1 in Wilkinson's No. 39, for tr. of *Report* of June 26.

(48) Ichiko, "Railway," p. 47. Ch'üan Han-sheng, p. 232. Lo Lun presented this to Wang to submit.

(49) See fn. 47, and SCPL, 128. Meetings of the protestors drew 4 to 5000 after the first.

An Advisory Committee (*ts'an-shih hui*) directed the League from behind-the-scenes. This was comprised of P'u Tien-chün, Lo Lun, and the Assembly's Resident Members.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Thus, despite the overt influence which the Company and its directors exerted over the League, the Assembly elite controlled it.⁽⁵¹⁾ This arrangement exemplified the convergence of Company, Shareholders' Association, and Assembly personnel and interests during the course of the Railroad crisis. A few key figures actually assumed multiple positions as leaders of the Protection Movement; in this, they duplicated the common pattern in Szechwanese affairs during the Manchu Reform period. The Assembly, for that matter, had long been involved with the Railroad; it was dominated by the province's most active constitutionalist opponents of the government, foremost of whom was president P'u Tien-chün.⁽⁵²⁾

Responsibility for League functions was vested in the four departments concerned with General Affairs (*tsung-wu*), Correspondence (*wen-tu*), Lecturing (*chiang-yen*), and Liaison (*chiao-she*). These organs were directed by voluntary chiefs, approved by the Assembly. Assemblyman Chiang San-ch'eng presided over General Affairs. The articulate Teng Hsiao-k'ö (not in the Assembly) supervised Correspondence, and Assemblyman Ch'eng Ying-tu managed the League's Lecturing Department. Vice-President Lo Lun co-chaired the Liaison Department with his Assembly colleague, Lin sheng-yüan.⁽⁵³⁾

Wang Jen-wen, confronted at his yamen by dignitaries of the League, sanctioned this body as a legitimate instrument of protest. Wang agreed to memorialize Peking about the views of this new force in the Railroad crisis.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The League rapidly established a branch network throughout the province. There were branches in most *chou*, *hsien*, and other administrative units, formed in many cases from local shareholder groups as a result of agitation by agents from Chengtu. Branches were established on many streets of the capital and even within its Manchu city. Commercial organizations also became sites of

(50) On this committee, see FO, No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 161.

(51) The Company's overt control is indicated by FO, No. 37127, Encl. in No. 1. On Assembly leadership, see FO 371/1345, No. 19994, Annual Report, 1911, p. 42; while sessions were not held, Assembly "members have been in the forefront of the struggle" over the Railroad. See also fn. 24.

(52) Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 158-159. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 44. Chang P'eng-yüan, "Constitutionalists," p. 174, notes that P'u's "men" controlled the Company--"He tried to control the Board..., of which seven out of thirteen...were his men."

(53) Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 47-48. FO, No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1 and Encl. No. 1 in Wilkinson's No. 39.

(54) See sources in fn. 53.

League branches.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The League sought to reach beyond its own organizational structure by propagandizing craft and occupational guilds, educational, commercial, and peasant groups within the province. It established liaison with the local self-government bodies, and agents such as Liu Sheng-yüan were dispatched to meet with assemblies of every province, the National Assembly and Szechwanese officials in Peking.⁽⁵⁶⁾

A primary League objective was to enlist broad popular support against the Agreement and for the protection of the old Company. To this end it widely distributed circulars and journalistic materials. The League began to publish its *Report* (.....*pao-kao*) on June 26.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Three newspapers, funded by the Company, began to appear several times weekly after June 17, and at least one other was started by the League during August. These dealt with the general subject of "railroad protection" and served as vehicles for promoting the League program.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Traveling lecturers were very important to the Movement's development. These men bore League credentials and their activities were permitted by the Viceroy if they honored several requirements. Their credentials had to be approved by magistrates before speeches were given. Not more than one lecturer was allowed in any one *chou* or *hsien*. Local officials had to attend speeches and could stop a lecture if riotous or provocative statements were uttered. Lecturers, moreover, could only speak to city self-governmental, educational, branch agricultural, and commercial bodies—all elements of the new institutional superstructure erected during the late Ch'ing⁽⁵⁹⁾—or to branch shareholder associations. Lectures were not allowed to propagandize rural villagers directly. In all cases local willingness to listen was requisite for official permission.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Lectures gathered signatures from various organizations and groups on

(55) SCPL, 113, 115, 116. Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 8, 22. Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 46-47. Yang Shao-ch'üan, pp. 72-73. Also Marie-Claire Bergere, "The Role of the Bourgeoisie," *China in Revolution*, pp. 259-260.

(56) SCPL, 104, 166, 191, 193, 324, Yang Shao-ch'üan, p. 71. Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 46-48. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 161.

(57) FO, No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1. SCPL, 104.

(58) Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 159-160. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 49. See below,

(59) These were the *ch'eng hui*, *chiao-yü hui*, *nung shang wu fen hui*. See Brunnert and Hagelstrom, Nos. 770, 774, 829.

(60) SCPL, 104, 107. FO, No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1. Sources use *fa-t'uan* variously to refer to self-governmental bodies or to other legal associations and corporate groupings such as education, agricultural associations and the chambers of commerce. Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 96-97, uses *fa-ting t'uan-t'i* of which *fa-t'uan* may be a contraction.

protest petitions. They tried to influence local officials to report to their superiors on the attitudes regarding railroad affairs in their areas.⁽⁶¹⁾ Lecturers sought out people concerned for both “the public [and] the local welfare” and urged them—as did the League’s circulars—to establish branches and carry word of railroad problems downward to the grass-roots level of society which the lecturers were officially forbidden to contact. These branches were to paste up daily news of the League for public consumption. To further mobilize public support, lecturers requested the heads of city and hsien self-government, education, and craft organizations to gather influential figures from villages, markets, and trading centers (*hsiang shih chen*) on the League’s behalf and to inform them about events so that they might then enlighten the lower strata of rural Szechwan.⁽⁶²⁾

League activism was designed to produce a well-disciplined, socially broad effort that was firmly under control. These objectives were apparent in the Lecture Department’s instructions to use key local individuals such as militia commanders, instructors of imperial moral exhortations, the heads of the *pao units* and of immigrant households (*t’uan-tsung*, *hsiang-yueh*, *pao-cheng*, *k’o-chang*) as bridges to the common people because these men could reach all classes (*ssu-min*) and would be able to promote support for the Movement without danger of riot. The League appreciated the fact that local officials trusted such local social leaders to manage affairs because they were able to speak for the villages and towns and could command the respect of the commoners and influence them. The League believed that these men possessed “mature views” about the importance of life and property which would make them immune to irresponsible instigations that might provoke lesser beings to violence.⁽⁶³⁾ The League, then, opposed violence but it favored controlled and effective action. Its approach to mobilization and its propaganda were designed both to build the Movement and to mold it.

Local officials thought to favor the cause were cultivated in the hope that their endorsement, combined with propaganda campaigns, might sway other hesitant officials and people to back the Movement.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Propaganda efforts stressed the kinship between achievement of League objectives and the resolution of sources for popular vexation and anxiety, thus to entice all aggrieved people

(61) SCPL, 103, 104,

(62) SCPL, 104, 105,

(63) SCPL, 105.

(64) SCPL, 105.

into the Movement. Placards distributed widely throughout rural towns and villages spread the League's plea for concerted, but disciplined, protest.

One placard described in the *North China Herald* played to a variety of passions: the Throne was made a possible ally, if it could be freed from the grip of decadent bureaucracy, but the tottering official pyramid had pinioned both gentry and commoners. Action by all classes was invited, but rashness was denounced, and people were urged to "arise, and follow" the League should it prove able to remove the crushing weight of bureaucracy. The "unbearable" actions of officials like Sheng Hsüan-huai who gave the wealth of provinces affected by the Hukuang Agreement to the foreigners were pointed out, as was the League's mission to save people from such traitors. Bold characters denounced Sheng and his cohorts as "Chinese slaves" who pandered to foreign interests.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Clearly the League attempted to tame and channel the strength of common apprehensions. Despite the anti-bureaucratic theme of the placard noted above, only officials who were considered personally responsible for the crisis were made direct objects of the Movement's fury, along with the Hukuang Agreement itself. Sheng and his allies—but not the emperor, the central government, the provincial officials, nor ever the foreigners—were made culprits and targets in this Summer offensive. Violence of all types was discouraged; as one vernacular League broadside in June put it, patriotic people must not barbarously attack the government nor the foreign churches. Riots were not proper instruments for protecting the Railroad or destroying the Hukuang Agreement. The League exhorted people to learn the methods of civilized constitutional countries, where people had a voice in government, in order to achieve Szechwanese goals.⁽⁶⁶⁾

The League sought to harness the forces it recruited to a political engine run by advocates of political, rather than violent, action. League branches were key elements in this contest; they were to express their opinions to local officials who would relay them up the bureaucratic chain of command. Branches were also to communicate their sentiments to the Szechwanese Assembly,⁽⁶⁷⁾ thus

(65) NCH, Sept. 9, 1911, pp. 634-635, and Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164. This broadside was reported on Aug. 16.

(55) SCPL, 104-105, 112. FO, 37172, Encl. in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, July 7, 1911, tr. of comment in the League *Report* (to reassure foreigners) that "Our countrymen are now become citizens of the Majestic Central Kingdom. We are not, as at one time, a turbulent people raging without reason."

(67) SCPL, 105.

strengthening this institution's advocacy in service of provincial opinion.

The philosophy of constitutionalists (whose position is treated in this paper's final section) mandated the Assembly's involvement in such a protest and, indeed, the Movement bore the constitutionalists' mark. As early as May 27 the Company had denounced nationalization on the grounds that public opinion had not been consulted, as it should have been by a government committed to a "policy of constitutionalism."⁽⁶⁸⁾ Wang Jen-wen urged the Cabinet to delay action on nationalization until after the Szechwanese and National Assemblies could consider it. He suggested further, that the opinions of these bodies should be respected. The Provincial Assembly should have a voice in this matter, Wang asserted, because the well-being and rights of Szechwan were at stake. Wang accepted the political principle of central importance to the Movement, that to heed public opinion expressed through the self-government institutions was only to obey the law.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Constitutionalist themes were directly linked to Railroad questions, and frustration over governance by ministerial proclamation contributed to beliefs that policy was being made in total disregard for proper constitutional procedures. The League contended that the crisis itself had developed because popular institutions had been excluded from decisions. It stated that if the Throne had already inaugurated a parliamentary system as constitutionalists had urged, the government would not be in thrall to "one man's opinion"—Sheng Hsüan huai's—and could not "gamble the whole nation in (this one railroad) venture."⁽⁷⁰⁾

In late July a shareholders' committee conjured plans for a citizens' convention (*kuo-min ta-hui*) in Peking "according to the practices of foreign nations." Its delegates were to be drawn from assemblies, chambers of commerce, educational associations, and corporate entities (*fa-t'uan*) throughout China. Pressure could thus be applied to force governmental reforms and to check the unfettered use of power by individuals, dangerous to province and nation alike.

The plan, which probably never bore fruit, showed the thrust of constitutionalist sentiments within the Movement. So did the committee's

(68) SCPL, 71.

(69) SCPL, 81, 128. On Wang's support, see FO 371/1081, No. 39186, Encl. 1 in Jordan's 358, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Aug. 19, 1911. The Throne rejected Wang's plea; SCPL, 82.

