



Herbert Hoover's Apologia of His Chinese Mining Career 1899-1912 -- Untangling the Refutation Campaign

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Herbert Hoover's Apologia of His Chinese Mining Career 1899-1912
Untangling the Refutation Campaign

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Abstract

The overarching aim of this study is to reposition the records of the refutation campaign preserved at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library (HHPL) in West Branch, Iowa as essential in the historiography of Hoover. In the years 1895-1901, it was feared that China would be carved up by imperialistic powers as the world powers scrambled for concessions in China. Hoover's Chinese mining career took place during the turmoil of the political instability in China and he was a transnational player in the battle of concessions. By putting Hoover's deliberate efforts to conceal and to change the narrative of his Chinese mining career in direct relation to the historical events that they referenced, namely his mining career in China (1899-1901), his time as a board member of the CEMC (1901-1912), and the CEMC's recruitment and transportation of 63,695 Chinese to South Africa (1904-1910), it will elucidate how these efforts filled the public sphere with myths and fragmented the American historiography.

Dedication

To my husband David Zahrieh and our lovely daughter Beatrice Karlsson with you at my side anything is possible. Thank you for all your love and support. To all the moms in the world who have touched my heart, Erin Anderson and Louise Potter thanks for endless coffee and encouragement on this journey. Professor Erez Manela your class in 2013 changed the way I engage with history. Lastly to my family in Sweden where it all began!

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Chapter I

Introduction

In 1957, Ellsworth C. Carlson's study of the Kaiping Mines 1877-1912 highlighted the western impact on Chinese economic development, and contemporary scholars welcomed the research.¹ Yet, one reviewer was less than praiseworthy and, frankly, the reviewer was baffled about the timing of the published work; he claimed, "The matters with which it deals are now ancient history...." Seemingly well versed in the foreign takeover of the Kaiping Mines in 1900 and the British enterprise that followed, the reviewer stated:

Incidentally there is an error in the notes (no. ii [11] in Chapter II), in which it is stated that Mr. Herbert Hoover was a member of the Board of Directors of the Chinese Engineering and Mining Co. up to 1912; he had in fact ceased to be a member before the celebrated law-suit in 1905.²

Although the review was signed London E. J. Nathan, it is likely that the architect of the review was Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States. This fraudulent

¹ Albert Feuerwerker, review of *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912*, by Ellsworth C. Carlson, *Journal of Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (1959): 286-287; John Gray, review of *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912*, by Ellsworth C. Carlson, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 21, no. 1 (1958): 214-215. The work reviewed was, Ellsworth C. Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1957); updated in 1971 by Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University; Harvard University Press, 1971).

² E. J. Nathan, review of *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912*, by Ellsworth C. Carlson, *Pacific Affairs*, 32, no. 1 (1959): 106-107. Edward J. Nathan (1898-1964) was the British Chairman of the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Ltd. and an associate of the Kailan Mining Administration, who administrated the Kaiping Mines, British management ceased with the coming of the communists. Nathan's review referred to footnote 11, on page 123; Carlson summarized Hoover's role with the CEMC and correctly stated that Hoover was a member of the Board of Directors until 1912, which Nathan refuted. The review by Nathan inhibited elements, which reoccurred in the refutation campaign primary records in regards to the Kaiping Mines, Hoover often described the Kaiping affair as ancient history, and referred to the lawsuit as *celebrated*; additionally he often used middlemen to carry his apologia in the form of written published statements or articles in the printed press.

statement, 39 years after the inception of Herbert Hoover's refutation campaign, underscored the reach of Hoover's efforts to refute, suppress, and alter the truth of reports related to his exploitative business dealings with the Kaiping Mines transfer at the height of the Boxer Uprising of 1900-1901 and the British corporation Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Ltd. (CEMC) that followed.³

In 1877, Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), the powerful Governor General of Zhili and seated in Tianjin, founded the Kaiping Mines located in Hebei about 75 miles northeast of Tianjin.⁴ The Kaiping mines were established as part the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), a reform initiative to modernize China and to halt the increased Western encroachment on its territory; the mines provided coal for the Chinese navy and aided industrial development.⁵ In 1877, Herbert Hoover then three years old lived in West Branch, Iowa, and without a doubt, was unaware of both the powerful Chinese statesman Li and China's efforts to strengthen itself to fend off the Western powers. Twenty-four years later, however, Hoover, stationed in Tianjin as a mining engineer with a strong belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority and western technology, was at the center of the controversial Kaiping Mines transfer to Western ownership, the largest land transfer to foreign hands to ever take place in China.⁶

On February 24, 1901, Hoover acted as an agent for the British mining investor Charles A. Moreing and signed a Conveyance & Assignment contract for the Kaiping

³ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 59-69.

⁴ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 1-11.

⁵ Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 35-37.

⁶ *Chinese Engineering & Mining Co. Conveyance and Assignment*" HHPL, West Branch, IA

Mines along with his Chinese counterparts: Zhang Yi, the Director General of the Mining Bureau of Zhili and Jehol, as well as the Director General of the Kaiping Mines and Zhang's German advisor Gustav Detring, the Commissioner at Tianjin for the Chinese Maritime Customs Service.⁷ Effectively, the Conveyance & Assignment contract transferred all the property of Li's original Kaiping Mines' piers, railways, offices, and warehouses from Tianjin in the north all the way to Guangzhou in the south, as well as the valuable ice-free harbor Qinhuangdao, to the British registered (CEMC.)⁸

Zhang first refused to sign the Conveyance & Assignment contract and requested further clarification on how the company would operate. Zhang only signed once a side memorandum was offered stipulating that the CEMC was to be an Anglo-Chinese company with equal say in management and that Zhang would remain in his position as Director General of the Kaiping Mines. Zhang was told that the memorandum was to be the ruling document of the business transaction.⁹ However, Hoover and his Belgian counterpart Chevalier E. de Wouters ignored the memorandum. When Hoover left China in the fall of 1901 administrative and financial control of the CEMC had been consolidated to the boardroom in London.¹⁰ Hoover was invited to serve on the board of

⁷ Zhili covered the geographic what today is Hebei and the Beijing and Tianjin municipalities and Jehol was north of the Great Wall known later as the Rehe province.

⁸ "Chinese Engineering & Mining Co. Conveyance and Assignment," HHPL, West Branch, IA.

⁹ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer, 1874-1914* (New York: W. W. Norton; Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 155-158.

¹⁰ "The Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Limited," *The Economist*, no. 3012, July 20, (1901): 1100. The first board meeting in London gave detailed descriptions how the company had been formed and detailed information of the property in China that the British CEMCs controlled.

directors of the CEMC a position he held from 1901 to 1912 when the company merged with another Chinese mining enterprise.¹¹

The Kaiping Mines transfer promised an infusion of £1,000,000 in new share capital, however, it would be achieved via stock manipulation; 62.5% of the newly issued shares were given away for promotional consideration, and 37.5% of the shares went to the original shareholders in China.¹² Overall, the Kaiping Mines transfer embodied financial imperialism, characterized by immense greed to exploit Chinese mineral resources and with complete disrespect for Chinese sovereignty and mining regulations by Hoover and his associates. King Leopold II of Belgium financed a large portion of the CEMC.¹³

Yuan Shikai, the Governor General of Zhili since 1902, considered the Kaiping Mines transaction as invalid. Yuan argued that in 1877 Li was required to obtain imperial approval to start the company. Therefore, the same imperial approval was needed in 1901 for the Kaiping Mines transfer, which had not been obtained.¹⁴ In 1903-1904, Yuan issued multiple memorials in which he warned the throne about the destiny of China. For instance, in one memorial he stated “it was hard to imagine how great the future sorrows of the nation might be if Chinese officials of higher rank than Zhang and foreigners of

¹¹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 222.

¹² Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 70-71.

¹³ Ian Phimister and Jeremy Mouat, “Mining, Engineers and Risk Management: British Overseas Investment, 1894- 1914,” *South African Historical Journal* 49 (2003): 9; William R. Braisted, “The United States and the American China Development Company,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (1952): 147-65. Braisted’s article is an interesting contrast to the Kaiping Mines transaction. The United States through proper diplomatic channels gained a railway concession, the right to build the Hankou to Guangzhou line. J. P. Morgan was the lead financier of the project on the U.S. side, but Morgan invited Belgian capital from King Leopold II. The Chinese stated the railroad concession was a U.S. concession and the invitation of Belgian capital violated the contract. Ultimately the concession was returned to China.

¹⁴ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 98.

more importance than a “travelling businessman” (Hoover) should secretly sell and buy the nation’s land and property.”¹⁵ Yuan asserted consistent pressure and, as a result, the Kaiping Mines case headed for the British courts in London.

In a 1905 lawsuit filed in the London courts, Zhang via his British lawyers asked (1) for a ruling that the memorandum signed on February of 1901 was binding and that the provisions within the memorandum had to be carried out by the European business partners, or (2) if the memorandum was ruled invalid, Zhang wanted the court to declare that the transfer agreements of 1900-1901 had been obtained by fraud and should be cancelled. Yuan desired the second option.¹⁶

In March of 1905, Judge Sir Matthew Ingle Joyce, ruled in favor of option (1) that the memorandum was binding and that the defendants, Moreing, Hoover, and their associates were charged with breach of contract. The British CEMC was ordered to follow the memorandum and offer equal say in management to the Chinese. Zhang was encouraged to file an injunction to have the CEMC properties restored to the Chinese that is unless the CEMC implemented the court order within a reasonable amount of time.¹⁷

Judge Joyce lambasted Hoover and his associates in public for deceitful business practices; on multiple occasions, it was found that Hoover utilized threats and main force to achieve his business goals.¹⁸ Moreing and his associates filed an appeal, and in 1906 a

¹⁵ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 96-99; Nash, *The Engineer*, 198-200.

¹⁶ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 104.

¹⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 204-218. Nash gave a detailed record of the trial he used the only known transcript of the 1905 lawsuit in the E. J. Nathan papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

¹⁸ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 104-155; Nash, *The Engineer*, 153, 165-166; “A Chinese Enterprise, Mandarin and Company Promoters,” *Manchester Guardian* March 2, 1905. Hoover consolidated the power of the CEMC, March 22, 1901 Hoover reported that most title deeds had been taken

panel of judges equally found that the memorandum was binding.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the British court's decision was not enforced and, as a result, the control of the Kaiping Mines remained in London. Overall, the Kaiping Mines remained predominantly in British administrative control until 1949 when Mao Zedong announced the People's Republic of China.²⁰

For Hoover, China was a pivot in his professional mining career. His performance in the Kaiping Mines transfer gained him partnership in the renowned London mining firm Bewick, Moreing, & Co. and spring boarded him into the exclusive transnational business elite, which his entire professional career and, arguably, his public service career, depended on for advancement and recognition.²¹ By the age of 40, Hoover was a millionaire and had amassed a fortune from business ventures spanning the globe.²²

“by main force;” on May 18, 1901 to stop unauthorized disbursement of funds Hoover had “seized by violence” all the funds and put them under management key.

¹⁹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 219-220; Walter W. Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* (New York: H. K. Fly Company, 1932), 361-362. In the memorandum, point seven had given Zhang the right to remain as Director General of the Kaiping Mines (see Liggett for the full version of the memorandum,) as Nash pointed out the appeal in 1906 stripped Zhang of that right. British corporate law dictated that shareholders needed to vote for a position such as Director General.

²⁰ Jonathan J. Howlett, “The Communist and the Kailuan mines: Eliminating the legacies of the treaty ports,” in *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land, and Power*, ed. Robert A. Bickers and Isabella Jackson (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016) 243-260; Jürgen Osterhammel, “Imperialism in Transition: British Business and the Chinese Authorities, 1931-1937,” *China Quarterly* no. 98 (1984): 261-262. Howlett's recent study gives much insight to the Kaiping Mines as the communists took over the operations.

²¹ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Tianjin, July 15, 1901, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, “China 1899-1901.” In an account Hoover asked his brother to publish in the Stanford alumni paper Hoover wrote, as a reward for his role in the transfer of the Kaiping Mines he earned partnership in Bewick, Moreing & Co.

²² Phimister and Mouat, “Mining, Engineers and Risk Management,” 1-26; Jeremy, Mouat and Ian Phimister, “The Engineering of Herbert Hoover,” *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (2008): 568-578. Both studies offer a more critical reading of Hoover's global spanning career. Hoover had business ventures in Australia, China, Russia, Burma, South Africa, Mexico, as well as in countries in Europe and North and South America.

At the outbreak of the Great War (1914-1918), Hoover entered public service, as the Chairman for the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) and in that position he distributed food to the war occupied Belgium. President Wilson noticed Hoover's work and in 1917 he asked him to serve as the United States Food Administrator to preserve food in America in order to feed the allied troops in Europe. Favored by President Wilson, Hoover served on the President's Committee of Economic Advisors at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.²³

Hoover emerged from the conflict in Europe as the great humanitarian, the great engineer, and the great administrator, laudable characteristics that became synonymous with Hoover's name.²⁴ With these characteristics, Hoover was encouraged to inspire for the highest and most honorable office of the nation, the seat of the presidency. The presidency, a friend told him, was attainable if he used the same tactics of propaganda he applied in his job as the United States Food Administrator.²⁵ Ultimately in 1928, with these laudable characteristics Hoover was elected the 31st President of the United States.

Hoover's positive public image as a great administrator, great humanitarian, and great engineer in relation to his presidential bids in 1920 and 1928 has received much

²³ Gary Dean, Best, *The Politics of American Individualism: Herbert Hoover in Transition, 1918-1921* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 4-13; Herbert Hoover to John Agnew 16 July, 1914, Herbert Hoover Papers, the Pre-Commerce Subject Files, "Mining Correspondence." Hoover still involved in many business ventures in 1914 signed his power of attorney over to John Agnew a friend, an engineer and mining financier.

²⁴ Robert. F Himmelberg, "Hoover's Public Image, 1919-20: The Emergence of a Public Figure and a Sign of the Times," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and Its Aftermath, 1914-23*, ed. Lawrence E. Gelfand (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 213-216; Kent Schofield, "The Public Image of Herbert Hoover in the 1928 Campaign," *Mid-America* 51, no. 4 (1969): 279-280; 282-283; 287-288.

²⁵ Best, "*The Politics of American Individualism*," "33.

attention by scholars.²⁶ Few studies, however, have focused on the attacks on Hoover's private career, first as a mining engineer, but then upon moving to London in 1901 he had rapidly advanced to a promoter and financier of mining and oil enterprises spanning the globe. To date, the most comprehensive study of the attacks on Hoover was O'Brien's scholarship, which claimed that in the 1920 election Hoover had a British problem. Due to Hoover's long associations with London and British corporations, the media and politicians questioned his Americanism; consequently, he was labeled an anglophile.²⁷ O'Brien showed how Hoover rebranded his image by presumably manipulating the Anglo-American rubber crisis in 1925.²⁸ Yet, Hoover, as a public servant did not only have a British problem. He had a Chinese problem.

In the 1920s, Hoover's positive public image conflicted in the U.S. press with his controversial roles as a mining engineer in China (1899-1901) and as a board member of the CEMC (1901-1912); the CEMC was one of several companies that recruited and transported 63,695 Chinese laborers to the goldfields in Witwatersrand (Rand) South Africa, 1904-1910.²⁹ Hoover was also present in South Africa in July – August 1904 where he publicly met with the men who had orchestrated the Chinese labor project.³⁰

²⁶ Craig Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert: A Study of Herbert Hoover and Public Relations Management, 1912-1932* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972); Himmelberg, "Hoover's Public Image," 213-216; Schofield, *The Public Image of Herbert Hoover in the 1928 Campaign*, 279-280; 282-283; 287-288. Lloyd's study showed how Hoover used public relations to preserve his image.

²⁷ Phillips Payson O'Brien, "Herbert Hoover, Anglo-American Relations and Republican Party Politics in the 1920s," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 2 (2011): 200-201.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 207-208.

²⁹ Rachel K. Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle*. (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2013), 1,91; Peter Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour in the Transvaal* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 112-119.

³⁰ Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Scrapbooks – *London to South Africa, 1904*, pp. 49-152, contains Hoover's day to visits with businessmen and officials while in Transvaal in 1904.

While Hoover was in South Africa the first Chinese labors from the northern Port of Taku arrived Hoover's presence has been explained simply as a coincidence.³¹ The conflict between Hoover's praiseworthy public image and his underhanded business practices tainted by financial imperialism and connected to the exploitative use of Chinese with the CEMC served as a catalyst for Hoover to start the refutation campaign, a task of Sisyphean proportions.

By the presidential election of 1920, Hoover and his loyalists, Edgar Rickard, John Agnew, and Lawrence Richey, ran an efficient and long standing behind-the-scenes machinery, the refutation campaign, which refuted, suppressed, and altered the truth of reports surrounding Hoover's exploitative business dealings.³² Hoover vehemently stated that he was misrepresented in the contemporary press and that the attacks on his character and Chinese record were libel and malice.³³ Yet, Hoover deeply believed that media could be used to shape public opinion. He also believed that misconceptions could be revised or erased.³⁴ Hoover's lifelong apologia resulted in an attractive narrative in the

³¹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 346; David Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 42.

³² The refutation campaign's records are for most part found at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library (HHPL) in West Branch, IA; in the Herbert Hoover Papers, the Pre-Commerce Subject Files as the *Chinese Matters folders*; and the Misrepresentations Files, *Chinese Mining Suit* and the *Chinese Labor folders*.

³³ Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert*, 166-167; Herbert Hoover to John Agnew, January 25, 1921, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, "China."

³⁴ Colin, Dueck, "Hoover and Offshore Foreign Policy, 1921-1933," *Foreign Policy Research Institute* 4 (2016): 6, 11, 18-20; Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert*, 107-109; Stephen Ponder, "Popular Propaganda: The Food Administration in World War I," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (1995): 539-550. Lloyd's study is still the authoritative study to show how deeply Hoover depended and believed in formation of public opinion. Ponder's study is also helpful in understanding how Hoover used Propaganda during his time as U.S. Food Administrator and saw the power of shaping public opinion, additionally which is also noted by Lloyd, Hoover had many former muckrakers as his friends, many who he met during his time as the U.S. Food Administrator. Dueck, showed that even Hoover's foreign policy was based on formation of public opinion, in the case of the Manchurian Crisis, Hoover had hoped that the Japanese would be "shamed" by the international public opinion.

media of him as a protector of the Kaiping Mines and a supporter of Zhang, with the image of the great humanitarian superimposed on his Chinese mining career.³⁵

Foremost, the refutation campaign claimed that Hoover's involvement with the CEMC was nothing but honorable, this despite the highly visible lawsuit in 1905 that he and his associates had lost. For example, by 1920, Hoover had reduced his own role in the lawsuit to that of a witness. In a letter to an editor, Hoover wrote: "my part was that of a witness only, between two quarrelling fractions of a bondholders' reorganization."³⁶ These words were in stark contrast to the letter Hoover wrote to his brother Theodore in 1905, post-trial, when he stated: "I have been very busy 2 months fighting Chinaman but have beaten him."³⁷ The tactics that were used in the refutation campaign was in clear opposition to the moral person Hoover was made out to be in the press. For instance, Hoover offered payments to suppress or destroy court records pertaining to his involvement with the CEMC.³⁸

Over time, five major myths, or falsehoods, which Nash discussed to some extent dominated Hoover's narrative in regards to the Kaiping affair: (1) he took no part in the financial arrangements of the reorganization of the CEMC, (2) he always followed the 1901 memorandum, which gave equal rights to the Chinese in the administration of the

³⁵ Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert*, 166-167; Herbert Hoover to John Agnew, January 25, 1921, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, "China."

³⁶ Herbert Hoover to Herman Suter, April 29, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

³⁷ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, London, 1905, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, "London, 1901-1907/9."

³⁸ T. H. D. Berridge to Arthur Train, January 21, 1921, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." A letter addressed to Hoover's lawyer Train, Berridge confirms that he received the letter in which Train instructed him to purchase all records in the Zhang case with the instructions, "Spare no expense or effort."

company, (3) he was the main witness that allowed his former boss Zhang to win the lawsuit in London, (4) he ended contact with the company when he left China in 1901, and did not serve as a board member of the CEMC 1901-1912, and (5) he had nothing to do with the Chinese laborers in South Africa 1904-1910.³⁹ In spite of the refutation campaign's exhaustive efforts, the allegations of unscrupulous business tactics mounted and the media attacks on Hoover intensified, reaching a zenith in the 1930s when the smear books, so named by the refutation campaign, were published and Hoover's past was fully exposed.⁴⁰ Yet, Hoover still persisted in his apologia of his Chinese mining career.

However, despite the richness of the refutation campaign, most scholars have eschewed examination of the historical records. Besides George Nash, in 1983, the records of the refutation campaign have not been used in direct relation to Hoover's Chinese mining career; however, Nash, who put his analysis in a four-page footnote, concluded that the refutation campaign was created as the necessary defense for political survival.⁴¹ Overwhelmingly, the records of the refutation campaign have been dismissed

³⁹ Prepared letter by lawyer Arthur Train, December 15, 1927, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Chinese Mining Suit 1927 – Arthur Train." Campaign speech Cleveland, OH, October 15 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign of 1932 – Hoover and Chinese Labor." Train was a hired lawyer who worked for Hoover from 1920 through at least the campaign of 1932. In Cleveland Hoover for the first time addressed the attacks on his CEMC record publicly by denouncing any involvement with the Chinese labors.

⁴⁰ John Hamill, *The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover under Two Flags* (New York: William Faro, 1931); Walter Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* (New York: H.K. Fly Company, 1932) are two of the six smear books that I have decided to include in my work, based on the fact that Hoover gave both books as well as its authors much attention. Liggett, a member of the muckraker journalistic era, presented a narrative of Hoover's Chinese mining career, which matched the later research of Carlson in *Kaping Mines 1877-1912*.

⁴¹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 356-359.

as bearing little to no impact on the elections. Moreover, Hoover's responses to the attacks on his China record were excused by his inability to criticism.⁴²

Rosanne Sizer, in 1984, saw the attacks on Hoover as unfounded charges. Notably, she did not evaluate the attacks relative to actual historical events. Instead, Sizer advanced the message from Hoover insisting that the attacks were libel and part of the workings of the political system.⁴³ In contrast, Jeremy Mouat and Ian Phimister offered a more critical account of Hoover's Chinese mining career and alluded to the fact that the refutation campaign may carry more weight in accurately understanding Hoover than previously believed.⁴⁴ It was their observation that served as a catalyst for the current research. However, Glen Jeansonne's 2012 biography advanced the earlier held common belief and simply dismissed the attacks on Hoover, without any real analysis of the refutation campaign. He said, "Only the most gullible could have taken them seriously."⁴⁵

As a result of the dismissal of the refutation campaign's records, Hoover's benevolent narrative of his Chinese mining career, which was rooted in his refutation

⁴² Geoffrey, Blainey, "Herbert Hoover's Forgotten Years," *Business Archives and History* 3, no. 1, (1963): 70; Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life*, 32-43; 92; 143; 317; Kendrick A. Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary 1918-1928* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 59; 419; Glen, Jeansonne, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Fighting Quaker, 1928-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 23; 395-397; Nash, *The Engineer*, 656-657; Rosanne, Sizer, "Herbert Hoover and the Smear Books, 1930-1932," *Annals of Iowa* 47 (1984): 343; Joan, Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover, Forgotten Progressive* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), 12-13. Blainey was the first scholar to call out Hoover's sensitivity to criticism, which scholars since has subscribed to as a flaw in Hoover's personality. Blainey did not excuse Hoover's behavior. Rather in 1962 Blainey was one of the first scholars to call out that Hoover's memoirs should be seen as a guide how Hoover wanted to be remembered not as a reference for historians to use.

⁴³ Sizer, "The Smear Books," 343-344; 360-361.

⁴⁴ Phimister and Mouat, "Mining, Engineers and Risk Management," 3-4, 7-11; Ian Phimister, "Foreign Devils, Finance and Informal Empire: Britain and China c. 1900-1912," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 740-743; Mouat and Phimister, "The Engineering of Herbert Hoover," 554-555; 583-584.

⁴⁵ Jeansonne, *Fighting Quaker*, 23.. Jeansonne is Hoover's most staunch contemporary apologist who feels Hoover's reputation as it relate to his presidency is much distorted. See, for example, Glen Jeansonne, "The Real Herbert Hoover," *Historically Speaking* 12, no. 4 (2011): 26-29.

campaign and epitomized in his memoirs as a way to cement his legacy, has been allowed to go unchallenged and thus has permitted myths to stand. The seriousness in not challenging his concocted narrative is evidenced in the refutation campaign's attempts to influence scholarship; not even a scholar like Carlson was immune to the re-engineered narrative of Hoover's Chinese mining career. With the delimited view on how the refutation campaign has been analyzed, a sizable gap in the historiography of Herbert Hoover exists. Neither the American public nor the historical events that the attacks referenced has been put at the center of the examination of Hoover's legacy. When both aspects are incorporated, the refutation campaign takes on a new meaning.

One hundred and forty years ago, when Li founded the Kaiping Mines to strengthen China's position in the world, he never imagined that a boy Hoover, then only three years old in Iowa, would grow up to grasp the rich Chinese mineral resource to Western control. However, history contains unexpected turns and twists, and the faithful Conveyance & Assignment for the Kaiping Mines, signed by Hoover in 1901, now rests at the HHPL in West Branch, Iowa.

Ironically, Hoover's apologia of his Chinese mining career in China is also preserved at the HHPL.⁴⁶ Synthesizing the methods and narratives used in the refutation campaign in relation to historical evidence, which the attacks referred to, (1) Hoover's role in the Kaiping Mines transfer and (2) Hoover's role with the CEMC as it related to

⁴⁶ Noreen Wales Kruse, "The Scope of Apologetic Discourse: Establishing Generic Parameters," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 46, no. 3 (1981): 279-283. Kruse gave good examples of what constitutes an apologia.

the Chinese laborers in South Africa 1904-1910 will offer a new and transparent interpretation of Hoover's role in history, which is long overdue.⁴⁷

When portraying Hoover in history, historians have often analyzed each career (private; public) separately or in geographic isolation of one another.⁴⁸ As a consequence, this fragmented presentation by historians prohibits our comprehensive understanding of Hoover and in turn we risk forming a false perception of Hoover in history. Therefore, by analyzing the careers in tandem, a global history perspective emerges which helps us to better understand how historical events are connected through time, space, and society.