(70) SCPL, 103.

recitation of several incorrect "lessons" from world history. "The American constitution was brought about by the tobacco tax; Japan's constitution... by foreign invasion. If everyone cries out, we can preserve our railroad rights and our own nation.... This is the last chance.... (Now) we can.... solve the problem of constitutionalism."⁽⁷¹⁾

Constitutionalism was also evident in the League's critique of the Hukuang Agreement. In a tract⁽⁷²⁾ written in both English and Chinese, the League condemned the new policies. Sheng's actions in regard to borrowing foreign capital and nationalizing the railroads were "arbitrary" and thus illegal. Under the terms of the new constitution and the "many kinds of laws" recently promulgated, Sheng was required to consult with the National or the Provincial Assembly on matters as important as the Agreement. Since the Minister had ignored legality, the League "for the purpose of defending the constitution must (resist) such an unlawful act.... (To) oppose the Government's unlawful action is the right of the Chinese people."

The critique sounded a nationalistic alarm. The League which had regularly linked "conservation of the Railroad" with "preservation of...our beloved country,"⁽⁷³⁾ now specified the dangers inherent in the Agreement. It established conditions which "harm China very much, and put her in the position where she may suffer much loss." China, like the independent countries throughout the world," had rights and freedoms which the Agreement had violated, since foreign banks directly or indirectly controlled the appointment of the Railroad's engineer-in-chief for construction, his staff, and the expert inspectors of purchased materials, the League complained that the Agreement had deprived China of her "freedom of selection for employment." The right of inspection gave foreigners control over material, and clever inspectors might subvert the Agreement's stipulation that rails and accessories for the line were to come from the Hanyang Iron Works. China thus lost her "freedom of purchase" and would "never receive the benefit from selling materials to the...line." Ownership rights over the Railroad were also jeopardized by the Agreement, the League charged, since provisions for foreign auditors to check Railroad finances gave foreign creditors rights which Chinese commercial law reserved

(71) SCPL, 166.

(72) The following is from FO, No. 39186, Encl. in Wilkinson's (no number), "The views of the Railway League."

(73) FO, No. 37172, Encl. No. 1 in Wilkinson's No. 39, tr. from the *Report* of June 26.

for owners. In fact, Sheng Hsüan—huai had, by his illegal action, given foreign creditors the chance “to usurp... the right of possession.”

The Agreement was further condemned because it placed constraints on future actions by the Chinese nation. Because the Hukuang terms stated that likin in Hunan and Hupeh, pledged as security for the loan, “should neither be decreased nor abolished,” “intended likin abolition” and “reform of customs revenue” were both blocked. And since China would have to consult with her creditor banks prior to extending any branches of the line, the League claimed that other sovereign rights had been sacrificed.

The curtailment of free Chinese action meant, the League argued, that the Railroad had indeed been “mortgaged” to foreigners, despite Sheng Hsüan—huai’s protest that this was not the case.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The Agreement meant that China would lose and foreigners would gain. Sheng, of course, was the culprit in this unfortunate situation. His ability to wield destructive personal power resulted, for his detractors, from the fact that the form of constitutional government they desired had not been implemented.

During the Summer the League consolidated its base of support. People from the influential, wealthy, and politically active segment of society flocked to its organization. It was said that ten thousand enrolled on June 19, the first opportunity to join.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Shareholders, Company officers, and Assemblymen comprised the League’s nucleus, while the membership swelled with students, teachers, and merchants.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Political views represented in the League ranged from constitutional monarchism to republicanism. The latter was championed by a few T’ung-meng hui people in the organization who were attracted by the hope that they might promote their objectives through the League.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Educational backgrounds, like the political orientations of members, varied. Graduates of new schools and men with foreign educations cooperated in the League with a few people holding only old-style degrees.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Most members shared concerns about cons-

(74) Sheng’s protest to this effect was in the June 1 tele.

(75) FO, No. 37172, Encl. in No. 1; Wilkinson believed this figure was “absurdly exaggerated.”

(76) SCPL, 116. Nieh Shu-wen, Ch’eng Te-yin, et al., *Chiang-chin hsien chih* (*Chiang-chin Gazetteer*) (N.P., 1924), ch. 7 “Hsiang-huan” sec., 40, and ch. 12, 22.

(77) Ch’üan Han-sheng, pp. 264–265. Hsiang Ch’u, “Ch’ung-ch’ing Shu chün cheng-fu ch’eng-li ch’in li-chi” (“Personal History of the Founding of the Chungking Shu Military Government”), HHKMHL, p. 79.

(78) Kuo Hsiao-ch’eng, *Chung-kuo ko-ming chi-shih pen-mo* (*The Complete Record of the Chinese Revolution*) (Shanghai, 1912), I, 213.

titutionalists and the Railroad, and both issues were merged in the flood of petitions sent to other provinces and to the imperial government by the League, the shareholder groups, and the Assembly during the Summer.⁽⁷⁹⁾

Liaison was established with the *ko-lao hui* (KLH),⁽⁸⁰⁾ the major secret society in the province. Its leaders included men from the upper classes active in the Movement. Lo Lun's father, a scholar, was a case in point. Well-placed Szechwanese Leaguers commonly became KLH leaders, while KLH chiefs sponsored the League in many areas of the province.⁽⁸¹⁾

The structure formed by organizational efforts and the support built through lectures and propaganda gave the League an impressively substantial presence.⁽⁸²⁾ Mobilization created an extensive base for the politics of petition and protest to defend the Railroad, "free speech," and "constitutional government."⁽⁸³⁾ Links with the KLH and recruitment of local elites—often the largest shareholders—which influenced rural lower classes and controlled the militias (*min-t'uan*) also gave the League a military potential.⁽⁸⁴⁾

(79) SCPL contains many such petitions.

(80) Tan T'i-yüan, p. 49. NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164. J. Hutson, *Chinese Life in the Tibetan Foothills* (Shanghai, 1911), passim., on Szechwanese secret societies. Charlton M. Lewis, "Some Notes on the Ko-lao Hui in Late Ch'ing China," and John Lust, "Secret Societies, Popular Movements, and the 1911 Revolution," in *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China 1849-1950*, ed. Jean Chesneaux (Stanford, 1972). See also Ōno Mitsunori, and Liu Lien-k'o, *Pang-hui san-pai nien ko-ming shih* (*History of Secret Society Revolutionary Activities for the Last 300 Years*) (Macao, 1940), passim.

(81) Information on KLH-League relations is in Ōno Mitsunori; Wu Chin-han, "Ssu-ch'uan hsin-hai ko-ming chien-wen lu" (Record of Observations of Szechwan's 1911 Revolution), HHKMHIL, p. 109 Cheng-hsieh Ta-chu hsien wei-yüan hui, "Li Shao-i ling-tao Ta-chu nung-min ch'i-i te ching-kuo" ("The Events During the Peasant Uprisings in the Ta-chu hsien Led by Li Shao-i"), HHKMHIL, pp. 294-298; Ning Chih-ts'un, "Chien-wei t'ung-chih chün chien-wen-lu" ("Record of Observations of the Chien-wei Association of Comrades"), HHKMHIL, pp. 254-255; FO docs. include many references to secret societies.

(82) FO 228/1838, No. 30, Chungking, June 8, 1911, stated this in assessing Szechwanese potential for mobilization, through lecturing, to support the National Subscription effort.

(83) These phrases are from a shareholders meeting of Oct. 4; SCPL, 382. Nationalistic and economic concerns were subsumed by these issues which ran through the Movement.

(84) FO, No. 30, comments on the importance of vertical social relations for mobilization. The militia was comprised mainly of "country people dependent on the large land holders, who were... the largest shareholders"; Gr. Britain, Foreign Office, *Correspondence Relating to China, China No. 1* (London, 1912), pp. 6-11--hereafter GBFO; Kuo Hsiao-ch'eng, p. 220, notes the elite's role in the militia. On the militia's importance in later conflicts, and its "peasant" composition, see FO, 371/1081, No. 39905, Encl. 2 in Jordan's No. 374, Sept. 5, 1911; FO 371/1081, No. 38257, tr. of tele. from Wai-wu-pu, Sept. 23; FO 371/1081, No. 44534, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 398, Memo. on Mil. Ops. Around Chengetu, Sept. 7-22; Chao Cheng-ho, et al., *Ming-shan hsien hsin-chih* (*New Gazetteer of Ming-shan hsien*) (N.p., 1930), ch. 13, 16; Ichiko, p. 62; Ch'üan Han-sheng, pp. 230, 254-255. The KLH role is briefly appraised in FO 228/1838, No. 2, Chungking, Jan. 10, 1922, Extract from Letter of Rev. H. G. White. See also Hedtke, ch. 4, and Ōno Mitsunori.

Peking's rejection of provincial demands during the Summer intensified friction between the Szechwanese and their officials, so—in effect—the latter became trapped between two unyielding forces. They were also subjected to pressures from high officials outside the province to crush the Movement. These conditions helped cause the protest's early cooperative character to wane.

Good relations evident during the tenure of Wang Jen-wen continued briefly after Chao Erh-feng took up the seals of office in late July.⁽⁸⁵⁾ League leaders, including Teng Hsiao-k'o and Yeh Ping-ch'eng, curried the new Viceroy's favor, and at a special welcome meeting the Company implored Chao to represent Szechwanese interests,⁽⁸⁶⁾

Through August Chao played a mediator's role;⁽⁸⁷⁾ however, friction with officials became publicly evident as early as the League's August 25 meeting when tea cups were hurled at the four *tao-t'ai* in attendance. Chao himself was made the target of scandalous caricature and Chengtu was adorned with "frescoes with verses and other lampoons of literature, doggerel, most derogatory to (Chao) and his authority."⁽⁸⁸⁾ By August 27 the Viceroy could report that "if the government will not compromise, the people will not yield... (If force is used against the people) it will set the whole province against the government."⁽⁸⁹⁾

A major goad to the intensification of Szechwanese opposition was Tuan-fang's effort to carry out the government's policies. Tuan-fang, who had been appointed Superintendent of the Yüeh-Han and Ch'uan-Han Railways,⁽⁹⁰⁾ believed that conditions demanded firm action. Accordingly he warned Chao Erh-feng to deal severely with the adventurous youths (*hsiao-nien hsi-shih*)—including students filtering in from Japan as well as those within the province—who were "causing all the trouble."⁽⁹¹⁾

Tuan-fang was a principal in the dispute concerning the Company manager at Ichang, a Szechwanese named Li Chi-hsün, which transformed the Movement

(85) Des Forges, pp. 63-64, on Chao's earlier close relations with Szechwanese. Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 19-20.

(86) Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 162. See also Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 19-20.

(87) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 23, and below.

(88) NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164.

(89) NCH, Sept 16, 1911, p. 696. SCPL, 206.

(90) He was appointed to this post in May; SCPL, 50.

(91) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 23; a joint statement with Jui-cheng from Hupeh, Aug. 17.

from a battle of words to a violent war.⁽⁹²⁾ In early August Li withdrew from the League and proposed to turn over to Tuan-fang's control both the rail facilities which had been completed in his area and the seven million taels on deposit at Ichang. Li stated that while the protest would not gain what the League demanded, satisfactory terms could be negotiated with the government.

Li was denounced and shareholders, meeting on August 9, voted for his assassination. The meeting also called for Li's impeachment (assassination was not enough), and for Sheng's. Disregarding League sentiments, Tuan-fang informed the Chengtu Company on August 23 that Li was being recommened to the Ministry of Posts and Communications to take up the new governmental post of General Railroad Manager at Ichang.