In essence, this thesis answers the call by Robert Bickers, who stated in *China's Age of Fragility*: "it would be useful if Britons and other westerners were made aware of their tangled and difficult past relations with China."⁴⁹ The current research sets out to untangle the records of the refutation campaign by putting the American public and the historical events front and center. The research aims to make apparent the historical significance of the refutation campaign, debunk Hoover's myths, and add to the understanding that American businessmen were not a benign force in China at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁴⁷ Anthony G. Hopkins, "The Historiography of Globalization and the Globalization of Regionalism," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53 (2010): 20-25; Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2013), 5, 17, 79. Iriye encourages a transnational approach to analysis historic events as it challenges the current historiography.

⁴⁸ Nash, *The Engineer*, 96-222. Chapters 7-11 is a very detailed study of Hoover's private career in relation to China and the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company.

⁴⁹ Robert Bickers, "China's Age of Fragility," *History Today* 61, no. 3 (2011): 36. Bickers, a professor at the University of Bristol, greatly contributed to my understanding of the environment Hoover operated in while a residence in Tianjin, 1899-1901, in the book, Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann, *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

This paper will argue that in order to secure the vote from the American people, Herbert Hoover and his associates employed propaganda directed from behind-the-scenes as an instrument to deliberately conceal and reshape the narrative of Hoover's Chinese mining career (1899-1912) so that it aligned with Hoover's favorable public image; consequently, the American people were deceived by Hoover and the historiography became fragmented. Overall this thesis will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Hoover and his place in history.

Chapter II

The Chinese Loss of the Kaiping Mines

“The impact of the Boxer Uprising was truly global.” This is how Joseph W. Esherick opened his book on the Boxer Uprising in China.¹ He could easily have added to this opening sentence, with long-term consequences, because Herbert Hoover’s instrumental role with the Kaiping Mines transfer, which was initiated at the height of the Boxer Uprising, impacted people far beyond China. Hoover’s deliberate efforts to conceal and change the narrative of the Kaiping Mines transfer in the American presidential elections created ripple effects to the extent that Hoover’s legacy is still open for debate. This is precisely why it is so important to view Hoover’s role in history through a global lens rather than from just the U.S.’s perspective; the application of a global lens can capture the magnitude and nuances of Hoover’s expansive transnational business career that later affected his public service career in the United States. Hoover’s Chinese mining career will serve as a principal example.

At the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, foreign encroachment on the Chinese territory intensified and China turned into an object.² Between 1895 and 1900, the world powers scrambled for concessions and nations turned against each other.

Alliances were struck and broken, and no one wanted to miss an opportunity to gain a

¹ Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1; Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Esherick and Cohen’s studies are good starting points for any student of the Boxer Uprising.

² Thomas G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1-27.

railroad, a mine, or another commercial concession.³ Imperialistic powers carved out exclusive spheres of influences in which the powers claimed administrative and territorial control. The China Question became the main foreign policy concern in 1895-1905. It was feared that China would be carved up like a melon.⁴

During this time of turmoil, the U.S. and the British wanted the Qing Empire to remain intact and both world powers feared the advancement of imperialistic intentions by Russia, Japan, France, Belgium, and Germany. Yet, despite Lord Salisbury's expressed policy of no territorial interests in China, as spheres of influences with exclusive rights were carved out among the world powers, the British pressured the Chinese for equal treatment and subsequently a lease for the Weihaiwei territory was signed in 1898.⁵ Although the U.S. claimed to have no imperialistic designs in China, the nation wanted to maintain an active voice of authority during this time, and in September of 1899 a policy was issued to safeguard U.S. investments and rights.⁶ Secretary of State John Hay's Open Door Notes requested equal access to international trade and commerce within the foreign spheres of influences.

³ Charles Denby Jr., "America's Opportunity in Asia," *North American Review* 166, no. 494 (1898): 39. Denby wrote, "Nothing is so badly needed as aggressive American business methods." In this time period the U.S. businessmen like Charles Denby Jr., son of Charles H. Denby the former U.S. Ambassador to China, wanted the U.S to get involved in China. Denby met Hoover in China and they became lifelong friends.

⁴ Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 38-45.

⁵ Otte, *The China Question*, 123-127.

⁶ Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 43-46; Akira Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism: US Foreign Policy to 1914* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1977), 165-167; Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire; American China Policy, 1895-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 102-105; 202-204. U.S military desired a coaling station in China and in the pre-Boxer days Ambassador Conger supported the aim. After the Boxer Uprising Conger favored the policy of Open Door. He was apprehensive about Westerners ruling over the Chinese on Chinese soil.

Simultaneously, foreign resentment grew among the Chinese populace. In 1898 in Shandong, a grassroots anti-imperialistic movement Boxers United in Righteousness (Yi-hi-quan) took hold. Their slogan stated “Support the Qing, destroy the foreign.”⁷ Western missionaries had pressed inland and preached what they professed to be a higher form of life and civilization. Chinese Christian converts and the missionaries were violently attacked, often with loss of life.⁸ Businessmen, tradesman, and engineers equally preached Western superiority via the gospel of capitalism and western technology. Eventually, in the spring of 1900, due to a severe drought, Boxers increased in numbers. In June 1900, Tianjin and Beijing became besieged. The Boxer Uprising broke out in a war between China and eight allied powers on June 21, 1900.⁹ Consequently, there were long-term ramifications in the changed relationship between China and these world powers.

Both the U.S. and the British, among other powers, were also slow to respond to the Boxer Movement.¹⁰ That is, military force was not moved with any speed when reports started to come in about the disturbances in the spring of 1900. It was believed that the movement would slowly die down without interference.¹¹ Although, nations played the game of concessions, there were also individual actors, for example, agents for companies that did not necessarily act within the restraints of their own nation’s stated

⁷ Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 136-141.

⁸ Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers*, 16-44; Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 68-94, 185-205, 242-270.

⁹ Cohen, *America’s Response to China*, 51; Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 303-313.

¹⁰ Otte, *The China Question*, 178-188.

¹¹ Ernest Mason, Satow, *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow, 1900-06 British Envoy in Peking, Volume One: 1900-1903*, ed. Ian Ruxton (Tokyo: Eureka Press, 2015), 7.

policies and who were willing to navigate a wide cross section of the diplomatic quarters in Beijing in their quest for profits and personal achievements. One such individual actor was Hoover. Hoover acted as an agent for British interests. In 1899 Hoover had sailed for China in the service for Charles A. Moreing of Bewick, Moreing, & Company in London.¹²

Charles A. Moreing Concession Hunting 1896-1899 – Setting the Stage

Moreing had entered the game of concessions in 1896 by an invitation from William Pritchard Morgan, another mine promoter and a liberal member of the British Parliament; Morgan had already initiated contact with Li Hongzhang, the Governor General of Zhili.¹³ In early 1898, Moreing, who also believed in the force of public opinion like Hoover, informed Li that he had started a campaign to gain public support for a British governmental loan to develop mining properties in northern China.¹⁴ Moreing, who had not yet visited China, told Li via a cable that if the loan was secured Li was ensured some financial compensation and in return Moreing wanted a reward, namely a mining concession in the province of Zhili.¹⁵

Li invited Moreing and Morgan to China in the spring of 1898, however, while in China, Li turned Moreing's proposition down, and the two men broke off their connections. Pritchard claimed that Li disliked Moreing's claim of power and wealth.¹⁶

¹² Nash, *The Engineer*, 86-87, 96.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

Although the opportunity for a loan supported by Li was not realized, another perhaps better opportunity presented itself. The German Gustav Detring, who was a long-term residence of Tianjin, a trusted advisor to both Li and Zhang Yi, and who had served as the Customs Commissioner of Tianjin for the Chinese Maritime Custom Service since 1877, had grand plans for mining opportunities in China.¹⁷

Detring desired to further develop the Kaiping Mines, funded by Li in 1877, by sinking new shafts and improving the transportation of the coal to the marketplace. The harbor Qinhuangdao was identified as an attractive logistical hub for the Kaiping mines provided that the harbor and mines could be connected by rail; the harbor was attractive because it was deep and ice-free for most of the year.¹⁸ Realizing that the Kaiping Mines, which were administered under the name Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, lacked capital, Detring sought out Moreing. Both men desired to exploit the rich mineral resources of China and Moreing offered a loan for the ambitious project of £200,000 at 12%.¹⁹

Zhang was satisfied with the terms of the proposed project; a British loan provided an injection of capital, as well as some protection, as it eased worries about Russian encroachment on the mines.²⁰ Zhang was related to Empress Dowager Cixi by marriage and was considered one of the richest men in northern China. He had grown up in the household of Prince Chun, the father to the Guangxu Emperor, and after the 100-

¹⁷ Hans Van de Ven, "Robert Hart and Gustav Detring during the Boxer Rebellion," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 650-651.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 655.

¹⁹ Van de Ven, "Robert Hart and Gustav Detring," 655-656; Nash, *The Engineer*, 99.

²⁰ Nash, *The Engineer*, 99. Zhang wanted protection from potential Russian invasion, but also approved of multiple nationals to invest in the loan as Zhang fear domination by any single nation.

Day Reform in 1898 an edict appointed him Director General of Mines for the province of Zhili and the district of Jehol.²¹

Hoover in China 1899-1900 during the Boxer Uprising

In 1899, Zhang also became the direct supervisor of his new mining engineer, the 24-year old Herbert Hoover and future 31st president of the United States. Moreing had observed Hoover's aptness for business when Hoover in 1898 aggressively and successfully navigated the acquisition of the Australian gold mines Sons of Gwalia to ownership under Bewick, Moreing, & Co.²² Zhang hired Hoover on Moreing's recommendation and Hoover's principle responsibility was to survey gold mines over a vast geographic area under Zhang's supervision; by January of 1900 and from influences by both Detring and Moreing, Hoover assumed increased responsibilities with the new title Engineer-in-Chief of the province of Zhili and the district of Jehol.²³ Zhang paid Hoover's salary of £2,500, as well as his boarding costs and an impressive 15-room brick home with a tennis court in the foreign settlement of Tianjin.²⁴

Hoover, who married Lou Henry Hoover, a fellow graduate of the geology department at Stanford University, the day before they departed for China, was

²¹ Jerome Chen, *Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1859-1916; Brutus assumes the purple* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1961), 87; Robert Hart, *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, edited by Fairbank, John King, (Cambridge, Mass, 1975); 1454; Van, de Ven, "Robert Hart and Gustav Detring," 655. In western sources it is hard to find information on Zhang Yi. Most accounts treat Zhang very harshly, so far only Robert Hart's letters give positive attributes to Zhang. Robert Hart to Campbell, no 1364, March 5, 1905: "He is a really nice fellow, extremely intelligent, and a capital talker."

²² Nash, *The Engineer*, 69-70; 82-83.

²³ Jeremy, Mouat and Ian Phimister, "The Engineering of Herbert Hoover," *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (2008): 559-560; Nash, *The Engineer*, 104-105.

²⁴ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Tianjin, 1899, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, "China 1899-1901."

immediately propelled into the exclusive foreign community. The newlyweds easily adjusted to the privileges foreigners enjoyed. For instance, in a letter to his brother, Hoover described the efficiency of their servants: “All you need to do is to wave your hand and anything you want appear”; Zhang also provided racehorses, and their upkeep, so that the young couple could partake in the social gatherings at the racetrack that Detring had built in the foreign settlement.²⁵ As a field engineer, Hoover traveled extensively in the interior of China, which included excursions to both Mongolia and Manchuria to survey existing and potential mines; his efforts resulted in lengthy business reports and proposals to Zhang.²⁶

Yet, as stated previously, Moreing had also hired Hoover. Hoover was entrusted to supervise the development of the Kaiping Mines’ loan and to represent the interests of the European bondholders, which included the likes of King Leopold II of Belgium.²⁷ For these efforts, Hoover’s compensation was set at 10% of all profits Moreing earned in China. On his way to China, after Hoover had received instructions from Moreing via a business visit in London, Hoover wrote his Stanford mentor that he was on his way “to conduct some negotiations of considerable character.” Strategically, Moreing had placed Hoover at the helm of his Chinese ventures.²⁸ Hoover served both British and Chinese interests, however, it quickly became apparent that his ultimate master was Moreing.

After less than three months under Zhang’s employment, Hoover turned his attention to the Kaiping Mines. In June of 1899, Hoover wrote Moreing and suggested

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mouat and Phimister, “The Engineering of Herbert Hoover,” 560.

²⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 136.

²⁸ Ibid., 96.

the formation of a new company with £1,000,000 in capital to develop new coalmines and the harbor of Qinhuangdao; interestingly, in this correspondence, Hoover suggested that the Kaiping Mines should transfer all of their property and assets to this new venture in exchange for 50% of the shares in the new company.²⁹ In parallel, Detring provided Moreing with his own suggestions on how to bring the Kaiping Mines under their administration. However, Hoover, Detring, and Moreing realized that buying the Kaiping Mines would not be easy. Although the Kaiping Mines were a stock company in the general sense, there were still major obstacles to overcome in purchasing them; technically the mines were still under the supervision of the Emperor and all business transfers required imperial approval.³⁰ In spite of that, Hoover persevered and continued to refine his business proposals.