Word of Li's formal appointment was received at Company headquarters by the morning of the 24th. This was taken as a sign of complete governmental disrespect for the League's position.⁽⁹³⁾ A "stormy meeting" of shareholders on the 24th resolved to close businesses and schools throughout Szechwan, as well as to withhold "every kind of likin, customs, and benevolence" (that is, "contributions," *chüan-shu*), apparently on the suggestion of Fan K'ung-chou, Chamber of Commerce president. This tactic was to continue until nationalization and the Agreement were cancelled. Handbills, hastily printed, were distributed throughout the city and the crowd from the meeting dispersed to close Chengtu's shops. Lo Lun, a leading figure in the Li Chi-hsün dispute, personally exhorted merchants to close their doors. Student organizations joined the campaign and an academic walk-out resulted.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The League, which initially had rejected business shut-downs as a method, accepted escalation by adopting this new stratagem.⁽⁹⁵⁾ By August 28 many areas outside of Chengtu reported business and school closures. Chungking, Lü-chou, Tzu-chou, and Chia-ting were all affected and lesser urban centers probably followed the lead of these major ones.⁽⁹⁶⁾ While closures were never

(92) On the following, see SCPL, 225, and FO, No. 44656, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364, Sept. 18, 1911. USDS 893.77/1031, indicates Li had been a "councillor of the Yu-chuan pu and President" of the Railroad. Li survived the Revolution, and in Jan. 1913, was reported to be the director of the Ichang-Wanh sien section of the Railroad, residing in Ichang; see USDS 893.77/1256.

(93) SCPL, 204; Li's dismissal had been demanded persistently. Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 23.

(94) Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 55-56. Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 23, 28-29, concerning Fan's suggestion.

(95) SCPL, 200. NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, p. 920, indicates a 1904 precedent for the business closure in Chungking to protest new likin duties.

(96) Yang Shao-ch'üan, p. 73. SCPL, 212, and below.

universally successful, nor rigidly upheld in the face of local opposition,⁽⁹⁷⁾ the new intensity of protest was clear.

Propaganda efforts followed suit. The League's *Report*, now distributed daily, carried notable rhetoric. One article asked, "How can it be called 'nationalization'... to seize all citizens and give them to the foreigners?"⁽⁹⁸⁾ Song pamphlets distributed for the League became instruments of confrontation; lyrics intoned, "if we are all going to die, it would be better to become Chinese ghosts than foreign slaves."⁽⁹⁹⁾ School closures even intensified the propaganda assault. Perhaps eighty per cent of the middle and advanced students who left Chengtu schools returned to their home districts and contributed to the Movement. The twenty per cent remaining in Chengtu formed a coordinating body which disseminate information on the general state of affairs.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

The new tactics served initial League objectives. Personnel still worked with local social leaders to promote constitutionalist and Railroad objectives.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ They linked the "perishing of the road" with the "perishing of the country" (*lu-wang kuo-wang*).⁽¹⁰²⁾ By August 25 Chengtu was ornamented with standards of the

(97) NCH, Sept. 16, 1911. In Chungking, business stoppages were disapproved by "the more reputable merchants," and the leaders of the League's branch were convinced by chief officials in the city to urge those shops which closed to reopen. Thus the first phase of activism in Chungking abated about Aug. 30; FO 371/1081, Nc. 41341, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 381 of Sept. 30, 1911, Brown to Jordan. Also FO, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364 of Sept. 18, 1911. Chungking's involvement with the protest began on June 28 when a League branch was formed; meetings were apparently at the Kiangsi guild hall (Wan Shou Kung); USDS 893.77/1150 and 1153. Sentiments varied during the Summer; merchants and farmers were reported not to oppose "the object of nationalization" and to welcome the end of rent shares. The Chamber of Commerce rejected plans for purchasing govt. shares with the balance of Company money. "Principle shareholders" as of July 8 opposed nationalization, but in mid-July the "largest shareholder" favored the "Government's plan" and blamed agitation on "petty shareholders of little or no importance, or the 'scholar' element which readily quotes 'to the death' talk." USDS 893.77/1143, 1150, 1152, 1154. Such differences continued, and affected the course of events in Chungking in the late Fall. See Bergere, "Bourgeoisie," pp. 259-260, and Hedtke, ch. 4. FO, No. 44534, Encl. 3 in Jordan's No. 398 of Oct. 16, 1911, Brown to Jordan, suggest that "apathy" in Chungking regarding League efforts to close shops was due to resentment over earlier Chengtu advocacy for building the line between Chengtu and Chungking prior to the one from Ichang to Kueichou-fu.

(98) Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 162. Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 57-58.

(99) FO, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364, Sept. 18, 1911.

(100) NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164. Nieh Shu-wen, 7.40. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 48.

(101) Nieh Shu-wen, 3.17-18. NCH, Sept. 23, 1911, p. 784. SCPL, docs. 164, 396, 409; compare the leaders' views in the Fall with those expressed in July, in docs. 105, 107, Liao Shih-ying, Chao Hsi, et al., *Jung hsien chih* (*Jung hsien Gazetteer*) (N.p., 1929), "Jen-shih" sec., item 8, 112. Hsieh Ju-lin, Lo Yüan-fu, comp., *Ch'ung-ch'ing hsien chih* (*Chungking hsien Gazetteer*) (Chengtu, 1926), "Shih-nü" sec., pp. 72-73. GBFO, pp. 15-17.

(102) S CPL, 254.

Movement; most residences were decorated with slogans and memorial platforms were raised across major thoroughfares in the city. These made the late Kuang-hsü Emperor the symbolic champion of the League's goals by quoting two Kuang-hsü phrases, "the affairs of the people shall be conducted in accord with public opinion" (*shu-cheng kung chu yü-lun*) and "the Railroad may be privately managed."⁽¹⁰³⁾

Control, respect for the League's direction, and non-violence continued to be encouraged in this period of escalation. Colloquial handbills were distributed in Chengtu exhorting people to temper actions and not allow themselves to be provoked into riot as "some evil officials," seeking to gain merit by arresting the unruly, desired.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

School and business shut-downs, as well as the refusal to pay *likin*, customs, and contributions, were considered an intensification, rather than a change in the nature of protest, even though the direction of the Movement was turning rapidly away from its cooperative early course. Szechwanese leaders and provincial officials alike interpreted withholding these levies as acts of "passive resistance," not of rebellion. This rationalization had its basis in fact, since "contributions" were considered "voluntary" items to fund "certain state emergencies, such as the Japanese war indemnity..., the indemnities of 1900, the expenses of reforming the provincial army, or the cost of administering" border areas between Szechwan and Tibet. Chao was tolerant of this form of protest in a way he would not be of refusals to pay land and poll taxes (*ch'ien liangti-ting*).⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Chao and other key officials including the Tartar General were gravely concerned about the critical stage the protest had reached. They memorialized the Cabinet three times on August 27 and 28. Their telegrams urged a government stand that would ease tension and reduce "the opportunities for evil" produced by the "grief and anger of myriads" of people. These officials noted Szechwanese belief that the nationalizers, by disregarding the legal authority of the Provincial and National Assemblies, scorned public opinion and eroded the basis for constitutional government.

The memorials indicated that the province's bureaucracy had itself reached

(103) FO, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364, Sept. 18, 1911. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 162.

(104) FO, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364, Sept. 18.

(105) Ibid. Contrast with Chao's response to the Sept. 1 decision to stop major taxes, below, from FO, No. 42757, Encl. 1 in No. 1, Brown to Jordan, Chungking, Sept. 22, 1911, and SCPL, 250.

an impasse. Old techniques of exhortation and remonstrance⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ could not contain the Movement raging against unyielding central governmental officials. The memorialists reported that popular suspicions had “come to a head” because of breaches of constitutional procedure, Sheng Hsüan-huai’s unfettered action, apprehensions about the foreign loan, the Li Chi-hsün affair, and dismay about conversion among the vast numbers with financial interests in the Railroad. One memorial lamented that “empty words” by the government could not allay suspicions. Although riots had not yet occurred, they were certain to, because the Movement’s leaders could not control the massive following. Therefore, memorialists urged, the Throne should “permit...a temporary reversion to commercial (that is, private) management, until the question (of the Railroad) be referred to and voted on by...the National Assembly when (it) reopens” in October.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

The posture of Szechwan’s high officials and concerns for preserving order provided a basis for continuing cooperation between protest leaders and Chao Erh-feng. In addition to permitting League meetings during late August, Chao directed his subordinates to confer daily with Company officers and Assembly executives to gain their aid in reducing tension.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Szechwanese leaders themselves called a meeting with officials on August 29. Lo Lun presided over the gathering and a “vigilance committee” (*wei-ch’ih pao-an hui*) of gentry and officials was formed to promote social order. This committee, which was praised as a sign of unprecedented closeness between provincial officials and Szechwanese leaders, tried to quash rumors about attacks on missions, prepared to arrest agitators, and attempted to convince people that blame for business closures lay with Li Chi-hsün rather than with foreigners. Although propaganda assailing imperialists’ activities continued to appear, the vigilance committee spread the message that rash anti-mission or anti-foreign incidents would “ruin the whole cause of (the protest so that) this railroad will not be recovered in our generation.”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Despite the common desire for peace and the moment of apparent good

(106) Chao attempted to use reason to convince people their concerns were exaggerated, that the Railroad was not being given to foreigners, and that the government was capable of protecting the interests of the Chinese; see Chao’s Aug. 27 poster, FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Sept. 5, 1911.

(107) Ibid. SCPL, 206, has tele. of Aug. 27. Passage is from one of the Aug. 28 telegrams.

(108) SCPL, 204. Chang Hui-ch’ang, p. 164.

(109) FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1.

feeling at the end of August, the basis for cooperation gradually dissolved. As it turned out, the vigilance committee was an anticlimax—more a signal of desires to check all types of violence than an indication that the Szechwanese would temper their objectives or that provincial officials could control events. Cooperation depended upon the shared concern for order, and also upon official toleration of the protest and willingness to transmit the League's arguments to Peking. The Szechwanese leaders' tolerance of their bureaucratic associates was contingent upon the officials' ability to achieve concrete results.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ As Summer ended, frustrations mounted because of Peking's inflexibility, and both officials and the League changed their ways.

The protest leaders remained desirous of peace. However, they were unwilling to sacrifice their goals. Their determination was reinforced by the weight of the organization they had constructed and by the community of interests which had been forged within Szechwan. Peking's rejection of League demands caused the leaders to question their reliance upon aid from provincial officials; the basis for cooperation broke down as a result.

By late August the League realized that encouraging officials to memorialize on its behalf was ineffectual as a means of pressing its case. British reports sagely predicted that should the central government fail to yield in response to such memorials, "this province may (defy the government) and endeavour to secede from the Empire."⁽¹¹¹⁾ Certainly the dynasty would suffer from any rupture between Szechwanese leaders and provincial officials, since this would symbolize the snapping of threads of relationship which provided the basis for the imperial order's tenuous centralism.

The first sign of schism within Szechwan came when the shareholders formed a "preparation committee" (*chun-pei hui*) on August 25. This committee decided to refuse liability for any future government loans and proposed the appropriation of land and poll taxes as payment for interest on Company shares.⁽¹¹²⁾ This course, obviously unacceptable to the authorities, foretold the direction the Movement would take should Peking not yield, perhaps to recommendations advanced in the August 28 memorial by Chao and his colleagues.

The Cabinet's response to this memorial was of crucial importance to the

(110) Ibid. and below.

(111) Ibid.

(112) Ibid.

protest. In a telegram of August 31 the Cabinet promised to order Sheng to draft an "accommodation" (*pien-t'ung pan-fa*) to suit Szechwanese concerns over the Railroad and matters of Company capital. When this telegram was read to a shareholders' meeting on September 1, however, ⁽¹¹³⁾ it provoked strong and indignant outbursts. The Cabinet's promises, whatever their ultimate outcome might have been, were insufficient to still the anger aroused by this body's gross and obvious neglect of the political sentiments which underlay the Movement: the Cabinet stated, "nationalization... can hardly be reversed..." Chao must proclaim "the beneficent purpose" of the Railroad policies. The people of Szechwan are but "a foolish folk... and ignorant," so Chao should have slight trouble "bringing (them) to reason" because "the gentry and people (have) long been attached" to him. If Chao can only "drill them into doing what is right, there will assuredly be no revolution." ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Lo Lun's evaluation of the Cabinet's telegram was precise. He complained to the September 1 meeting that the message took no notice at all of Szechwanese grievances. These, Lo specified: "the loan was contracted without previous consultation with the national and provincial assemblies" as constitutional procedure required; there were provisions in the Agreement "injurious to Szechwan; and Li Chi-hsün was appointed to high office after the Company had "impeached" him. Lo allegedly remarked, with notably dramatic impact, that the Cabinet had labeled the provincial opposition "fools." ⁽¹¹⁵⁾

During the meeting Lo responded to the evident failure of League tactics by endorsing the preparation committee's earlier plan that all tax payments, including the land and poll taxes, be deflected from the government and collected by a network of shareholder administrative offices (*pan-shin chü*) until Szechwanese investments had been fully recovered. This decision to interfere with all revenues, obviously a challenge to official power, was communicated to govern-

(113) FO, No. 33905, tele. from Cabinet, Aug. 31, 1911, indicates the relationship between rejection and escalation. See SCPL, 224, Aug. 30; Min. of Posts and Communications informed Chao the govt. will not compromise.

(114) Cabinet tele. to Chao, Peking, Aug. 31, appended to FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1. Also SCPL, 222-224. Govt. recalcitrance continued through Sept.; see SCPL, 368-369, although SCPL, 368, hints that the govt. might try some sort of compromise. Docs. 198, 224, show Tuan-fang and the Min. of Posts and Communications were willing to discuss methods for disbursing Company funds with shareholders' groups and provincial officials.

(115) FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1.

mental yāmēns throughout Szechwan. ⁽¹¹⁶⁾

By September 1 provincial officials were convinced that the situation was "difficult and dangerous" and they despaired of keeping order. In the words of British Consul Wilkinson, "they did not feel themselves sufficiently secure to resist the agitation." Chao reported, in dismay, that the Szechwanese "will not give up their struggle." ⁽¹¹⁷⁾

A juncture had clearly been reached by September and several critical factors contributed to Chao's decision to stave off catastrophe by arresting a number of major protest leaders, ⁽¹¹⁸⁾ as is discussed below. one of these factors was Chao's personal predicament. He was reminded by the Cabinet that he would be held responsible if his methods of quieting Szechwanese failed and trouble ensued. Tuan-fang censured him for his failure to use force to crush the protest, and Tuan-fang joined with Viceroy Jui-cheng on August 29 to bring impeachment charges against him. ⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Chao was thus caught between captious colleagues and the aggressive League. For him, further non-intervention in the Movement became impossible; he could no longer govern by adjusting relations between his provincial charges and his superiors. ⁽¹²⁰⁾

Under these circumstances the eruption of local riots in districts near Chengtu could only intensify the severe pressure upon Chao Erh-feng to adopt new

(116) Ibid. Also Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 28-29; the date given in Chou is wrong. On the purposes and details of the proposal, see FO, No. 41341, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 381, Sept. 30, 1911. These taxes were due six weeks later, in the Autumn; FO, No. 44657, Encl. 1 in Jordan's No. 364, Sept. 18, 1911. SCPL, 230. FO, No. 42757, Encl. 3 in No. 1, gives information on these offices; they symbolized the readiness to defy interference. There was some structural similarity between these and the "self defense" system called for in the "Tract" discussed below; compare Encl. 3 in No. 1 with Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 29-31.

(117) FO, No. 39905, Encl. 1 in No. 1. SCPL, 225. Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 26-27. Wilkinson was in Chengtu.

(118) Those arrested included P'u, Lo, Chang Lan (Vice-Chairman of the share-holder extraordinary general meeting), Teng Hsiao-K'o (a clerk in a Peking ministry, among other things), Hu Jung, Chiang San-ch'eng, P'eng Lan-fen (head of the Company's Board of Directors meeting--SCPL, 75--and a representative of the "Education Office"), Meng Ts'ai-ch'eng (Superintendent of a local school), and Yen K'ai (Chairman of the Shareholders' Association); see FO, No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1. FO 371/1311, No. 2922, Encl. 3 and 7 in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Nov. 18, 1911, also lists Yeh Ping-ch'eng and Wang Ming-hsin. Ichiko, pp. 48-49.

(119) SCPL, 218, 250. An edict of Sept. 8 ordered the arrest of those responsible for the tax stoppage and for the "Tract" mentioned below. See tele. from Cabinet to Chao, Aug. 31, in FO, No. 39905. Tan T'i-yüan, p. 60. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 165. John Fincher, "Political Provincialism and the National Revolution," *China in Revolution*, p. 205.

(120) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 22. Early in the crisis, Chao informed Wang Jen-wen that he saw his mission as one of promoting "righteousness" as the basis for "saving the situation." FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1.

methods. Beginning on August 30 isolated riots broke out in P'eng hsien, Chung-chiang, Kuan hsien, Hsin-ching, and Hsiu-fan hsien. Their targets included police, likin and tax stations (*cheng-shou chu*). These incidents--evidence of generalized popular wrath, perhaps aggravated by Railroad agitation--⁽¹²¹⁾ must have seemed like portents of disaster to the Viceroy.

It was clear to Chao that while violence was imminent, the use of repressive measures would surely provoke open hostilities. Yet it was also apparent that a deadlock had been reached and some direct action on his part was essential to turn the tide. Both provincial officials and Szechwanese recognized that peace required the central government to refer its new policies to the National Assembly for discussion; this body's decision, the Chengtu Chamber of Commerce Report indicated, "people" would respect.

Some hope for a parliamentary resolution of the crisis lingered into September⁽¹²²⁾ despite governmental opposition.⁽¹²³⁾ However, extreme tension led both provincial official and Szechwanese leaders to examine tactical alternatives. The new patterns which emerged spelled the end to peaceful compromise.

By September 4 shareholders in Chengtu had decided to call up militia (*min-t'uan*) contingents to support league efforts, should authorities interfere with the Movement. The proportion of the crisis became obvious by September 5 in Kuan hsien northeast of the capital where, British observers reported, the "attitude of the students and merchants... is sullen and determined and their placards breathe a spirit of resistance to the death."⁽¹²⁴⁾ Such resolve and the preparations to employ weapons should they be necessary were rehearsals for the future.

Students from the Railroad School in Chengtu expressed the themes behind the Movement and the determination of this moment in their "Tract Discussing the Szechwanese People's Self-Defense" ("*Ssu-ch'uan jen tzu-pao shang-ch'üeh shu*") which they distributed outside the Company's headquarters during a shareholders' meeting on September 5.⁽¹²⁵⁾ The protest was defended as a controlled action to force government to yield to Szechwanese demands--without, at the same time, threatening peace. "Troublemakers" would be prevented from utilizing

(121) GBFO, pp. 6-11. FO, No. 42757, Encl. 5 in No. 1 and Encl. 6 in No. 1.

(122) FO, No. 39905, Encl. in No. 1, for the above data. This Report was the *Shang-hui kung-pao*.

(123) SCPL, 222.

(124) FO, No. 42757, Encl. 6 in No. 1.

(125) On the following, see SCPL, 250; Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 29-31. The "Tract" was attributed to efforts of the railway students to "imitate" the vigilance committee; FO, No. 42757, Encl. 1 in No. 1.

the Movement for their objectives by militia units.

"Self-defense" had broad requirements, beginning with the elimination of the "traitorous officials and gentry" (*mai-kuo kuan shen*) who impeded national development, thus keeping China weak and facilitating foreign aggression. But it transcended the immediate issue of nationalization and required provincial and national reforms for the sake of a strong future. Self-defense, for example, warranted changing tax policy and fiscal practice. Szechwanese could no longer render "tribute" to Peking or support other less endowed provinces. National economic strength necessitated the development of industry, hydro-electric power, and railroads. Military power required the creation of a citizen's army (*kuo-min chün*). Political strength demanded establishment of authoritative self-government institutions upon all administrative levels.

Immediate goals provided a gateway to the future; the "Tract" promised Szechwanese cooperation with the Ch'ing and its officials, if demands were met. But a warning was clear: only concessions would bring about relaxation of tensions within Szechwan. Acquiescence to the broad program of self-defense, however, would inaugurate a grand era, preserve the nation, protect the people, and give the Ch'ing tenure "for an eon."

Both the Viceroy and the Throne interpreted this "Tract" and the decision to halt tax payments as signs of rebellion. The Throne expressed "shock" over these assertions of "provincial independence" and demanded the arrest of those responsible. ⁽¹²⁶⁾ Chao himself had already moved to contain any eruption of violence; since his troops were insufficient to face a general uprising (by his own estimation), ⁽¹²⁷⁾ he had summoned 1500 to 3000 veteran soldiers from the Tibetan marches at the end of August. ⁽¹²⁸⁾ with these reinforcements on the way, Chao attempted to carry out the Throne's command by staging the arrest of Szechwanese leaders.

His plans were cautiously executed. On September 6 foreigners around Chengtu were invited into the walled city on a pretext. Early on the 7th soldiers were ordered to take positions within the capital, and what British observers

(126) SCPL, 236, 250.

(127) SCPL, 206, Aug. 27.

(128) These troops were formerly under Chao's command; they required between 12 and 20 days to march from bases at Tachienlu and the Chien-chang Valley to Chengtu. At least 1500 arrived on Sept. 15, and some on Sept. 10. NCH, Oct. 21, 1911; FO, No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 31.

termed the "Governor-General's coup"⁽¹²⁹⁾ began with a ruse: representatives of the Shareholders' Association, meeting on the morning of the 7th, were lured to the viceregal yamen to examine a telegram from the Cabinet which allegedly proposed a solution for the deadlock. Several hours later a gong was sounded --some say in response to a fire which had been set on Chao's orders--and police, cavalry, and soldiers poured onto the city's streets from their places of concealment. The Company's headquarters was surrounded by several hundred troops (including *hsün-fang tui* and *Lu-chün* units) and the shareholders rudely learned of Chao Erh-feng's methods for re-asserting the government's authority. They were informed of the arrest of their leaders;⁽¹³⁰⁾ the editors of the company's newspaper organs were seized; and offices of such propaganda sheets as the *Hsi-ku pao* and the *Ch'i-chih hua-pao* were sealed.⁽¹³¹⁾

Chao close the the city's gates. His soldiers began to dismantle the memorial platforms to the Kuang-hsü Emperor as the Cabinet's August 31 telegram to Chao had directed.⁽¹³²⁾ A 5 p. m. to 10 a. m. curfew was declared for Chengtu, and the Viceroy ordered shops to open and conduct business during the remaining hours. Firecrackers, drums, and gossip were all officially banned in the interests of peace and order, and temples which might harbor the unruly were placed under surveillance.⁽¹³³⁾ The city was carefully patrolled; it became an armed camp.

A viceregal proclamation issued at the time of the time of the arrests illustrated Chao's intentions. He hoped to reverse the tide of protest by disbanding the League and by forcing business to recommence.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Official authority, however, remained weak, and the League's structure actually continued to function covertly in Chengtu.⁽¹³⁵⁾

Chao's coup triggered violence. In fact, tragedy followed swiftly upon the heels of the arrests. News of Chao's actions transformed a crowd of petitioners gathering at the yamen into a mob. These several thousand "respectable" and lower-class Szechwanese closed in upon the officials buildings, demanding that the captives be freed. The Viceroy was "compelled to order the guards to fire," killing at least thirteen where they stood and wounding others. Most of these

(129) FO, No 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1.