Then in August of 1899, Moreing received Hoover's reworked plan. The key element in the new plan was that the Kaiping Mines would not transfer *all* of its properties to the new company and, therefore, the original Chinese company would still be in existence; Hoover theorized that with this stipulation some legal difficulties would evaporate. Moreing was satisfied with this plan and immediately cabled Hoover to continue with the negotiations.³¹ Moreing sailed for China in December of 1899, yet not before the Oriental Syndicate had been set up with its primary mission to handle mining

²⁹ Ibid., 109.

³⁰ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 2nd ed. 39-44.

³¹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 109-110.

concessions obtained in China.³² It is obvious that Hoover, and the European interests that he served, had fixed their sight on the Kaiping Mines well before the Boxer Uprising.

Several barriers remained before Hoover and Moreing could realize the takeover of the Kaiping Mines; for instance, new mining regulations of 1899 restrained foreign encroachment and severely hampered Hoover and Moreing's aggressive proposals for the takeover of the Kaiping Mines. Specifically, applications seeking to form new joint Sino-foreign companies had to fulfill certain criteria, such as (1) at least 50% of the share capital in new mining ventures must be held by the Chinese, (2) new companies could only be approved for a specific mine, (3) administration and management of the mine had to be Chinese, and (4) foreigners were limited to technical positions in the company.³³ Zhang also resisted full outright European ownership, as he sought to still hold onto his authority in regards to the administration of the Kaiping Mines. As a consequence, no deal for the Kaiping Mines had been reached during Moreing's brief visit to China, February of 1900 to May of 1900. Once again, Moreing entrusted Hoover to carry through on the final negotiations.³⁴

By June, the rebellion-related conditions had intensified and soldiers were seen about in all of Tianjin. The Boxers had marched further north and on June 4, 1900 Lou

³² Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 69; Nash, *The Engineer*, 112-114. The Oriental Syndicate was registered in London, December 14, 1899.

³³ Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life*, 35; Herbert Hoover, "Present Situation in the Mining Industry in China," *Engineering and Mining Journal* 69 (1900): 619-620. Hoover's article commented on the new mining regulations of 1899, he stated "After the war the door to concessions was more or less opened, but as time goes it is gradually swinging closer shut."

³⁴ Nash, *The Engineer*, 114.

noted that they were now within a 3-mile radius of the foreign settlement.³⁵ Slowly American military enforcement arrived in Tianjin, alongside other nations militaries. Over lunch, the Hoover's shared their accumulated experiences in China with the American officer Captain Bowman Hendry McCalla. They discussed geography, politics and military problems.³⁶ The next day, Sunday, June 10, 1900 Captain McCalla joined the historic Seymour Expedition that set out to enforce the protection of the diplomatic quarters in Beijing.³⁷ Mrs. Anna Drew, the wife of the Customs Inspector in Tianjin Edward Drew, recorded in her dairy that Seymour expected to reach Beijing by Monday evening.³⁸ History proved to differ. Seymour's forces never reached Beijing rather they retreated back to Tianjin on June 26.³⁹ As a result of unexpected fierce resistance from the Boxers and the Chinese military, many injured soldiers were carried back to Tianjin and both Mrs. Hoover and Mrs. Drew helped to nurse them in the open garden of the Drew's residence.⁴⁰

On June 10, 1900, the day the faithful Seymour Expedition set out from Tianjin, and as the danger of the Boxers intensified, Hoover was preoccupied with business matters. Although Washington and London had been slow to respond to the threat that the Boxer's posed in the spring of 1900, Hoover appeared to have grasped the magnitude

³⁵ Lou Henry Hoover, June 4, 1900 diary entry Tianjin, China, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, "China 1899-1901."

³⁶ Lou Henry Hoover, June 9, 1900 diary entry Tianjin, China, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, "China 1899-1901." Lou wrote, "Captain McCalla of U.S Newark took tiffin with us - a fine man."

³⁷ Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers*, 48-49.

³⁸ Anna Drew, June 10, 1900 typed diary entry Tianjin, China, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, "Boxer Rebellion Diaries - Mrs. Drew."

³⁹ Esherrick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 136-141

⁴⁰ Susanna Hoe, *Women at the Siege, Peking 1900* (Oxford: Women's History Press, 2000); 231-233

of the threat, particularly in relation to the weakened Qing Empire.⁴¹ As Admiral Seymour and the allied forces marched north, Hoover prepared a detailed business report to Moreing in London. In this report, Hoover discussed financial details of his mining ventures and business contracts, such as the June 8, 1900 agreement that made Hoover Engineer-in-Chief for the Mining Bureau of Zhili and Jehol for another three-year period at a salary of £3,000.⁴²

As a consequence of the developing state of affairs, Hoover theorized that profound changes to the Chinese governance were inevitable and that his supervisor Zhang was bound to lose his mining rights.⁴³ In anticipation of changes ahead, Hoover calculatingly prepared for his and Moreing's continued post-rebellion influence in the mining rights within the province of Zhili and the district of Jehol. Hoover reported on a finalized provincial loan letter for £1,000,000 to be raised with a 30-year term and, in exchange, the three concessionaries Charles A. Moreing, Detring, and Hoover would be granted exclusive rights to the development of the mines in Zhili and Jehol.⁴⁴

As part of Hoover's calculus, he additionally discussed a debenture issue of 6% and suggested that for each pound invested in the debenture, one or two shares should be given away as a promotional benefit; the terms of the debenture were later implemented in the financing of the Kaiping Mines transfer. Hoover closed his report with the words

⁴¹ Thomas G. Otte, "The Boxer Uprising and the British Foreign Policy," in Robert and R. G. Tiedemann, *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 157-177.

⁴² Herbert Hoover to Charles A. Moreing, June 10, 1900, Bewick, Moreing, & Company Collection, 1885-1962, "1900 Hooverina – Cabelgrams and agreements."

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

“if the govt. changes we must find an opportunity somewhere.”⁴⁵ Business opportunities of Chinese mining concessions were invariably on Hoover’s mind, many of which were the same opportunities Moreing had pursued since 1898 when he first met Li, the founder of the prized coalfields that made up the Kaiping Mines.⁴⁶

On June 17, 1900, when the allied forces attacked the Taku forts, Hoover and his wife became besieged in the foreign settlement of Tianjin, a siege often lost in the Boxer narrative, which lasted until July 14, 1900. With thousands of foreign soldiers in Tianjin, it was not safe for any Chinese, scholar or servant, to move about the settlement. Hoover and other civilians provided provisions and water for the Chinese who were hiding or trapped in the foreign settlement. Beijing equally became besieged on June 20, 1900, and Empress Dowager Cixi’s declared war on June 21, 1900.⁴⁷ The opportunity Hoover had theorized about presented itself. That is, the Boxer Uprising, in an ironic twist of history, served as a tipping point in favor of fulfilling Hoover’s, Detring’s, and Moreing’s business aspirations. Zhang was arrested by the British troops, and although he was released later, Zhang signed his power of attorney over to Detring while in confinement.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Nash, *The Engineer*, 98.

⁴⁷ Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 302-309; Michael Hunt, “The Forgotten Occupation: Peking, 1900-1901,” *Pacific Historical Review* 48, no. 2 (1979): 501-529; Lewis Bernstein, “After the Fall: Tianjin under Foreign Occupation, 1900-1902,” in *The Boxers, China, and the World*, edited by Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 133-146. There is a considerable gap in the literature about the siege of Tianjin as it relates American military and businessmen. The Tianjin Provisional Government (TPG) ran Tianjin 1900-1902 and had many Americans involved, for example Dr. Charles Tenny the President of Peiyang University served as TPG’s secretary. Another American who had influences in Tianjin was Charles Denby Jr. who served as a foreign advisor to Yuan Shikai the Governor General of Zhili.

⁴⁸ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 59-60. Zhang was arrested with Tang Shaoyi on the grounds of being connected to the Boxers.

On July 5, 1900, some of the last women and children in the foreign settlement sailed down river to safety. Lou refused to leave unless her husband came with her. Around July 8, 1900 the couple agreed to the soundness of leaving the bombarded foreign settlement; additionally, the military had also announced that civilian volunteers were no longer needed.⁴⁹ Lou's diary put the Hoovers on a boat down river on July 11 as they escorted Zhang to Taku.⁵⁰ The following day Lou commented that they were staying with the German family Von Hannekens and wrote "we are residing in a comfortable home and with food."⁵¹ On July 13, 1900, a cablegram reached Hoover's father-in-law in California with the one word, "Safe!"⁵² Surely this was received with much relief.

Around July 30, 1900, Gustav Detring, acting on behalf of Zhang Yi via a power of attorney, and Hoover signed a contract, developed under the Self-Strengthening movement (1861-1895) that transferred the Kaiping Mines solely to Hoover's control as a trustee.⁵³ However, because war had broken out, there had been clear instructions, at least for the U.S. diplomatic core, that no land gained under the pre-text of war would be recognized. On July 3, 1900, Secretary of State Hay issued a second round of Open Door

⁴⁹ Oscar Davis to his wife, July 8, 1900, Tianjin, China, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Presidential Period Articles re "Attacks, 1930-1932." Oscar Davis in his letter to his wife discussed how Hoover had finally consented to leave Tianjin with Lou Henry Hoover and they started to make preparations.

⁵⁰ Lou Henry Hoover, July 11, 1900 diary entry Tianjin, China, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, "China 1899-1901."

⁵¹ Lou Henry Hoover, July 12, 1900 diary entry Taku, China, Lou Henry Hoover Papers, "China 1899-1901."

⁵² Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life*, 37; "Reached Shanghai in Safety," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 15, 1900, 1. "Via Stanford University a telegram was received today from H.C. Hoover and wife stating that they had escaped Tien-tsin and were now safe at Shanghai" Per Burner the cable was sent to Ray Lyman Wilbur at Stanford University. There is a gap in Lou Henry Hoover's diary July 12 – Aug 4, 1900.

⁵³ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 61-63; Nash, *The Engineer*, 130. Although the contract was dated July 30, 1900 it was signed on August 1, 1900.

Notes that called for protection of China's "territorial and administrative integrity" with the intended purpose that the other world powers were not to use the pretext of war to expand Chinese territory.⁵⁴

While China was still occupied by the eight allied forces, Edwin H. Conger, the U.S. Ambassador in Beijing, issued multiple reminders of the U.S. policy to the Tianjin Consul Ragsdale that the war was not to be used as a pretext to gain territory and to reject all such claims by other powers (i.e. any territory claimed by a deed after June 17, 1900 should not be recognized).⁵⁵ Therefore, antedated letters with dates as early as May 15, 1900 were created to give the appearance that a business transaction had actually been agreed upon prior to the war.⁵⁶ Hoover would once again turn to antedated documents in January of 1901.

Detring had performed similar transactions in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 when Li had transferred both the Imperial Railways of Northern China and The China Merchants Steam Navigation Company to German possession and protection, only to be transferred back to Li once the hostilities ceased.⁵⁷ However, the Kaiping Mines transfer was different, as Carlson noted. The company needed not only protection, but it also needed capital infusion and no clause for transferring the company back was entered

⁵⁴ Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 43-48, 52, 59.

⁵⁵ Mr. Conger to Mr. Ragsdale, Legation of United States, Peking, February 24, 1901: 51. *United States Department of State, Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 3, 1901* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1901) China 39-133. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1901> Mr. Conger the U.S. Minister to China was clear on the U.S. Government policy he stated, "it is against the declared policy of our Government to in any way make the present military movement in China pretext for seizing or obtaining territory; and it is for this reason that I have instructed you to make the protests which you have made against the seizures by other powers."

⁵⁶ Nash, *The Engineer*, 127-128.

⁵⁷ Van, de Ven, "Robert Hart and Gustav Detring," 658.

into the contract; in other words, it was a full out sale.⁵⁸ The broader terms of the contract promised British protection via formation of a British limited company, the infusion of £100,000 working capital, and a capital of £1,000,000 in the form of new shares at £1.⁵⁹ Verbally, the contract also promised Zhang cooperation in management and formation of a joint Anglo-Sino company; the promise was never carried through and, as a result, eventually caused the 1905 London lawsuit.⁶⁰

With a business contract signed during the vortex of the war, Hoover gained Chinese territorial and administrative rights of the Kaiping Mines. The business contract system was capitalized on by private companies during the game of concessions in China; for instance, a business contract gave the appearance of mutual consent and cooperation, however, since the Westerner was typically the initiator of the legal document, there was always a clause or two that managed to sway the contracts to the advantage of the Westerner.⁶¹ Equally, China did not have a corporate law so the Westerners had an advantage. Furthermore, as the Westerner largely financed the proposed business venture, often in the form of a loan, this automatically translated to supervisory control.⁶² Eventually, an official policy developed called colonialism-by-

⁵⁸ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 61-62.

⁵⁹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 129-130.

⁶⁰ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 62-63.

⁶¹ Charles, Denby, Jr., "Chinese Railroad and Mining Concessions," *Forum* (1899): 337, 345. Denby's article was a "how-to-guide" in regards to the process by which concessions were grabbed by foreigners; and pointed how the foreigners worked the business contracts to their advantage.