(130) GBFO, pp. 6-11. Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 35. NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164.

(131) Chao could not allow these papers to spread their propaganda. They carried incendiary political cartoons. NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, pp. 159-164. Chang Hui-ch'ang, 159-160.

(132) Tele. of Aug. 31 in FO, No. 39905.

(133) SCPL, 275.

(134) FO, No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1.

(135) Ibid. Alsn Tan T'i-yüan, pp. 53-54, and SCPL, 409.

victims were merchants.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Another bloody incident followed, and by evening large numbers of militiamen had gathered outside the city's walls. Frequent clashes between these groups and Chao's troops occurred, and within three days the capital was besieged by some one hundred thousand people.⁽¹³⁷⁾ The protest mounted by Szechwanese thus became an armed conflict which contributed ultimately to the destruction of Ch'ing authority.

DRIFTING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Fall was a time of conflict Szechwan. Its pattern was broken and the military situation was confused. Major clashes occurred between governmental forces and the League Armies (*T'ung-chih chün*), a loosely applied designator for contingents primarily from village militia units and the KLH massing in the name of Railroad protection.⁽¹³⁸⁾ This was a war of opportunity, complicated by the wars of opportunists. Marauders--identified variously as robbers, banditti, and League forces--also caused trouble. Such broadly disturbed conditions stimulated localities to arm for defense during the last months of the Ch'ing,⁽¹³⁹⁾ and previewed the post-Ch'ing situation.

Beginning in November one area of the province after another rejected Ch'ing authority⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ as other options became hopeless and revolution spread

(136) NCH, Oct. 21, 1911, p. 163. Many accounts of the situation exist; e.g., FO, No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1, and Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 33-34.

(137) FO, No. 42757, Encl. 2 in No. 1. Ch'üan Han-sheng, pp. 248-249. Kuo Hsiao-ch'eng, I, 215. Ning Chih-ts'un, p. 253, describes the convergence of people on Chengtu as a *ch'i-t'uan*, a massing of rural people armed with their own weapons to face bandit dangers.

(138) Conditions around Chengtu in Sept.-Oct. are treated in FO, Nos. 38257, 39905, 42757, 44534. See Hedtke, ch. 4 and sources, for further information. On the T'ung-meng hui's role see Ōno Mitsunori; a different appraisal of this is in unpubl. conference paper, WCAAS, Tucson, 1970, by Charles H. Hedtke, "T'ung-meng hui Radicals and Revolutionary Mortality."

(139) Certainly this situation contributed to post-1911 conditions which Kapp's study discusses. Note FO, 228/1838, No. 6, Encl. in Brown's No. 24, General Series of May 23, 1912, mentions that in the first months of 1912 several districts had been permitted to purchase arms for militia. On the militia in self defense (some distinction was made between the defensive *hsien* town and the more aggressive village units) see FO, No. 42757, Encl. 4 in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Sept. 18, 1911; this may reflect the fact that League Armies were of village origins. Note FO, No. 39905, Encl. 2 in Jordan's No. 374, Sept. 23, 1911, that Kuan *hsien* (one of the *hsien* towns mentioned as given to self-defense) participated in the attack on Chengtu on Sept. 8. On the *T'ung-chih chün* see Ōno Mitsunori; FO 371/1312, No. 6824, Encl. 2 in No. 1, Chengtu Intell, Report for Quarter ending Dec. 31, 1911, comments the *T'ung-chih chün*--formed of peasant *min-t'uan* "who formed the fighting element of the League"--provided the Yin Ch'ang-heng govt. with one of its 2 divisions.

(140) See below.

within Szechwan and beyond. Railroad demands and desires for political reforms influenced most actions before mid-October, and until then Szechwanese warmed to any sign that they might win their protest. Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan, for example, was appointed to investigate conditions in Szechwan and people in Chengtu believed that his arrival (he never came) would promise "disgrace to the authorities, from Chao... downward, (rather) than danger to the Leaguers".⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Ts'en advocated repayment of Company investments, release of the arrested leaders and dismissal of Li Chi-hsün.⁽¹⁴²⁾ Other positive developments such as the removal of Sheng Hsüan-huai on October 26 and the issuance of the Nineteen Article Constitution on November 3, which should have gratified old-line constitutionalists, came too late to check the growth of revolution.⁽¹⁴³⁾

Revolt proliferated swiftly after news of the October 10 Wuchang uprising reached Szechwan.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ The impact of this intelligence surged electrically across the land, and the Movement became "frankly anti-dynastic."⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Action for anti-Ch'ing objectives intensified⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and rumors about the dynasty's collapse which filled the province from mid-October contributed to revolutionary purposes.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

While revolutionaries and government forces exchanged control of various localities within the province, imperial authority remained nominally in effect until late November. Then between November 22 and 27 key centers, as well as many lesser ones, declared their independence and established temporary governments.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Acts of revolt, particularly by major cities, and the presence of revolutionary forces often influenced this course.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ In Chengtu, the last

(141) FO, No. 44534, Encl. 2 in Jordan's No. 398, Oct. 16, 1911. Yang Shao-ch'üan, p. 75, mentions he terminated his trip. See Hedtke, diss., pp. 236-237, for other stimuli to optimism.

(142) NCH, Oct. 14, 1911, p. 113. Ts'en had been the respected Viceroy of Szechwan, 1902-1903.

(142) Pan Wei-tung, *The Chinese Constitution: A Study of Forty Years of Constitution Making in China* (Washington, D.C., 1945), pp. 10-11.

(144) Chou Shan-p'ei, p. 41; this news reached the viceregal government in Chengtu about Oct. 12.

(145) GBFO, p. 121.

(146) Hsieh Ju-lin, "Shih-nü" sec., pp. 75-76.

(147) Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 51-52.

(148) Resp. these major centers were Chungking, Luchow, Wanhsien, Chengtu. Others included Feng-tu, Chiang-chin, Shun-ch'ing, Hsü-fu. Temporary govts. included Luchow's So. Szechwan Military Govt., Kuang-yuan's Great Han No. Szechwan Military Govt., and Chungking's Shu Military Govt.

(149) E.g., Nieh Shu-wen, *ch.* 3, "Ch'ien-shih" sec., pp. 26-29; Liu Tzu-ching, Ho Wei-han, comp., *Wan-yüan hsien chih* (*Wan-yüan hsien Gazetteer*) (Printed for Ta-chung publishers, 1932), *ch.* 10, "Shih-shih, Ta-shi" sec., p. 12, and *ch.* 12, p. 3; NCH, Des. 2, 1911, p. 587, Dec. 16, pp. 730-731.

to declare, independence resulted from negotiations between Chao and the arrested leaders, whom he released on November 14; these were generated by tales of Ch'ing failure, news of revolt outside Szechwan, and conditions within the province. ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

The independent regimes naturally asserted the need for stability and economic revival, ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ but their political programs reflected the principles behind earlier disputes. Efforts by Chengtu and Chungking, for example, to build viable governments were carried out as preparations for the expected formation of a Chinese republican nation--within which political initiative would become a provincial right. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

On November 20 Szechwanese leaders in Chengtu announced success in the Railroad controversy, measured only by nullification of the foreign loan Agreement which they believed had automatically resulted from political disturbances. ⁽¹⁵³⁾ The absence of references to nationalization in this celebration possibly reflected the fact that discussions for transferring political power in Chengtu were then underway and that a favorable political settlement, combined with the general course of revolution would negate this particular goad to action. ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

On November 27 Chao Erh-feng placed the Chengtu Great Han Szechwan Independent Military Government (*Ta-Han Ssu-ch'uan tu-li chün cheng-fu*) under the temporary stewardship of P'u Tien-chün whom, he explained, was a logical choice since he had represented the entire province as Assembly Presi-

(150) Chao apparently felt abandoned; Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 51-52. SCPL, 400, 428 from Oct. 14 and Nov. 6. Hsiang Ch'u, "Ch'ung-ch'ing Shu chün cheng-fu ch'eng-li ch'in li-chi" ("Personal History of the Founding of the Chungking Shu Military Govt."), HHKMHIL, pp. 87-89. FO, No. 6824, and FO 371/1311, No. 2922, Encl. 3 in No. 1, Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Nov. 14, 1911.

(151) E.g., in both Chengtu and Chungking; SCPL, 450. Hsiang Ch'u, pp. 82-83.

(152) SCPL, 438, 448, 449. Kuo Hsiao-ch'eng, pp. 226-227.

(153) FO, No. 2922, Encl. 6 in No. 1 Wilkinson to Jordan, Chengtu, Nov. 21, 1911, and Encl. 7 in No. 1, Circular Letter... Nov. 20, 1911. Note British denials that Szechwanese understood the Agreement.

(154) FO, No. 2922, Encl. 7 in No. 1, Circular Letter... Nov. 20, 1911, talks about the "political revolution" in Szechwan and the problems of upheaval; it pleads for peace. Negotiations in Chengtu began on Nov. 18, apparently on the initiative of several officials. Chao accepted the terms on Nov. 22. See Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 51-52, 54-55.

dent.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ This particular revolution was cheered for ending prolonged Han subjugation (*ya-chih*). The transfer of power was lauded as a victory over autocracy and the achievement of Szechwanese responsibility for their own affairs.

The broader political goals underlying opposition to late Ch'ing policies were quite apparent in the Chengtu regime's trans-provincial visions. The new leadership viewed its regime as one building block of the future Chinese nation, a great Han "federal empire" (*Ta-Han lien-pang chih ti-kuo*). The guide posts toward this political anomaly were the "principles common to the whole world" (*shih-chieh chih kung-li*) and the "theory of human morality" (*jen-tao chih chu-i*), and the one-time constitutional monarchists in Chengtu advocated republican constitution as the basis for political construction.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ All Chengtu echoed with the new politics; the North China Herald reported, "people are going about with smiles... flags are being prepared with a big red Han character on a field of white; a ring in black around this character will stand for the Republic to be and eighteen smaller circles denote the provinces."⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

Exhortations for peace and normalcy and expectations of a new federal system, which would last out the world's history,⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ proved phantasmagorical. P'u's government was itself destroyed in a coup on December 8. By mid-1912 the successor military regime was riddled with factionalism and intrigue, and signs of

(155) FO 371/1312, No. 32685, Szechwan and Yunnan..., Chengtu, May 7, 1912, p. 3, and FO 228/1838, Intelligence Report for Quarter Ended Sept. 30, 1912, Chengtu. The Assembly was dissolved after Aug., 1911, and a provisional deliberative assembly (*lin shih sheng i-hui*) could not be formed due to unrest and friction between Chengtu and Chungking. After they merged in the Spring of 1912, each provincial administrative area was supposed to elect 2 representatives for this body; it met July 1-September 18 when Yin Ch'ang-heng disbanded it. It was critical of Yin at first, but moderated its position. Delegates were elected according to the old Assembly's rules but with broader franchise: new election regulations were expected from the Provisional Govt. in Peking after which the whole procedure would be brought into conformity with central directives.

(156) SCPL, 448-450, on the above. Note Lo Lun's April 30, 1912, pronouncement in which primitive concepts of "democracy" and "republic" are discussed; FO 228/1838, "Notification by Lo Lun." He was then the "Chief Adviser" to the Yin government; FO 228/1838, "Chengtu and Chungking Governments: negotiations for amalgamation," Chungking, Jan. 19, 1912. Note Mary Wright's important comments on the meaning of republicanism in "Introduction," *China in Revolution*, pp. 77-78.

(157) NCH, Dec. 30, 1911, p. 867.

(158) SCPL, 449.

estrangement from Peking had developed.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

THE MOVEMENT IN HISTORICAL PRESPECTIVE

That nationalization policies could provoke the struggle they did was evident from earlier controversies over the Railroad venture and late Ch'ing political innovations. Unresolved disputes over methods of developing enterprises and over the character of political change shaped both the reactions to nationalization and the aspirations of Szechwanese heirs to Ch'ing power. While the Movement's broadcast appeal came from fears that new policies meant foreign danger and financial loss, its significance was forged in the course of controversy preceding 1911. The Movement was another battle of an old war in which declarations of independence represented ephemeral armistices.

The Company, from the first, was a source of tension between provincial officials and Szechwanese, although an object of common concern as well. Many Szechwanese shared Hsi-liang's belief that railroad construction must be completed without foreign aid.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ They praised the Viceroy for establishing a Company which was exclusively financed by Chinese and for braking the advances of concession-hunting foreigners.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ It was said that concessions opened passageways for western penetration and any influence gained over the Railroad would permit foreigners to engulf the province. The extension of alien interests would impoverish well-to-do Chinese and within a century cause China's demise (*wang-kuo*).⁽¹⁶²⁾

There was agreement on the Railroad's importance and Szechwanese believed, with Hsi-liang, that it would benefit both province and nation.⁽¹⁶³⁾ Development of Szechwan's business depended upon it, and the line would stimulate the province's economy, in decline since the mid-nineteenth century. Surtaxes had multiplied; recent provincial, military, and police reforms had been costly; and foreign goods flooding inland regions had injured the livelihood of peasants, artisans, and merchants. Szechwanese wrote that investment by

(159) FO 228/1838, "Proclamation, in colloquial, dated Chengtu, April 23rd, 1912."

(160) See Des Forges, ch. 6, on the early disputes over the venture and on the concept of "self-management" (*tzu-pai*) as an approach to development. There was recurrent debate from 1904 about using foreign resources.

(161) SCPL, 10, 11 (Oct., Nov., 1904).

(162) SCPL, 10. Des Forges, p. 191, on fears.

(163) Des Forges, p. 66, on the greater-than-provincial orientation of Szechwanese. SCPL, 10, 11, show early concerns with the fate of nation as well as province.

all classes, essential for the project's success, should be motivated by the grand goals of development and salvation for province and nation--not merely by the pursuit of profit. They portrayed dedication to the Company (*ai kung-ssu*) as vital for its survival, much like patriotism (*ai kuo*) was for the country's. This analogy underscored a plea for popular support of the venture--and a demand for Company reforms to make it worthy of devotion.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Despite shared concerns, strong disagreements developed from the first days of the venture. The same Szechwanese who expressed support objected, beginning in 1904, to the Company's form and to many of its practices. The freest critics were Szechwanese studying in Japan, several of whom became Assembly leaders, staunchly promoted the Company's interests, and led its defense in 1911.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Their commitment to the project was equalled by their conviction that success required change.

Only Company reforms, they charged in 1904, could attract adequate domestic capital, thus precluding foreign involvement. This goal required guarantees for investors, official cooperation with merchants, permission for shareholders to participate in Company affairs, and elimination of the corrupt practices which people expected from officially managed enterprises.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Even gentry (*shen*) employed by officials as Company agents often slipped into the bureaucratic world, beyond the reach of shareholders, to grow fat at the expense of the Railroad and the public.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

Official management, that was the critics' target. Their strategy was to convert the venture to private management, and to demand bureaucrats' compliance with new commercial laws in order to keep it free from their intimidating dalliance.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ The critics believed that bureaucratic power over the Company was inimical to success⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and they deplored the political conditions which

(164) SCPL, 10, 17, 24. Des Forges, p. 70, notes Hsi-liang's suspicion of merchant profit motives; certainly the critics placed other motives ahead of profits.

(165) Of the 45 men signing SCPL, 17, 6 became Assemblymen, including P'u, Hsiao Hsiang (one of 2 co-vice-presidents), Li Te-fang, Liu Tu-chen, Chiang P'an, and Hsia Sheng-ch'u. P'u and Hsiao were in Japan as early as 1904; see Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 158. The first 2 were *chin-shih*; 3 others were *chü-jen*. Other Japanese-educated Szechwanese negotiated with Chao in November, including Shao Ts'ung-en, a constitutionalist who had studied politics and economics there. Wu Pi-hua, an elderly *chin-shih* who was a *t'ung-nien* of Li Hung-chang, sympathetic with the Movement, joined Shao. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 168; Chou Shan-p'ei, pp. 35-38; Yang Shao-ch'üan, p. 73.

(166) SCPL, 10, 11.

(167) SCPL, 17, 18 recite many problems blamed on official management.

(168) SCPL, 17, 18.

(169) SCPL, 17.

allowed officials unrestricted influence over the project. They argued that officials in enterprise stimulated mistrust and the unassailable position of the bureaucrat caused people to yield to official whims. Unfettered, officials had been able to misuse Company funds and to appoint personnel who advocated dangerous liaison with foreigners.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Injustice in collecting Railroad funds, considered by the critics to be the natural consequence of official domination over the enterprise, was repeatedly attacked. Objections centered upon the administration of the rent-share system in which bureaucracy's influence over Company affairs was clear.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ The levy was mandatory and anyone who resisted it could be reported to local magistrates for "disregard of the public welfare."⁽¹⁷²⁾ The amount due was calculated and collected in the rural areas (*hsiang*) by the heads of the militia (*t' uan*), *pao*, and *chia* units under the supervision of gentry directors (*shen-tung*) who were appointed by *chou* and *hsien* officials. Local operations and collections were under the control of branch rent share offices, perhaps co-existent with local Company and branch share-sales offices, at each *chou* and *hsien* seat. The magistrates appointed gentry (*ti-fang shen*) and the "merchant-wealthy" (*shang-fu*) as managers (*tung-shih*) of these rent share offices. Use of these notables, rather than government runners (*ya-i*), to manage the levy was designed to prevent disturbances.⁽¹⁷³⁾

Szechwanese in Japan had their own ideas about special funding devices. In 1904 they suggested that capital could be obtained from "grain contributions" made (out of conscience) by wealthier landlords for a period of perhaps three years. Local *chou* and *hsien* were to purchase public shares with these contributions, both to support the Railroad and to earn interest useful for public welfare (*kung i*).⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ The preference for a definite time limit for such special

(170) SCPL, 10, 17, 23, 24. Des Forges, pp. 62-63, 68.

(171) See SCPL, 14, 15, 17, on the overlapping of officials and Company on all levels during its official management period. This continued in some ways until Fall, 1911, in spite of private management form; fn. 221, The Company representative in Shanghai charged with losing Company money in the 1910 scandal was a viceregal appointee; SCPL, 70. SCPL, 24, art. 7, also notes the continuing viceregal role.

(172) SCPL, 14.

(173) SCPL, 14, 15. This practice may have been designed to build cooperation.

(174) SCPL, 10, p. 11. This suggestion called for exemptions for owners of "lower" grade land, after holdings were categorized as upper, middle, or lower grade (*shang*, *chung*, *hsia*). See Ho Ping-ti, pp. 115-116, on the historical practice of categorizing land. Note Des Forges, pp. 64, 67, does not indicate the difference between Hsi-liang's system and this early proposal, thus making Szechwanese criticisms of the rent share practice seem surprising.

funding systems and this "public" orientation distinguished these suggestions from rent share practices.

In 1906 students protested from Japan that rent shares merely increased the tax burdens of less wealthy families. They urged that the ten picul exemption level be raised to alleviate economic pressures upon the poorer landowners whose meager incomes were already diminished because of debts and other financial problems. The levy's indefinite duration--it was to continue until the Railroad's completion--was objectionable, and many troubles of the system reduced willingness to purchase voluntary shares; rent share practices constituted part of the Company's "unclear" business operations which, together with common suspicion that officials misappropriated capital, caused a disinclination to invest. Low levels of voluntary investment had condemned the venture to dependency upon the rent share levy which had become the major source of revenues. ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

Two of the men responsible for this attack, Teng Jung and P'u Tien-chün, published an indictment of rent share practices in 1908. Households with middle and low incomes (*chung hsia hu*) were suffering, the accusation read, because "many *chou* and *hsien*" had attached the levy to the regular land tax as a surcharge, converting it to a "railroad tax." Satisfying the land tax obligation required preliminary payment of that levy, and people who did not pay the latter were officially punished for defaulting on the former. Serious consequences arose from such maladministration, the denunciation noted: people "forced to rebel" by inequitous practices had been falsely labeled "Boxers" by officials who attacked them in order to feed their own ambitions for high office by pretending to stem the tides of recrudescing catastrophe. ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

That the Railroad had become a vehicle for exploitation scandalized the critics. They attacked all conditions which frustrated broad investment and, hence, the project's success. Their criticism, accompanied by positive and innovative suggestions as it was, went beyond simple protest. Their program manifested an approach to development and their estrangement from men and ideas which thwarted it. They were the moderns, assailing men of the older generation (*lao-pei*) who held fast to the ideas of the early 1890's. Those ancients resisted the Railroad because of old-fashioned fears that it would violate *feng-*

(175) SCPL, 17, and Des Forges, p. 67, on early criticism.

(176) The indictment, in SCPL, 19, was written by an official. See SCPL, 17, where Teng and P'u are listed with other 1906 critics.

shui and that foreign ways would bring unwanted change to China. These obscurantists opposed the Railroad as a threat to the livelihood of the little people (*hsiao-min*),⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ while the critics argued that the entire Szechwanese population should contribute because the completed Railroad would bring about improvement of the province's whole economy. The critics' observation of Japanese, scrimping to help their nation pay the costs of the Russo-Japanese war, strengthened their views on the important role of mass financial support for public undertakings.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

Foreign ways also provided the critics with a commercial model that would resolve the problem of official interference with privately funded enterprise. This model was the limited company (*yu-hsien kung-ssu*) in which executive power was vested exclusively in the hands of shareholders.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Private management meant shareholder power. Officials could invest, but like any shareholder, their influence over an enterprise would be conditional and based upon investment rather than bureaucratic power.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

A residue of official management, surviving the Company's reorganization of 1907, was blamed for continuing low voluntary investment⁽¹⁸¹⁾ and the absence of construction. In November 1909 the Provincial Assembly became the critics' forum for Railroad affairs. It inventoried the areas in which the Company neglected proper private management: shareholders lacked control over the firm's books and the use of capital; the Company's director-general (*tsung-li*) was appointed by government rather than elected by shareholders; and many personnel practices violated commercial law. Illegalities and mismanagement of funds combined to reduce the Company's attractiveness for investors and perpetuated dependence upon rent shares which could never alone provide adequate capital. Shareholders suffered from such conditions, whereas under the full reign of commercial law their investments would yield profits and, of

(177) SCPL, 11.

(178) SCPL, 10, 17.

(179) Business practices of modern countries are mentioned in SCPL, 10, 11, 24; the critics' attitude--their world view--is manifest in docs. 17, 18, 24-26, 30, dating 1904-1909.

(180) SCPL, 10, 17; 24 clarifies the conception of differences between *kuan-pan* and *shang-pan*.