⁶² Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World – The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 71-73; 75-76; Emily Rosenberg and Norman Rosenberg, "From Colonialism to Professionalism: The Public-Private Dynamic in United States Foreign Financial Advising, 1898-1929," *Journal of American History* 74, no. 1 (1987): 65-66. Rosenberger's although she focused on the U.S official policy; showed the switch of power, how the

contract by Rosenberg that utilized business contracts and replaced the treaty-enforced system.⁶³ Stated differently, the contract was financial imperialism in disguise. The Kaiping Mines transfer epitomized the craftiness of the concessions game in China, as the business contract was the sole instrument used by Hoover and his associates to gain the control of the mines. Once the contracts were finalized, Hoover left China in August of 1900.⁶⁴

Hoover arrived in London in October of 1900 with the July 30 agreement for the transfer of the Kaiping mines, as well as a July 25 agreement signed by Zhang for a provincial loan of £1,000,000.⁶⁵ Another contract that was in clear conflict of the U.S. stated policy of the time as it took away both territorial as well as administrative rights from the Chinese. The provincial loan letter, written by Hoover, in which Moreing, Detring, and Hoover were designated as the concessionaries to raise £1,000,000 over 30 years in exchange for the following: the development of the mines in Zhili and Jehol under their sole direction and control, the restriction that no mines in the provinces could be sold or managed by foreigners unless all three concessionaries agreed, and the agreement that at the end of the loan 50% of the profits would go to the concessionaries,

private sphere gained greater influences abroad often in cooperation with public interests, via the use of private contracts.

⁶³ Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World*, 71-73, 75-76; Rosenberg, "From Colonialism to Professionalism," 65-66. Rosenberg, also pointed out that the Chinese refused any loan supervisory arrangements offered to China, another trend in efforts to stop advancement of foreign influences on Chinese territory.

⁶⁴ Nash, *The Engineer*, 132.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

25% to the Chinese government, and 25% to the Mining Bureau.⁶⁶ Equally, such a loan contract needed approval from the Qing court and had not been given.

The men had finally carved out their exclusive piece of China, yet it had taken the pretext of war to realize their contracts and to enable their further encroachment on China. Moreing sent a letter to the British foreign office in regards to the newly signed contracts with the Chinese.⁶⁷ Moreing, with assistance from the British financiers, then obtained financial support for the Kaiping Mines from Belgium via Albert Thys, the financial advisor to King Leopold II. However, the financiers soon found a major obstacle in the July 30, 1900 agreement. Hoover as “the trustee” of the Kaiping Mines hindered any financial compensation to be drawn from the transaction. The financiers who represented the Oriental Syndicate requested a legal language revision to the deed if they were to accept the deal. It was understood that all parties, Hoover included, should receive promotional benefits from the transaction.⁶⁸ Hoover was once again entrusted to travel to China to finalize the negotiations for the Kaiping Mines.

In London on November 9, 1900, Hoover signed a power of attorney to Moreing. Hoover had authorized Moreing to sell any Chinese mining properties that Hoover had acquired in China to the Oriental Syndicate.⁶⁹ The Oriental Syndicate, which had been

⁶⁶ Ibid., 129, 194. Nash quoted the original letter written by Hoover, in the Bewick, Moreing & Co. *Collection*. Notably, Nash is the first to bring up the provincial loan in regards to Hoover mining career in China. Hoover, Moreing, and Detring planned for exclusive mining rights in China in a clear violation of the Open Door Notes.

⁶⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 134-135; Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 63.

⁶⁸ Nash, *The Engineer*, 136-137.

⁶⁹ Herbert Hoover to Charles A. Moreing Power of Attorney, November 9, 1900 Bewick, Moreing, & Company Collection, 1885-1962, “1900 Hooverina – Cabelgrams and agreements.”

registered in 1899 by Moreing to carry out the financing for Chinese mining ventures, was ready to receive the revised contract for the Kaiping Mines transfer.

Additionally, it is likely that Moreing had enticed Hoover with the possibility of a future partnership in Bewick, Moreing, & Co. if Hoover successfully completed the deal for the Kaiping Mines.⁷⁰ In 1900, London was the center for mining financing and Bewick, Moreing, & Co was considered one of the leading mining firms of their times.⁷¹ Therefore, beyond the motivation of monetary compensation, Hoover might have been motivated to aggressively carry the deal through as he did because of the prospect of a career promotion. Regardless of his motivations, Hoover acted decisively and with authority, but with complete disregard to the integrity of the Chinese and the policy of the Open Door Notes, in completing the Kaiping Mines transfer.

Hoover and the Open Door Notes 1899 – 1901

In route to China, Hoover and his wife arrived in America. During the stopover in New York City, Hoover gave quite a few interviews and willingly shared his opinion on the Open Door Notes and the deficiency of the American diplomacy, “Eighteen months ago Hay had scored a diplomatic triumph and had obtained the “open door” in China” then Hoover continued, “This idea remained with us while there was peace, but as soon as the crisis came and tested the American triumph, it turned out to be only a paper

⁷⁰ Lou Henry Hoover, November 5 1900 diary entry London, England. Lou Henry Hoover Papers, “China 1899-1901.” A dinner was given in the Hoovers’ honor by the American electrical engineer Mr. White. Lou wrote, “12 people in attendance – all Americans. The people and kind of people we will want to know when we live in London.” There seem to have already been plans that the Hoover’s were heading for London to live. A partnership with Moreing might already have been discusses, although that is not mentioned in her notes. Most likely Lou referred to the engineer James Gilbert White.

⁷¹ Ian Phimister and Jeremy Mouat, “Mining, Engineers and Risk Management: British Overseas Investment, 1894-1914,” *South African Historical Journal* 49 (2003): 1-26.

triumph.”⁷² Hoover did not see the Open Door Notes as a sufficient policy to protect American interests in China. Furthermore, Hoover opined that “Diplomacy with an Asiatic is of now use. If you are going to do business with him you must bring your talk with a gun in your hand, and let him know you will use it.”⁷³

In essence, Hoover in 1900 subscribed to the more standard gunboat diplomacy which the western powers had exercised in China since the time of the Opium Wars in the 1840s. Hoover’s opinion represented a long-standing discrepancy between the Americans on the ground in China vs. the policy makers in Washington D.C. It was felt that the government should and could do more to protect the American interests in China.⁷⁴ As an American citizen, Hoover desired further military protection from the U.S. government. However, as an agent for a British business venture, Hoover did not depend on the U.S. government for his business success. British diplomatic and military personnel came to protect the Kaiping Mines.

Furthermore, Hoover in 1900 saw China as a backwards country and believed in the superiority of western business methods and technology. Without any sympathy for the Chinese, Hoover concluded that the major reason why the Chinese protested was that

⁷² “Loot of Tientsin – \$ 20,000 gold would have bought \$250,000 Silver,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch* November 25, 1900, 6. Hoover also shared that the American soldiers took part in the looting in Tianjin during the summer of 1900.

⁷³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 139, quoted from an interview in *New York Times* November 19, 1900.

⁷⁴ Cohen, *America’s Response to China*, 42-43, 48-49, 53-55; Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism*, 165-167; Hunt, “The Forgotten Occupation: Peking,” 528-529. Washington’s belief was expansion by commerce. Hunt captures nicely how Lieutenant General Adna Chaffee entered China in the spring of 1900 with the attitude of benevolence, but by the time he left China he had switched to the more common attitude on the ground “the power of might.” Hoover agreed with the “the power of might” attitude.

the Chinese disliked foreigners who had made profits on their soil.⁷⁵ Hoover himself was one of those foreigners who forged ahead to make profits from the Kaiping Mines. John Agnew a mining engineer from New Zealand who worked with Hoover in China, and a lifelong supporter of Hoover, recalled that in 1900 Hoover “foresaw the immensity of these deposits and that in the hands of the Chinese they would never be more than mediocre concerns.”⁷⁶ Hoover’s belief in the Anglo-Saxon superiority allowed him, without regard for the Chinese, to execute the contract granting exclusive mining rights to the province of Zhili and the district of Jehol, as well as the deed for the transfer of the Kaiping mines.

Both contracts completely disregarded Chinese mining regulations as they stood in 1900. However, Hoover did not only violate the Chinese regulations in the takeover of the Kaiping Mines. He also acted in direct conflict of the stated U.S. foreign policy in China in the early 1900s. Hay’s Open Door Notes called for protection of China’s “territorial and administrative integrity.” The intended purpose of the notes was to shame other world powers to not use the pretext of war to expand on Chinese territory.⁷⁷ Under the pretext of war and as an agent for Moreing, Hoover executed the deed that led to the

⁷⁵ “Mining in China” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 8, 1900; Frank A. Ninkovich, “Herbert Hoover: Culture vs. Civilization.” In *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 88-91. Ninkovich described Hoover’s general attitude towards China as infused by traditional Western prejudices.

⁷⁶ John Agnew to Edgar Rickard, 16 September, 1930, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, 1912-1962, “Richard, Edgar Files – Agnew, John A., 1928-1932.”

⁷⁷ Cohen, *America’s Response to China*, 43-48, 52, 59; Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism*, 170. In Iriye’s work he quoted Secretary of State John Hay who said, “We do not want to rob China ourselves, and our public opinion would not permit us to interfere with an army to prevent others from robbing here. Besides we have no Army” Hay resorted to the Open Door Notes as the best alternative at the time.

exclusive territorial and administrative takeover of the Kaiping Mines, a takeover that had been deliberated over since Hoover's arrival in China in 1899.

The Open Door Notes also contributed to what came to be the notion of America's special relationship with China. Americans believed that their presence in China was benevolent in nature that is in the form of missionary stations, hospitals, and the opening of universities; in other words, Americans felt that they brought civilization to the Chinese.⁷⁸ American businessmen, under the shield of the Open Door, stood out from other actors in the field. Americans had no territorial designs and their Chinese business ventures were seen as benevolent; the development of railroads and industry was their way to spread Western civilization and progress in China. A notion existed that the American businessmen were a benign force in China, that is, Americans were not exploiting the Chinese for their own benefit, as was the case with other imperialistic nations.⁷⁹ Clearly, Hoover did not fit the perceived image of the American businessman in China.

However, in the refutation campaign and ultimately in his memoirs in 1951 capitalized on this notion that as an American he protected China and her integrity during the concession hunting years 1899-1901. In his memoirs, Hoover described China post the 100-day reform movement of 1898 as a time when hordes of concession hunters

⁷⁸ Carol C. Chin, "Beneficent Imperialism: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (2003): 327-352; Michael Hunt, *Making of a Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 198-199, 205; Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 65-66, 69.

⁷⁹ Michael Hunt, "Americans in the China Market; Economic Opportunities and Economic Nationalism, 1890s-1931," *History Today* 61, no. 3 (1977): 277-307.

gathered and demanded mining concessions.⁸⁰ Hoover failed to state that he acted as an agent to one of these concession hunters. Rather, in his memoirs Hoover crafted a legacy that distanced himself from a player in the concession hunting game. Hoover stated, in line with the myth of American benevolence in China, that he recognized a need for a mining law to stop the concession grabbing and so he drafted a decree which he described as “I think it was one of the first attempts to safeguard China from foreign exploitation.”⁸¹ Hoover was not a benign actor in the exploitation of China. Rather, veiled under the British flag, he asserted aggressive American business methods in order to claim territory in China. In 1901, Hoover was not concerned about the protection of China’s territory and administrative integrity. Instead, he was an active player who exploited China’s rich mining resources for his own personal and financial gains.

Hoover in China 1901 – Consolidation of the CEMC’s Powers to London

Hoover arrived back in Tianjin in January 1901. Until September of 1901, Hoover and his Belgian colleague Chevalier E. de Wouters, an agent for Albert Thys, worked tirelessly to enforce the European vision of the Kaiping Mines, that is, a vision of sole European control, aided by financiers in Europe via stock manipulation.⁸² In January of 1901, Tianjin and its surroundings were governed and occupied by the Tianjin Provisional Government (TPG) formed by the foreign military officers on July 30, 1900. The TPGs rule was described as an iron military rule, that is, Hoover and De Wouters

⁸⁰ Herbert Hoover, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventures 1874-1920* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 37.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁸² Nash, *The Engineer*, 145-146.

operated in a martial milieu.⁸³ In Beijing, Li had been recalled from the south of China and with Prince Qing the two dignitaries represented Empress Cixi in the peace talks with the eight allied nations.⁸⁴ Empress Cixi and her court had fled Beijing and did not return until January of 1902. Hoover set to work.

Hoover met with Detring who again represented the Chinese interests in the transaction, aided by a letter from Moreing dated November 9, 1900; Hoover portrayed the needed legal revisions to the July 30 deed as minor.⁸⁵ Detring objected to Hoover's demands and cited that Moreing had ratified the contract in October 1900. More importantly, Detring had already exposed the contract. Russians troops had occupied the mines since September 1900 and Detring had used the July 30, 1900 contract that claimed British ownership to restart work on the mines.⁸⁶ The men eventually agreed to the changes on January 17, 1901.⁸⁷

Hoover, possibly to acknowledge Detring's objections, but also because peace had not yet been signed, created an entirely new document that contained the agreed-upon legal revision and antedated the document to July 30, 1900.⁸⁸ In the new antedated

⁸³ Bernstein, "After the Fall: Tianjin under Foreign Occupation," 141.