(181) See SCPL, 10, and NCH, May 12, 1905, p. 298, for early investment patterns. Lack of shareholder influence over the use of funds caused initially heavy investments to fall, a fact that possibly influenced Hsi-liang to sanction merchant management in 1907. Following the latter, a temporary surge in investments occurred; note the pattern of share subscription: 1907--2, 535, 697 tls; 1908--136, 890 tls; 1909--87, 863 tls. Other revenues came from the native opium tax, the opium lamp forced tax, and rent shares; USDS 893.77/1031, dated Peking, June 6, 1910.

course, the venture would prosper.⁽¹⁸²⁾

Shareholders' meetings, the result of Assembly efforts, were outspoken about conditions. The first meeting echoed the Assembly's catalog of deficiencies and objected to the firm's taking on the "airs of a yamen."⁽¹⁸³⁾ The second annual meeting of November 21–December 9, 1910, followed the critics' analysis of the Company's financial weakness and wrestled with methods of increasing its capital. It denounced the obligatory aspects of the rent share system, enforced ultimately by bureaucratic sanctions, and asserted that the removal of this compulsory overlay would bring a rich infusion of share capital into the venture.

The second meeting also urged a new financial instrument, ironically one that was again compulsory. People who purchased land were to buy shares at the time they arranged for formal transfer of title deeds.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ To implement this proposal, government, which preserved its responsibility for land registration and taxation, would necessarily become involved in Company affairs. Its role would be effected through new bureaus for revenue collection (*ching cheng chü*) which placed local resources under control of the highest provincial administrators.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ So in spite of their attack upon the obligatory features of the rent share system, these shareholders were willing to sanction a continuing connection between the machinery of bureaucracy and the Company. But of what sort and under what conditions?

The connection, to be tolerable, required fitting Company and bureaucracy

(182) SCPL, 30. "Commercial Law" (*shang-lü*) here probably refers to Company Law, the critics' usual yardstick; see SCPL, 17.

(183) FO 371/851, No. 11403, Miller to Grey, Peking, March 19, 1910, No. 1. Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 158–159.

(184) USDS 893.77/1114, pp. 3–4, for abstract of this meeting. A public lottery was also suggested.

(185) Before 1907 land registration and taxation had been in the hands of *chou* and *hsien* magistrates, and higher officials had lacked institutional power to tap local resources directly. Between 1908–1911 Szechwan underwent fiscal reorganization and gained a network of revenue collection bureaus which collected taxes of many types, including those on land, property, and land deeds. They presumably took charge of registration transfers, as they did the various magisterial tax responsibilities. These bureaus were headed by people designated by the Lt. Gov. (*pu-cheng shih*), often from expectant officials. Magistrates also sometimes chaired them. These bureaus were an example of effort to rationalize the provincial fiscal system and bring it under central provincial control. On the previous system, see Sybille van der Sprenkel, *Legal Institutions in Manchu China...* (London and Toronto, 1962), p. 106, and *The China Year Book 1912*, ed. H. T. M. Bell and H. G. W. Woodhead (London and New York, n.d.), p. 313. On the land tax system and its weaknesses, see Wang Yeh-chien, *Land Taxation in Imperial China 1750–1911* (Harvard, 1973), pp. 29–30, 35, 39–42, 46–47, 55, 129, 131. On the bureaus, see Hedtke, pp. 129–131.

together in a fashion conducive to the success of the enterprise. For the critics, building a viable relationship required the elimination of sources for trouble such as those associated with rent shares. That system, denounced less for its financial potential than for its stigma, had been tainted by the worst aspects of official influence over enterprise--those promoting corruption and exploitation, giving the project a bad name, causing financial inadequacies, and menacing the Railroad's chance for success.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ Within local administrative areas officials and the powerful men they appointed to manage Railroad affairs—including rent share collection--had easily victimized society. At the provincial level, critics complained, official disregard for the law and for the spirit of private companies had also harmed the project. The critics attributed both situations to a distressing political reality: shareholders working through the Company's central apparatus had less influence over Railroad affairs than the officials on any administrative level. Bureaucratic will, not the Company's legal status, actually determined the quality of private management in this enterprise.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

One instrument for resolving the Railroad's problems was institutional. The new bureaus for revenue collection, for example, freed provincial finance from magisterial control and promoted fiscal centralization efficiently enough to leave some districts short of administrative funds after the bureaus had remitted their quota of ninety per cent of their local revenues to Chengtu.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ For the Company, such fiscal centralization meant that government could be recruited to gather vital capital without the untoward consequences (associated with rent shares) that had occurred when the *chou* and *hsien* were authorized to collect funds for the enterprise.

The Assembly, as an institution, was invaluable to the Company. Assembly patronage dated from its first session, and the first shareholder's meeting was chaired by Assembly officers and their close associates. Assemblymen even comprised forty per cent of the Company's first elected thirteen-man Board of Directors.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

(186) SCPL, 10, 17, 24, 30, and below,

(187) SCPL, 10, 17, 18, blame troubles on the lack of shareholder influence and the vague division between the Company and the Bureaucracy.

(188) Fn. 185 on the bureaus. IGC, 1902-1911, pp. 266-267, on the remittance in 1909.

(189) SCPL, 10, 14, 24, 30. GBFO, pp. 6-11. Ichiko, "Railway," p. 54, mentions the commitment of many social strata to the Railroad. Ch'üan Han-shang, p. 230, notes that the elite (*shen-shih*) influential in local government (*ti-fang cheng-chih*) and society were among the landlords holding shares. Shareholders were men of wealth, of both commercial and landed origins. The Board served a 2-year term. See also Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 158-159, and Tan T'i-yüan, p. 44.

The Assembly's broad responsibilities for provincial affairs brought it into questions about the Railroad. So did the interests and inclinations of its members. ⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ The Assembly's institutional opinion reflected the critics' views. It scrutinized the use of Company resources, denounced exploitation connected with shares, ⁽¹⁹¹⁾ and pressed for limitation of bureaucratic powers over the enterprise; ⁽¹⁹²⁾ its effect upon Company reorganization manifested the critics' demands for reform and for official compliance with commercial law as means to solve troubles of the enterprise.

The institution served as a forum, not just to promote a functional separation of the yamen from the venture--Company regulations provided for that--but to force the delineation of governmental and Company spheres of authority. The Assembly was instrumental in the critics' fight for enterprise autonomy under the conditions of new commercial law. ⁽¹⁹³⁾ Beyond that, the critics' stand on the Railroad, like the Assembly's efforts on its behalf, imitated the themes behind the broad political issues of the last Ch'ing years--issues foremost among the Assembly's concerns and politically central to the outbreak of the Protection Movement. ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

The Assembly campaigned for important provincial reforms, fought magisterial corruption, ⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ and sponsored regularization of financial resources for

(190) SCPL, 30, suggests both, as do the roles of the Assembly and its members in the Movement. Note also the Assembly's institutional stand regarding Company affairs.

(191) The Assembly declined to evaluate the merits and faults of the rent share system and merely listed it as a funding device; however, it urged proper private management practices to relieve doubts about misuse of funds and to attract capital; SCPL, 30. At the same time the Assembly attacked official corruption of all types; see below. Worry about availability of capital was a constant in the Company's history; Ichiko, "Railway," p. 54; SCPL, 11; and below.

(192) Note concern over the appointment of the Company's director-general and dismay over continuing official control of the enterprise. These themes were representative of Assembly leader' views.

(193) SCPL, 14, 15, prohibited the use of government runners, separated rent share collection from governmental revenues, and provided for establishment of local Company offices separate from those of government. These are all marks of functional division. Early critics blamed troubles on the lack of clear separation of the venture from the bureaucratic world in regard to matters of authority in addition to functions. New Ch'ing commercial law was cited for support; SCPL, 10, 17, 25. The same note was clear in the 1909 shareholders' meeting.

(194) Szechwanese in 1911 noted that frictions between the Assembly and the officials were preconditions for the Movement; GBFO, p. 6. Note also the scope of Assembly interests, below.

(195) Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 153-154. Some of the officials whose misdeeds were reported to the Viceroy were punished. GBFO, p. 6.

local bureaucratic operations (thus to check one major cause of exploitative taxation).⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ It sought revenues for self-government institutions and new enterprises, both on the local level, and it promoted self-governmental supervision over local administrative affairs. Many such Assembly endeavors were supported by chief provincial officials, and both these power centers had keen interests in developmental and educational matters.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Controversy between them, however, shattered illusions of cooperation.

Trouble erupted with the first Assembly session, apparently over actions by high provincial officials which Assembly leaders interpreted as efforts to restrict "freedom of debate."⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ The *North China Herald* dramatically reported that "no other Assembly was more free in its criticism of the authorities."⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ The Assembly's financial authority became an issue, as did its efforts to reduce the salaries of high officials, and features of the preliminary central governmental

(196) Chang Hui-chang, pp. 153-154. The Assembly supported salary increases for local officials; this would reduce their dependence upon surcharges to pay for governmental costs; IGC, 1902-1911, pp. 266-267, and Wang Yeh-chien, above.

(197) Mutual interests and differences are suggested by the 2 agendas of 1909, prepared by the Viceroy and by the Szechwanese Assembly, duplicating the ambivalences in all provinces mentioned in Fincher, pp. 202-204. On the Viceroy's agenda appeared a variety of "developmental" matters, including an item for establishing banks (see below), an "experimental department for industrial machinery and implements," and "a provincial society for the investigation of natural resources." The Viceroy's list also included the item, "acceleration of the raising of capital" for the Company. The Assembly, legally eligible to select items for deliberation, selected such topics as: the faults and merits of the "ticket salt system," Company reorganization, reform of the salt-tax system and the public granaries, reform of receipts for land tax payment, elimination of excess expenditures by local officials, extortion by local officials "under the guise of fines," universal education, revision of legal fees, bank administration, etc. The Assembly supported rapid development of new industries, such as sericulture, to replace revenues lost from suppressing tax-producing opium; the Viceroy also requested deliberation on "establishment of textile societies." The Assembly sought to raise local capital and nurture enterprises by creation of banks--*chih yeh yin-hang* (possibly a contraction of *chih ts'ai yeh-ch'an yin-hang*, "to nurture financial capital and enterprise")--in each *chou* and *hsien* with money from local public resources. Sketchy data in several sources indicate that the Assembly supported local self-governmental influence over local tax matters, analogous to its own broader responsibilities--and sought to transfer into its own hands (and probably those of lesser self-government bodies) the management of local granaries, public lands, and funds which were all profitably controlled by local gentry. On these points, see, FO 371/857, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1909, pp. 16-18; IGC, 1902-1911, pp. 266-267; Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 153-154; NCH, Feb. 18, 1910, p. 359; GBFO, p. 6. On the involvement of local gentry in the above, see Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry...* (Seattle, 1955), pp. 51-62. See PFR (1909), p. 137, on imperial sanction for sub-Assembly self-governmental control over public resources to provide operating funds.

(198) FO, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1910' p. 16.

(199) NCH, Feb. 18, 1910, p. 359.

budget for 1910 cause an uproar.⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Jurisdictional disputes were also obvious.⁽²⁰¹⁾ Official reassurance to the Assembly that viceregal emendation of its rules should not arouse suspicion⁽²⁰²⁾ underlined the Assembly's mistrust of bureaucratic intentions. Apprehension characterized relationships, and at the end of 1910 the Assembly objected that the newly established Viceroy's Council (*kuan-t'ing hui-i*) was a vehicle for interference in its legitimate functions.⁽²⁰³⁾

The Assembly's contest with the provincial bureaucracy over jurisdiction and authority within the new constitutional structure was analogous to Szechwanese battles for a privately managed Railroad which conformed to new commercial law. Attacks on bureaucratic control of the enterprise (which had begun with Hsi-liang)⁽²⁰⁴⁾ corresponded in spirit to Assembly efforts to carve out a more autonomous role over provincial affairs than officials would tolerate. Officials feared that if people seized the reins of politics through the new self-government bodies, order and regulation would yield to anarchy, and "feudalism" (*feng-chien chih-tu*) would be let loose upon the land.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Hsi-liang had worried that the machinery of state would fail, should officials cease to control critical administrative processes.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ And imperial blueprints for political innovation endeavored to check such dangers by carefully stipulating the functions, authorities, and interrelationships of all elements of the new polity; institutions, bureaucratic servitors, and elected assemblies alike were fully subordinated by regulations to a sovereign, executive monarchy.⁽²⁰⁷⁾

(200) Chang Hui-ch'ang, pp. 153-154. GBFO, p. 6. NCH, Feb. 18, 1910, p. 359. Cameron, pp. 164-166, on the effort to develop a budgetary system. There were probably also financial disputes over matters of tax revision; while the Assembly's agenda refers to reforms and revisions, Chao Erh-hsün's refers to "expenses."