⁸⁴ Hunt, "The Forgotten Occupation: Peking," 510-511.

⁸⁵ Nash, *The Engineer*, 141-143. Hoover withheld the notion of how conditional the deal was, that is the Oriental Syndicate would not move ahead unless the July 30 deed was changed, i.e. Detring could have put his own conditions on the deal.

⁸⁶ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 62-63; Nash, *The Engineer*, 140. Russian occupied the mines since September, but by October 25, 1900 Detring had been allowed on sight to start work again.

⁸⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 143.

⁸⁸ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 64-65. Carlson theorized that Hoover resorted to antedating as to not draw attention to the unfair financial changes the European financiers imposed on the deal. Nash pointed out that since July 30, 1900 the allied powers had issued strict guidelines in regards to deeds obtained under the pretext of the Boxer War, which is further supported by diplomatic correspondence from the time, as seen above by U.S. Ambassador Mr. Conger.

deed, Hoover was removed as the trustee and, equally important, as Nash pointed out Hoover was given extraordinary powers as an agent for Moreing. Specifically, Hoover was allowed to use any means he “may deem proper” and on “such terms and conditions” as he “may think expedient” in the transfer of the Kaiping Mines. Hoover tried to expunge all copies of the original contract documents in which it stated that Hoover was a trustee.⁸⁹ Put another way, the antedated document was given the appearance of the original document by destruction of the original deed. Hoover registered the new antedated deed with the British diplomats as a “copy of the original.”⁹⁰

In the American mining press appeared on February 16, 1901 a notice that the Kaiping Mines had been transformed into “a limited liability company with British and Continental capital.... The new organization acquires the Kai-Ping coal fields, a fleet of steamers, wharves at Tien-Tsin (Tianjin) Tong-Ku, Hong Kong and Canton.... The Capital will be fully subscribed, the transfer taking place February 28th.”⁹¹ A dispatch that had no author, but most likely Hoover was the originator as the American on the ground in China. Based on the dispatch in the American press, no trouble was anticipated to convey the property over to European ownership. Zhang had not been included in the change of the July 30 deed, but his signature was required for the next step.

⁸⁹ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 64-65; Nash, *The Engineer*, 143. Carlson theorized that Hoover antedated the document to not expose the financial arrangements. Nash pointed out the diplomatic regulations about obtaining property during the war.

⁹⁰ Nash, *The Engineer*, 143

⁹¹ “Late News – A dispatch from Tien-tsin, China February 14, 1901,” *Engineering and Mining Journal* 71, no. 7 (1901): 224.

Conveyance & Assignment and the memorandum

Hoover and de Wouters presented Zhang with Conveyance & Assignment that would transfer all the property of the Kaiping Mines to the British Engineering and Mining Company Ltd. (CEMC) registered by Moreing in London on December 21, 1900.⁹² Zhang refused to sign. He had demanded a joint Sino-Anglo company with equal say in management, promises that he had been given verbally in the summer of 1900.⁹³ Zhang's resistance must be seen as a bold move. Punitive missions were still ongoing in China and Tianjin was occupied and administered by the TPG. The mines themselves were under British guard. In other words, Zhang, who travelled from Beijing to Tianjin to take part in the negotiations, was under pre-dominantly European military dominance with limited autonomy within his own territory.⁹⁴ However, and even more important, Zhang like Hoover was a businessman.

The negotiations were drawn out for four days and lined with much quarrel. Zhang received threats that he would be destroyed and that British diplomats would intervene. On day four, Hoover was brought in with an American translator Dr. Charles Tenny. Dr. Tenny was the President of Peiyang University but he also acted as the Secretary of the TPG. Hoover equally threatened Zhang, but through encouragement from Dr. Tenny, Hoover was urged to compromise.⁹⁵ Consequently, a separate side

⁹² Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 61-62.

⁹³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 151-157, 159. Zhang had never wanted a full out sale he had envisioned an Anglo-Chinese company where he still was in charge.

⁹⁴ Bernstein, "After the Fall: Tianjin under Foreign Occupation," 135. TPG, ruled by a council had absolute authority over the Chinese within Tianjin and its surrounding area.

⁹⁵ Nash, *The Engineer*, 155.

memorandum that included Zhang's demand in the form of fourteen clauses was agreed upon.⁹⁶

The memorandum addressed Zhang's demand of a joint Anglo-Sino business venture directed by joint-management with two boards of Directors, one in London and one in China. Zhang was promised to remain in his former position as Director General of the Kaiping Mines and in charge of the affair with equal powers as the foreign directors in China. Most importantly, Zhang was assured that the memorandum would be the ruling document of the transaction.⁹⁷ On February 24, 1900, Zhang affixed his seal to the Conveyance & Assignment and the memorandum alongside with Detring, Hoover, and DeWouters. However, Zhang had one more demand that was not put in writing. Zhang demanded that Hoover excuse himself entirely from the business. Zhang's wishes of Hoover's removal went unheard.⁹⁸

Instead, on February 24, 1901, the same day the memorandum was signed, Hoover took the next step to solidify his power in China. Hoover sent a cablegram to Moreing that contained a pre-written message to be cabled back to China, to give the appearance that it originated in London.⁹⁹ On February 27, 1901, Detring, who represented the Chinese interests, received a cablegram that congratulated him on the successful completion of the Kaiping Mines transfer. Hoover was announced as the new

⁹⁶ Walter Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* (New York: The H.K. Fly Company, 1932), 361-362. Provides a full text of the memorandum.

⁹⁷ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 66. Later Hoover claimed that he had nothing to do with the creation of the memorandum.

⁹⁸ Nash, *The Engineer*, 160; "The Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Limited: Meeting of the China Shareholders at Tientsin," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, December 10, 1902.

⁹⁹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 160-161.

General Manager of the Kaiping Mines now to be run by the CEMC. The cablegram, contained one addition to Hoover's original text, namely de Wouters was to be made the co-manager with Hoover; the two men were ordered to take possession of all the properties that now belonged to the CEMC.¹⁰⁰ Hoover's cablegram to Moreing must be seen as a pre-arranged promise to Hoover to be in charge of the operations.

Article thirteen of the memorandum stated, "the company will be managed in such spirit as to make Chinese and foreign interest harmonize on a fair basis of equality and to open an era of co-operation that will enrich the Government and the people."¹⁰¹ A new era did open for the Kaiping Mines and it quickly became apparent that Hoover and de Wouters had no intentions to honor the memorandum. The memorandum had only served as a means to an end, that is, to obtain Zhang and Detring's signatures, as representatives of the Chinese, in order to convey the company to the Europeans.¹⁰²

Already, on March 9, 1900, Hoover reported to Moreing that he and de Wouters were able to make sweeping reforms. Military troops on the mines put fear in the local Chinese workers, and the absence of Chinese management on the mines gave the Europeans freedom to carry out their agenda.¹⁰³ In order to stop what Hoover considered unauthorized disbursements of funds, Hoover "seized by violence" all the funds and put

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover*, 362.

¹⁰² Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 76. De Wouters wrote Brussels that the memorandum was without value. Although Hoover and de Wouters did appease the Chinese to some extent the power was held by Hoover and de Wouters.

¹⁰³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 161.

them under the management key.¹⁰⁴ The management key belonged to a handpicked person by Hoover, often a fellow Stanford University engineer, such as George Wilson who Hoover put in charge at the Tongshan location of the Kaiping Mines.¹⁰⁵ Power was stripped away from the Chinese. Detring lost his privilege to write checks and was only informed on a need-to-know basis about company operations.¹⁰⁶

Hoover physically collected the deeds for the newly acquired properties outlined in the Conveyance & Assignment, a process he reported to Moreing that had required main force.¹⁰⁷ Hoover, as a sage of a Western civilization, operated under his own business manual in China. Not even Zhang was immune to Hoover's goal oriented tactics. Zhang was asked to hand over the deeds to the offices of the CEMC in Tianjin, as well as the deed to Zhang's own residence in the foreign settlement. Hoover had become the master of his former boss.¹⁰⁸ An ironic juxtaposition, as only a year and a half earlier Zhang had invited Hoover as a consultant engineer to serve the Bureau of Mines of Zhili and Jehol and to survey gold mines to enrich China. By design, the Chinese were excluded from the control of the organization.

¹⁰⁴ Nash, *The Engineer*, 166; "A Chinese Enterprise, Mandarin and Company Promoters," *Manchester Guardian*, March 2, 1905.

¹⁰⁵ Nash, *The Engineer*, 161.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 167; 170.

¹⁰⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 165; "A Chinese Enterprise, Mandarin and Company Promoters," *Manchester Guardian* March 2, 1905.

¹⁰⁸ Nash, *The Engineer*, 164; Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover*, 362. The memorandum clause seven stated that Zhang would have equal powers with the Westerns and remain as Director General as before. It is clear that Hoover did not follow the memorandum.

The Financing of the CEMC

Hoover and de Wouters were aided in centering the power of the company in Europe by the financiers, the original shareholders in China, who had invested in the enterprise under Li prior to the Boxer Uprising and who had held 100% of the shares in the Kaiping Mines, were reduced to minority shareholders; of the 1,000,000 new shares issued, the original shareholders received 375,000 in the conversion (37.5%) and the remaining 625,000 shares (62.5%) were deemed promotional shares, that is, shares that were given away for free. No new share capital entered the enterprise. Rather, a debenture issue of £500,000 at 6% added more debt to the Kaiping Mines and the subscribers of the debenture received one free share for every two pounds invested.¹⁰⁹ Hoover who in the refutation campaign claimed he had nothing to do with the financing, had written Moreing to suggest a debenture issue of only £300,000.¹¹⁰

The belief in Western superiority was also seen in the terms of the debenture. With Western management on the ground in China, the loan dropped by an astonishing 6%.¹¹¹ Despite being a British registered company, the debenture was held predominantly by the Belgians, £310,000.000 vs. the £190,000.00 held by British interest. This also explained why de Wouters was awarded co-management; money equaled control.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Mouat and Phimister, "The Engineering of Herbert Hoover," 564-565, Nash, *The Engineer*, 173.

¹¹⁰ Nash, *The Engineer*, 173-174.

¹¹¹ "The Chinese Engineering and Mining, Co. –A Holder of Bearer Script," *China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, August 20, 1902.

¹¹² Nash, *The Engineer*, 174. The Belgians had a large financial stake in the company. Although not under study here there British and Belgian interests later came in conflict. For more on the financing of the company see; Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 69-76; Nash, *The Engineer*, 170-175; Ian Phimister, "Foreign Devils, Finance and Informal Empire: Britain and China c. 1900-1912," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 737-759.

Hoover used a portion of the free shares in the CEMC to pacify resistance from other powers. In an article in 1902, Hoover stated that the properties of the CEMC taken by other powers were reclaimed by the means of free shares; in other words, people in positions of power were bribed with free shares in the CEMC. Hypocritically, Hoover had earlier criticized how the Chinese used bribes and squeeze as part of their business practices. Hoover and de Wouters were also responsible for the advertisement and the organization of the old shareholders conversion to the new stocks. Interestingly enough, in the refutation campaign Hoover and his loyalists claimed he had no involvement in the financial dealings of the Kaiping Mines.

Exclusive Mining Rights to the Province of Zhili and the District of Jehol

Zhang must have felt frustrated. Hoover and de Wouters reported that by June Zhang knew he had lost all control of the mines.¹¹³ However, on one point Zhang managed to stop the Western aggression. He refused to ratify the provincial loan contract that granted exclusive mining rights in the province of Zhili and the district of Jehol to Hoover, Moreing, and Detring. Yet, Hoover did not give up. Hoover visited the British Minister Satow at least on two occasions in regards to the loan in which he had asked Satow to put diplomatic pressure on the Chinese.¹¹⁴ On the last visit documented on June 29, 1901, Hoover stated that the loan contract was rightfully theirs and should be ratified. The Pekin Syndicate had obtained a mining concession in the Western Hills and Hoover

¹¹³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 168-169.

¹¹⁴ Satow, *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow*, 85. On January 21, 1900 Hoover visited Satow to inform him of the Kaiping Mines transfer. Satow stated the foreign office had provided the information. Hoover also brought up the provisional loan contract. Satow stated he had not obtained any information from the Foreign Office in regards to the exclusive contract of all the mines and stated that he desired such copies to be furnished to him.

proclaimed that it was within their exclusive geographic area of Zhili and Jehol. Satow offered no aid to Hoover.¹¹⁵ In 1902, Moering then visited China but to no avail.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the exclusive mining rights to the entire province of Zhili and the district of Jehol was never realized. The British Minister in Beijing Sir Ernest Satow eventually grasped the severity of the Kaiping Mines transfer as he had had visibility to the antedated documents by Hoover and was quite frank when he said, “I have no high opinions of Moreing and Hoover who instead of telling the truth tried to bamboozle the F.O. [Foreign Office.]”¹¹⁷

Imperial Approval the European View

Hoover and his associates knew that some form of formal Chinese acknowledgement was needed for the Kaiping Mines transaction. Granted, Zhang, Detring, and Hoover, in the summer of 1900 operated under military rule, in which the administrative processes of the Qing Empire had come to a halt. However, by spring of 1901 the Qing administrative cog had been set in motion again. Yet, the Westerners, rather than following the set Chinese mining regulations, which had already been broken,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 124. On June 29, 1901 Hoover wanted Satow to assert pressure on Zhang and Hoover asserted that even Detring was becoming difficult to deal with in the re-organization of the Kaiping Mines.

¹¹⁶ Nash, *The Engineer*, 194-195. Moreing tried to negotiate with Detring, but Detring informed him no loan contracts would be approved.

¹¹⁷ Satow, *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow*, 35, 135. On February 27, 1904 Satow gave his early opinion of Hoover and Moreing a harbinger of the refutation campaign, “I said that prob[ably] several people connected with the affair w[ou]ld like to squash it, as their reputations w[ou]ld suffer if the whole story were made public. Personally I attributed no blame to the present Directors, but I sh[ou]ld be glad if it were possible to make Moreing & Hoover disgorge.” Satow recalled his conversation earlier in the day in regards to the impending lawsuit in England with the general manager of the CEMC Major Walter S. Nathan (1867-1940), Major Nathan was the father to E.J Nathan, who took over as a general manager after his father, both men came to defend Hoover in the refutation campaign.

established their own view of what was considered proper imperial approval. Their vision consisted of two parts.

In January and February of 1901, Hoover and de Wouters visited various diplomatic quarters in Beijing to address their claim of the Kaiping Mines. De Wouters had at least one audience with Li.¹¹⁸ The exact information de Wouters gave Li might never be known. Yet, clause four of the February 1901 memorandum stipulated that a government loan of 200,000 taels should be repaid as quickly as possible. The intended recipient was Li. In June 1901, Li cashed a check sent by the European financiers, which served as one part of the imperial approval for the Kaiping Mines transfer. As the Europeans saw it Li was a representative of the Qing court and his acceptance of the money sanctioned the deal.¹¹⁹ However, it is doubtful that Li the founder of the Kaiping Mines during the Self-Strengthening Movement had been briefed on the extensive and exclusive European control of the Kaiping Mines. Li passed away in November of 1901 and with him the knowledge he carried about the Kaiping mines.¹²⁰

The second component involved pressuring Zhang into sending a memorial to the throne. Zhang did not elaborate about the extent of the business transaction. Rather he described the difficulties during the Boxer Uprising in 1900 and how he acted in order to save the mines. Regardless, a response was received from the Qing court, which stated

¹¹⁸ Nash, *The Engineer*, 146-147; Satow, *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow*, 85. On January 21, 1900. Hoover and de Wouters spent a few days in Beijing Hoover, visited with Satow and the U.S diplomatic core. De Wouters who had more experience in China probably saw Li.

¹¹⁹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 192.

¹²⁰ Satow, *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow*, 174. December 25, 1901: Satow, had met Robert Hart and discussed Li Hongzhang, who had passed away. Satow told Hart “in fact it was difficult for anyone to gather up the threads of the work he directed.” Satow’s comment can be applied to Li acceptance of the Kaiping Mines deal.

“All Right” and guided Zhang to act in China’s best interest.¹²¹ The second portion of imperial approval, again as seen by the Europeans as well as by Hoover, had been achieved.¹²²

On July 15, 1901 Hoover wrote his brother that he had carried home the deal and as a reward he had gained partnership at the Bewick, Moreing, & Co.¹²³ In Beijing Li had been equally busy in fending off demands from the Western powers. Finally, on September 7, 1900 the Boxer Protocol was signed. As a result of the Boxer Uprising the Qing Empire was burdened with a \$333 indemnity.¹²⁴ The weakened Qing Dynasty approached its slow final demise. As Hoover sailed for London, Li’s star was dimming as he passed away two months to the day after the signing of the Boxer Protocol. Hoover was a new star on the rise.

¹²¹ Chen, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 87. In Chen’s account Empress Dowager Cixi stated “Alright.”

¹²² Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Tianjin, July 15, 1901, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, “China 1899-1901.” Told his brother he completed the deal and yesterday the “Imperial Edicts were handed down confirming it.”

¹²³ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Tianjin, July 15, 1901, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, “China 1899-1901.” In an account Hoover asked his brother to publish in the Stanford alumni paper Hoover wrote, as a reward for his role in the transfer of the Kaiping Mines he earned partnership in Bewick, Moreing & Co.

¹²⁴ Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers*, 54-56; Herbert Hoover to Commissioner of United States Claims Commission, Mr. W. E Brainbridge and Mr. J. W. Ragsdale, July 2, 1902, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, “China – Boxer Rebellion.” Nash, *The Engineer*, 146. Hoover claimed an indemnity against the Chinese Government of \$55,009 of which \$48,833 was loss of salary for three years with the Bureau of Mining of Zhili province. The Commissioners of United States Claims Commission asked him for clarification. In July 1902, Hoover responded that he still was entitled to the \$48,883 based on the three-year contract signed on June 8, 1900. In the end Hoover’s bluff was called. In 1906, he received a check for \$2689.81

The CEMC in London and China's Response

On July 20, 1901 the first extra ordinary meeting of the CEMC was held in London.¹²⁵ The article of associations was amended to take in account the compensation for the London board, “The directors shall be entitled to receive by way of remuneration in each year a sum at the rate of 250 per annum for each director,” and “The directors shall also be entitled to 10 percent of the balance of the net profits of the company remaining that year after payment to the members of a dividend of 10 percent on the amounts paid on their shares.”¹²⁶

On December 9, 1901 another extra ordinary meeting of the CEMC took place that also required an amendment to the article of associations, it allowed for an increase in the amount of board of directors, Hoover and de Wouters became members of the board, a position Hoover held from 1901-1912.¹²⁷ Hoover, the rising star, had arrived in China in 1899 with no vested interest in Chinese mining ventures, however, he left China in the fall of 1901 with shares in the in the range of 20,000–25,000 and worth about \$4.0 million today, and gained a lucrative partnership at Bewick, Moreing, & Co in London.¹²⁸

In the footsteps of the Boxer Uprising, more organized and productive resistance to Western encroachments followed. Yuan, Governor General of Zhili, and his long time protégé Tang Shaoyi as the Customs Taotai at Tianjin partly as a response to the Kaiping Mines affair initiated reforms. As a result, in 1904 the first company law was initiated

¹²⁵ “Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, Limited,” *The Economist*, no. 3012, July 20, London (1901): 1100.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 182.

¹²⁸ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 75-76, 83; William E. Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover* (New York: Times Books, 2009), 14; Nash, *The Engineer*, 175, 244.

and lawyers were trained to carry forth China's rights; additionally, the Rights Recovery Movement (1905-1911) was an organized effort led by local elite and educated Chinese who worked to recover lost rights of mining and railroad concessions.¹²⁹ Loss of rights translated to loss of profits, and China attempted to regain control of both. Tang was an avid leader of the Rights Recovery movement, yet despite some success, most of the concessions returned to the Chinese had not yet been put in operation; in regards to coalmines, Wright summarized the Rights Recovery Moment as ineffective. In 1911, only 18% of the coalmines in operation were Chinese enterprises and the Chinese failed to recover any of the coalmines that had been in operation prior to the Boxer Uprising, most notably the Kaiping Mines.¹³⁰

The European control of the Kaiping Mines, gained through Hoover and Detring's efforts in the summer of the Boxer Uprising, remained in some form or another until 1949 despite a merger with Yuan Shikai's Luanzhou Mining in 1912.¹³¹ The merger formed the Kailuan Mining Administration (KMA.) KMA was a Sino-British company

¹²⁹ Humphrey Ko. *The Making of the Modern Chinese State: Cement, Legal Personality and Industry* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 58-59. En-Han Lee, "China's Response to Foreign Investment in Her Mining Industry (1902-1911)," *Journal of Asian Studies* 28 no.1 (1968) 55-76. Ko discussed that as a response to the loss of rights to the Kaiping Mines Yuan Shikai pushed for a company law, equal to that of European corporate law in order to better defend Chinese interests against European encroachments.

¹³⁰ Tim Wright, *Coal Mining in China's Economy and Society, 1895-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 142-144.

¹³¹ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 137-144; Jürgen Osterhammel, "Imperialism in Transition: British Business and the Chinese Authorities, 1931-1937," *China Quarterly* no. 98 (1984): 261-262; Wolff, Ernst, "Midwest China Oral History Interviews" (1979). China Oral Histories. Book 69.

http://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/china_histories/69. The Japanese occupied the mines during the hostilities that broke out in 1937, yet European management remained involved in operations the mines were crucial to the Japanese. Ernst Wolff a Jewish man, who grew up in China, joined the Kailuan Mining Administration (KMA) in 1936 and provides a very detailed accounts how the Japanese treated the British and Belgian staff. In 1941 the European staff inclusive of Nathan were put in civilian internment camps. Wolff noted that Mr Shirhakawa, who was heading the mines, ordered special food parcels to be sent to the Kailuan Mining personnel.

that organized the sales and administration for the CEMC and the Luanzhou Mining Company. However, KMA's management remained predominantly British first under the auspices of Major Nathan followed by his son Ethan J. Nathan.¹³²

In China Hoover found another commodity in high demand in the imperialistic world at the turn of the twentieth century cheap Chinese laborers. The next chapter will explore Hoover and the CEMC's connections to the importation of 63,695 Chinese labors to the gold mines at Witwatersrand (Rand) in South Africa in the years 1904-1910.¹³³

¹³² Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*, 138; Jonathan J. Howlett, "The Communist and the Kailuan mines: Eliminating the legacies of the treaty ports," in *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land, and Power*, ed. Robert A. Bickers and Isabella Jackson, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016) 244-245.

¹³³ Rachel K. Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle*. (London: Palgrave, MacMillan, 2013), 1,91;

Chapter III.

Chinese Laborers in South Africa 1902-1910

Apart from being engaged in the Boxer Uprising in 1900, the British military fought in the Boer War (1899-1902) against the Dutch settlers for imperial control in South Africa. The war was of great importance to the British mining industry because the rich gold fields of Witwatersrand (Rand) dominated the economy. In 1902, peace was finally established in the British Crown Colony of Transvaal (1902-1910.) The gold mines had been idle during the war and, as a result, Transvaal's economy had suffered severely. Furthermore, the markets were pressuring to get the mines in full production. In 1902, the demand for gold exceeded supply, as the financial world (1870s-1914) markets advocated for one monetary solution tied to gold.¹

The war had created labor shortages on the gold mines in both unskilled and semi-skilled workers who operated machinery and supervised, respectively. In the imperialistic expansion at the turn of the twentieth century, labor shortages were common. Like gold, labor was a commodity and was also in high demand.² At the center of the labor shortage in South Africa was race. Africans would accept semi-skilled black workers, but the local white unions protested in fear that their wages would go down.³ Fearing for their safety, Africans elected to work in agriculture, a safer but still subjugated environment.⁴ The

¹Peter, Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour in the Transvaal* (London: Macmillan , 1982), 3-5.

² Ibid., 2-3.

³ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 5; Rachel K. Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2013), 44-46.

⁴ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 23-25.

white union workers had nothing to fear. The colonial administration of the Transvaal had no intention on paying their African counterparts at the rate of the white wage earners. After all, according to the leading Anglo-Saxons in Transvaal, the Africans were not considered civilized. Palpable racial hierarchy was at the center of the labor problem. The mining industry, as well as the governance of the Transvaal colony turned to China for solutions to their labor shortage. By February of 1904, the British Government approved the use of Chinese labor on the mines of Rand.⁵ Heightened racial divides still remained.

On July 9, 1904, Herbert Hoover sailed on the Royal Union Castle Line from England to South Africa where he arrived on July 26, 1904.⁶ In his pocket, he carried a letter of introduction from a fellow American mining engineer named James Hennen Jennings, Harvard class of 1877.⁷ Jennings was stationed in London and employed by Wernher, Beit, & Co. He was the first to advocate for Chinese laborers on Rand, as early as 1903. American engineers, like Jennings, worked in great numbers for British mining magnets and had great influence on Rand at the turn of the twentieth century.⁸ There was

⁵ Bright, *Chinese Labor*, 69.

⁶ Royal Union Castle Line, p55, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Scrapbooks, "London to South Africa, 1904."

⁷ Bright, *Chinese Labor*, 194; W. R Ingalls, "Hennen Jennings, A Biographical Sketch," *Mining and Metallurgy*, no. 161, section 1, (1920): 19-21; Hennen Jennings to Herbert Hoover, July 7, 1904, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject File "Mining – Correspondence, Jennings, Hennen, 1904 & 1915."