(201) Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 153. Assembly requests to inspect public offices (*chü-so*), schools, and factories in 1909 were rejected.

(202) FO, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1910, p. 20; this occurred in the first session of 1909.

(203) Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 155. See Fincher, p. 202, concerning the executive councils (*Hui-i t'ing*), and Hedtke, pp. 164 ff.

(204) Des Forges, pp. 68, 70, 190, on Hsi-liang's approach to innovation and development, as well as his distrust of profit-seeking merchants.

(205) *Ssu-ch'uan Ch'uan-Han t'ieh-lu tsung kung-ssu, Shang-p'an-----pao-kao* (Report of the Merchant Managed Szechwan Ch'uan-Han Railroad Company General Office) (Chengtu, Sept. 16, 1908), p. 12, gives this statement by the Provincial Commissioner of Education.

(206) In the political area, Hsi-liang demanded tight bureaucratic control over land tax collection, police powers, and management of local justice; see *Hsien-cheng tsa-chih* (Constitutional Government Miscellany) (Jan., 1907), I:2, 124.

(207) *China Year Book* 1912, ch. 22, and PFR (1908), pp. 182-188, give the regulations for the self-government bodies and the 1908 constitution. See the official *Ch'eng-tu jih-pao* (Chengtu Daily), Hsüan-t'ung 1/4/26, p. 1, for a memorial mentioning the authority and power particular to officials and the monarchy, and the laws which people should obey--hereafter CTJP.

The self-government institutions, part of the apparatus erected to manage complex new administrative programs, were to "improve the official system (*kuan-chih*)'."⁽²⁰⁸⁾ They expanded and supplemented the governmental machine to facilitate administration by institutionalizing the roles of social elites involved with the new political structure.⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Responsibility for integrating central administration with self-government within the provinces fell upon the governors and viceroys who were to implement "useful" Assembly resolutions "so that between Government and governed there may be one mind" and the country's "best interests" would be served.⁽²¹⁰⁾

Szechwan's bureaucracy tutored citizen-subjects for their duties in the new institutions.⁽²¹¹⁾ Chao Erh-feng and his brother Erh-hsün, both Hsi-liang's viceregal successors, were as cautious as the latter in their preparations for self-government.⁽²¹²⁾ Chao Erh-hsün insured that the training program conformed to the orthodox self-government curriculum which alone could prevent "the spread of false theories."⁽²¹³⁾ And his keynote address to the Szechwanese Assembly, consistent with imperial instructions, underscored the need for cooperation with the bureaucracy and warned members not to violate the monarchy's nine-year timetable for launching parliamentary institutions.⁽²¹⁴⁾

Participants in self-government bodies originated roles for themselves, and sought a form of relationship with bureaucracy, incompatible with the neat

(208) Fincher, p. 201.

(209) Fincher, *passim*, deals with the problems and programs of the Reform. Unpubl. diss (Radcliffe College, 1959), by Esther Morrison, "The Modernization of the Confucian Bureaucracy: an historical study of public administration," pp. 14, 52, 395, 440-444, 895-896, comments on the transformation of systems and political relationships during the Reform period.

(210) Regarding a general imperial exhortation; FO, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1910, p. 5.

(211) Hedtke, ch. 3. See CTJP, HT 1/4/26, p. 1, on the desire for government to spread self-government principles and practices, as well as to build the new system, from the top down. On the new sense of citizenship, see fn. 66, and Fincher, pp. 209 ff (on the "new public"). FO 228/1838, Intell. Report for Quarter ended Sept. 30, 1912, Encl. in Brown's No. 24, Genl. Series, of May 23, 1912, mentions the "new people" in reference to the unity of officials, merchants, and gentry in the National Subscription Movement of 1912.

(212) Hedtke, pp. 142-148. Hsi-liang left the viceregal office in May 1907 and was replaced by Chao Erh-feng temporarily; his brother, Erh-hsün held the office from Summer 1908 to Spring 1911 when Wang Jen-wen took over. Chao Erh-feng returned in July 1911 and remained through the Revolution; he was executed Dec. 22, 1911.

(213) Quoted from CTJP HT 1/5/26, p. 1. The curriculum included training in new regulations, laws related to self-government bodies and their authority and duties, etc. Chang Hui-ch'ang, p. 152.

(214) FO, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1910, p. 16. See Cameron, Appendix, on this timetable. CTJP, Kuang-hsü 34/8/5, p. 1, gives imperial instructions.

hierarchy planned by imperial political architects. Dissent was expressed primarily in the program of constitutionalism which inspired the assemblies of many provinces in 1910 and resulted in demands for the prompt inauguration of parliamentary government with a Cabinet responsible to the highest elected institution. The spirit animating this drive grew from the assemblies' particular conception of political change. On October 8, 1910, *Shen-pao*, the leading Shanghai vernacular paper, portrayed their views--and their frustration: assembly "deputies have the right to deliberate, but they have no power to enforce their decisions. If those in authority will not give effect to the resolutions of the Assembly, no amount of deliberation on their part is of any practical utility."⁽²¹⁵⁾ The paper argued that both the achievement of constitutional government and the nation's future demanded "radical reform" of the official system which enabled viceroys and governors to wield their "enormous power and influence" to the detriment of self-government.⁽²¹⁶⁾

Szechwanese constitutionalism, supported by chambers of commerce and "intellectuals" (*shih-min*) as early as 1908, was led by Assembly president P'u. In 1910 and 1911 the Assembly joined with leaders of the educational, agricultural, and business communities to convince people and officials alike that if their political goals were not immediately achieved, China would "perish."⁽²¹⁷⁾

Constitutionalists assaulted the formulas underlying the new political structure at their most vulnerable point--monarchy's presumption to ordain political cooperation between the components of the new polity, when discord was in fact the consequence of new institutional arrangements and of the divergent goals and interests held by men involved in the new political order. The constitutionalists put the lie to the brave assumptions that a neatly centralized system of power could be easily constructed.

Political tensions arose from innovations, as exemplified by the Szechwanese Assembly's confrontation with officials over authority. Dispute symbolized dissent from the Ch'ing principles of political change which denied self-government

(215) FO, No. 1142, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Dec. 20, 1910, p. 16.

(216) FO 371/857, No. 45707, Encl. in Miller's No. 33, p. 2, says the paper "took up the cudgels on behalf of the Provincial Assemblies." It also called for "strong central government" as a counter to dominant power of provincial bureaucrats; that is, strong--but representative--government.

(217) Hedtke, ch. 4, on Szechwanese constitutionalism. Methods to promote constitutionalism, like those in the later Movement, included student lectures, school strikes, demonstrations, and petitions.

institutions the scope of legislative power and authority they sought.⁽²¹⁸⁾ The constitutionalists' style of self-government represented an alternative to monarchy's way of reform which shaped the course of Assembly conflicts with provincial and metropolitan officials, and ultimately with the monarchy.⁽²¹⁹⁾

The Szechwanese crusade for private management of the Railroad manifested tenets of the constitutionalist philosophy of politics. Critics, whether students in Japan, Assemblymen, or delegates to Company meetings, considered authoritative shareholder control basic to the enterprise. A working relationship with bureaucracy, as far they were concerned, depended upon official acquiescence to their method. They wielded Ch'ing Company Law to break official controls, and denounced bureaucratic interference as imperious manipulation of society and its resources. The official management form of enterprise exemplified, the critics contended, government's lack of faith in its people; it also spurred distrust of government.⁽²²⁰⁾

The quest for complete private management in Szechwan was thwarted to the end by provincial officials who retained authority over Company affairs.⁽²²¹⁾ The constitutionalists' cause was also frustrated, and in the Spring of 1911 constitutionalists despaired of attaining their political ends.⁽²²²⁾ Thus on the eve of the Railroad crisis several fronts of the battle over power and authority were gripped by trouble. The Protection Movement, however, began a new campaign as Szechwanese joined Railroad and constitutionalist objectives together.

The connection was maintained all during the Movement, and stereotyped governmental reactions to Szechwanese demands brought home the soundness of Szechwanese apprehensions about the government's intentions. Disputes over both the Railroad's fate and questions of Assembly political authority showed the basic unwillingness of monarchy and its governmental spokesmen to grant the participatory role self-government institutions desired. The spirit of the 1908 "Principles of Constitution" and the Throne's reticence to yield to constitution-

(218) Fincher, pp. 198, ff, discusses aspects of assembly efforts to build their authority.

(219) The Railroad crisis and the form Szechwanese independence took were related to the general constitutionalist and assembly confrontation with authority throughout China. FO, No. 19994, Annual Report, 1911, p. 41, reports on the 19 Article Constitution, in which the constitutionalists' limited monarchy was provided for.

(220) SCPL, 17.

(221) USDS 893.77/1114, Pontius, Chungking, Jan. 22, 1911; despite the merchant management system, shareholders could only "make certain decisions....no action can be taken without the express approval of the Viceroy and the Board" of Posts and Communications.

(222) Chang P'eng-yüan, "Constitutionalists," pp. 168-173.

alists' demands marked regal intent jealously to preserve supreme power.

Rejection of Railroad demands⁽²²³⁾ stemmed equally from desires to preserve central power. The Prime Minister, Prince Ch'ing, was rumored to be only partially in favor of Sheng Hsüan-huai's ideas, but the Prince was nonetheless convinced that "if the provinces were to have their way (regarding the Railroad) there was an end of the Emperor's authority." He informed British Minister Sir John Jordan that nationalization policy "must be carried out at all cost." Sheng agreed: "any pandering to provincial sentiment... would not only put a stop to railway development on national lines, but might lead to the ultimate dismemberment of the Empire, as Szechwan, Hunan, Canton, and other provinces were all making common cause against the Government."⁽²²⁴⁾ The Cabinet made the point: "If Szechwanese demands should be accepted, then everyone would argue with the government over things and imperial decrees would not be carried out..."⁽²²⁵⁾ How could the Cabinet more clearly have expressed its royalist commitment?

Cabinet authoritarianism reinforced the suspicion that all troubles over the Railroad grew from the arbitrary actions of unresponsive bureaucrats. Since their autonomy came, however, from basic defects in the political system which made them, the Movement's Railroad demands were quite properly merged with the objective of altering the political patterns of empire.

The Movement created a new opportunity for politically active Szechwanese to promote their comprehensive goals. The broad aims designated by its leaders were essentially political ones, emerging from the complex and tension-ridden processes of change in the late Ch'ing. As an episode in the unfolding drama about the old system's departure from its traditional moorings, the Movement illustrated the revolution of the Chinese world. For its leaders, the Movement provided a fleeting moment of hope that they could indeed shape China's future course.

(223) On the rejection of demands during the Summer, see SCPL, 223-225.

(224) FO, No. 37172, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Sept. 5, 1911, Statement of Sept. 2.

(225) SCPL, 222.