⁸ John Higginson, "Privileging the Machines: American Engineers, Indentured Chinese and White Workers in South Africa's Deep-Level Gold Mines, 1902-1907," *International Review of Social History*, 52, no.1 (2007): 8-9, 14-16; Morley Z. Nkosi, "American Mining Engineers and the Labor Structure in the South African Gold Mines," *African Journal of Political Economy* 1, no. 2 (1987): 64, 66, 74-77. Nkosi's article gives a great overview of the influences of American engineers on Rand. John Hammond Hays, who worked for Cecil Rhodes, was one of the early American engineers on Rand. Higginson article connects the American mining press to the labor issue on Transvaal. T. A. Rickard who was the editor of the American Engineering and Mining Journal was in frequent contact with William L. Honnold as early as 1902 in

a general obsession of efficiency and since labor was one of the largest expenses on the mines it needed to be manipulated to gain the greatest profits.⁹

The CEMC, through Werner, Beit, & Co, expressed an interest in being a supplier of the Chinese laborers for Transvaal.¹⁰ The CEMC already used large amounts of Chinese manual labor on the Kaiping Mines and, therefore, had deep and established recruitment networks. As important, the CEMC held exclusive rights on the ice-free port of Qinhuangdao.¹¹ In other words, laborers could be shipped without seasonal interference. Qinhuangdao also had established rail connections with inland locations. To address the labor shortage, between February and April of 1904, two agents from Transvaal, named John Gardiner Hamilton and F. Perry, established recruitment contracts with the CEMC to be one of the suppliers of Chinese labor to Witwatersrand's gold mines.¹²

While Hoover was on route to South Africa, he received mail on board. Lord Alfred Milner the Governor of Transvaal requested the company of Hoover for dinner on August 1, 1904.¹³ Lord Milner believed in the racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and had been an avid supporter of Chinese labor to solve the labor shortage, not all mining professionals agreed with Chinese labor as the best solution. Colonel Frederic

regards to the use of Chinese laborers on the mines. Honnold and Hoover were also business partners on the Brakpan Mine, South Africa both a coal producing and a gold mine.

⁹ Higginson, "Privileging the Machines," 1-8; Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 9.

¹⁰ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 113. Richardson does not specify who from the CEMC contacted Werner, Beit, & Co. Many of the directors that Hoover served with also had interests on Rand.

¹¹ Ian Phimister, "Foreign Devils, Finance and Informal Empire: Britain and China c. 1900-1912," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 752-753.

¹² Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 114.

¹³ Lord Milner to Herbert Hoover, Invitation to dinner August 1, 1904, at 8:00 pm, p136, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Scrapbooks, "London to South Africa, 1904."

Creswell, General Manager at the Village Main Reef Mine and later the South African Labor party leader (1910-1929), promoted immigration of white labor to solve the labor problem. Creswell's strong belief in racial supremacy of the white race saw immigration of white European labor as a superior solution. In response, Lord Milner protested that he did not want to create a white proletariat in the colony and continued to view the Chinese as the ideal solution to solve the labor shortage.¹⁴

Both Lord Milner and Jennings recognized that public resistance was strong against the Chinese labor proposal. In step with the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, many of the British colonies had followed suit and implemented similar laws.¹⁵ In Cape Town, South Africa, the public protested loudly to the proposed labor project; in their minds, the Chinese were seen as parasitic hordes.¹⁶ Sir George Farrar, the chairman of East Rand Proprietary Mines, was recruited to appease the public opposition and merge the conflicted views that existed around the use of Chinese labor.¹⁷

In 1903, The Chamber of Mines Labor Importation Agency (CMLIA) was established on Rand and opened offices in London as well. The agency's purpose was to lobby and create a favorable public opinion for the Chinese labor project. Farrar, who was backed by Milner, printed pamphlets and articles supporting Chinese labor use on Rand and sent speakers on talking circuits to further promote the proposal in both

¹⁴ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 29.

¹⁵ Kornel Chang, "Circulating Race and Empire: Transnational Labor Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (2009): 678-701; Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 35.

¹⁶ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

England and Transvaal.¹⁸ The public decried the use of Chinese labor calling it modern day slavery and white labor unions further created strong resistance. Nonetheless, the project was sanctioned through co-operation with the state and the mining industry.

Dire predictions about Transvaal's economy swayed some of the public, as well as the local miners. Without Chinese labor, the economy of Transvaal would suffer.¹⁹ To mollify the remaining local resistance on Rand an agreement was reached that would ensure that Transvaal would continue to remain free of permanent Asian immigration. The Chinese laborers would work on three-year contracts. Repatriation was worked into the contract at the end of the third year requiring the Chinese to be returned to China.²⁰

A detailed Labor Importation Ordinance was issued. As a way of protecting the rights of the white laborers, the Chinese were assigned to a delimited group of tasks without possibility of advancement to a skilled job. To appease the local population's fear of a large Chinese presence, the Chinese would be segregated. Walled mining compounds were erected at each mine on Rand. To leave the compound, a special permit was required and no Chinese laborer could be absent for more than 48 hours. Moreover, the Chinese were not allowed to garden since the local farmers were worried about competition. Additionally, if the Chinese broke any rules, criminal not civil punishments were ordered.²¹ Fundamentally, the ordinance stripped the Chinese of their freedom. The

¹⁸ Ibid., 43-44.

¹⁹ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 16-17.

²⁰ Ibid., 166-167.

²¹ Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot, "Atlantic and Pacific Crossings: Race, Empire, and "the Labor Problem" in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Radical History Review*, no. 91 (2005): 47-51; Gary Kynoch, "'Your Petitioners Are in Mortal Terror': The Violent World of Chinese Mineworkers in South Africa, 1904-1910," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005): 534-535; Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 29-31.

Anglican Church in South Africa sanctioned the labor projects, as it was promised that they could convert the heathen Chinese once they arrived in Transvaal.²² Clearly, the mining industry was in control.

The Chinese government was able to negotiate three demands, as Chinese laborers had been gravely abused before: (1) a Chinese Consul in South Africa, which ultimately had limited power since permission was required to even visit the mines, (2) no corporal punishment, which was quickly violated, and (3) a minimum wage to be specified, which was later reduced and, moreover, if the Chinese did not meet the efficiency standards set for the day, they lost their entire day's wage.²³ In February 1904, the British Unionist government approved the labor project, followed by the Chinese government in May of 1904.²⁴

On July 31 Hoover called on Sir George Farrar, the publicity man of the Chinese Labor project. The following day, Hoover dined with Governor Lord Milner.²⁵ Hoover had met with the two men who were credited with making the Chinese labor project a possibility within days of his arrival in South Africa. Hoover's biographers have called Hoover's trip to South Africa "mysterious" and have carried forth Hoover's message of innocence in regards to his ties to Chinese laborers on Rand.²⁶ Unfortunately, no materials exists in regards Hoover's meetings with Lord Milner or Farrar. However, by

²² Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 43-44.

²³ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 81-82; Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 172.

²⁴ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 29-31.

²⁵ Herbert Hoover, daily notations, 112, 113, Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Scrapbooks, "London to South Africa, 1904." Hoover seemed to have dined alone with Lord Milner, he usually recorded everyone present and on August 1, 1904 only Lord Milner's name is noted.

²⁶ Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life*, 42; Nash, *The Engineer*, 345-347.

analyzing Hoover' writings on Chinese labor during this period 1899-1909 will provide insight.

Hoover and Chinese Labor

In 1909, Hoover published *Principles of Mining* and stated, "The whole question of handling labor can be reduced to the one term "efficiency."²⁷ Like his contemporary engineers, Hoover was obsessed with cost reduction. In 1898, in Australia, Hoover praised the progressive democracy that the British had attained; yet he opposed their labor policy. Hoover wanted the ban on the importation of Asiatic labor to be lifted.²⁸ Australia, like the U.S., had strong white labor unions, which favored the racial superiority of the white man. Australia had adopted similar sentiment to that expressed in the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.²⁹ However, mining the gold ore required large amounts of unskilled laborers and so the pool of Asiatic labor was considered more efficient. The commodity Hoover sought in Australia was realized in his next job.

After spending less than two months in China, Hoover wrote his brother Theodore with nothing less than excitement, "Tell Starr we will break records in costs here when we are started – for labor is only 10 cents per diem and superior men to Transvaal

²⁷ Herbert Hoover, *Principles of Mining: Valuation, Organization, and Administration* (New York: Hill Publishing, 1909), 162.

²⁸ Herbert Hoover, "Mining and Milling Gold Ores in Western Australia," *Engineering and Mining Journal* 66, no. 23 (1898): 725-726; Nash, *The Engineer*, 59-62. As Asian labor was not an alternative in Australia Hoover used Italian labor he considered the unionized Australians inefficient.

²⁹ Hugh H. Lusk, "Chinese Exclusion in Australia," *North American Review* 174, no. 544 (1902): 368-375.

niggerswater power.”³⁰ Hoover had found labor even cheaper than the Africans who worked in Transvaal. In China, Hoover experienced firsthand the ample supply of Chinese labor. Notably, Hoover soon developed some reservations. Efficiency was the problem. Hoover theorized that it would take ten Chinese to equal the job of one American.³¹ Hoover realized a gap in the current literature, that is, people seldom talked about the disadvantages of Chinese labor and wanted to publish an article on the topic.

Hoover wrote Theodore again and requested some books and statistics to be sent in regards to American labor.³² In 1900, while Hoover was still stationed in China, a paper wrote was read in London at the Institute for Mining and Metallurgy (IMM) it contained early his theory about Chinese labor. Hoover cautioned that although there was an unlimited amount of cheap Chinese laborers there were disadvantages as well. The Chinese to Westerner ratio of effectiveness was about 5:1. Yet, based on Hoover’s earlier observations he deemed the Chinese to be docile and easy to handle.³³

In 1902, after the successful conveyance of the Kaiping Mines to the Europeans, Hoover published an article about the Kaiping Mines that commanded a global audience among his fellow mining professionals.³⁴ By now Hoover had developed a firm theory about the usefulness, as well as the character of the Chinese labor that he seldom deviated

³⁰ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Tianjin, China, May 1899, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, “China 1899-1901.” “Transvaal niggerwaters power” in the context of labor cost at the time, it must be inferred that Hoover referred to the Africans that worked the gold mines in South Africa.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Herbert C. Hoover, “Metal Mining in the Provinces of Chihle and Shangtung, China,” read at the Sixth Ordinary Meeting, Institute for Mining and Metallurgy, March 28, 1900, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Mining Articles Copied.”

³⁴ Herbert C. Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines and Coal-Field, Chihle Province, North China,” *Engineering and Mining Journal* 74, no. 5 (1902): 150.

from. Hoover also shared a societal advantage he had learned in China, “The disregard for human life permits cheap mining by economy in timber, and the aggrieved relatives are simply compensated by the regular payment of \$30 per man lost.”³⁵ In essence, rather than provide a safe work environment, say by purchasing timber to stabilize tunnels, it was economically better to pay for the death of a Chinese laborer.

Although Chinese labor was cheap – 10-15 cents/day for a coolie (a labor recruited by an outside company) and 12-20 cents for a native – there were cautions to be considered.³⁶ For a comparison, in 1902 a coalminer in Pennsylvania earned roughly \$1.70 per day based on a six-day week.³⁷ Hoover stated that the Chinese were dishonest, and, “...the racial slowness, and much lower average intelligence, gives them efficiency far below the workmen of England and America.” The Chinese supervisors whom Hoover had deemed to have an “innate lack of administrative ability” further contributed to the lack of efficiency in the Chinese mines, he believed.³⁸

The Kaiping Mines article was read in London at the Institute for Mining and Metallurgy (IMM) in June 1902; the article differed slightly from the American published version. In the article, Hoover, who was an associate of IMM, announced his solution on how to make Chinese labor efficient and his answer was through Western management. Hoover estimated that within two years the Kaiping Mines if under new Western

³⁵ Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines,” 150.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

³⁷ “A Miner’s Story,” *The Independent*, 1902, Coal Mining in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Ohio State University, Department of History <https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/gildedage/content/MinersStory>.

³⁸ Herbert Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines and Coal-Field, Chihle Province, North China,” 426, read at the Eighth Ordinary Meeting, Institute for Mining and Metallurgy, June 19, 1902, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Mining Articles Copied.”

management “will prove the economic value of the cheapest labor in the world.”³⁹

However, Hoover had one final lesson for the mining professionals in London, a point often lost. Hoover stated, “For crude labor, such as surface excavation he has no equal, but as we proceed up the scale of skill he falls further and further behind....”⁴⁰

Had Hoover made a sales pitch for the labor that the CEMC had access to in China? In 1902, at the conclusion of the Boer War, crude labor was what the mining industry on Rand in South Africa was in dire need of. The IMM was the professional mining association in London.⁴¹ Therefore, Hoover’s audience at the IMM reading in June of 1902 was the mining professionals that influenced the London mining industry, as London was by any measure the financial center of mining at the time; also present were the professionals that came to advocate for the use of Chinese labor on Rand.⁴²

Sales pitch or not, by 1902 the mining industry had assigned a committee to explore labor recruitment on the mines to solve the labor shortage. William L. Honnold, another American engineer, promoted the use of the Chinese laborers on Rand especially in the printed American mining press. In 1902-1904, Honnold was in frequent correspondence with Thomas A. Rickard, the editor for the Engineering and Mining

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Herbert Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines and Coal-Field, Chihle Province, North China,” 426, read at the Eighth Ordinary Meeting, Institute for Mining and Metallurgy, June 19, 1902, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Mining Articles Copied.”; Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines,” 150.

⁴¹ Ingalls, “Hennen Jennings,” 20. In 1903, Hennen Jennings was elected the President of IMM, the only American to achieve such an honor. In 1904, the IMM bestowed the gold medal on Jennings for his instrumental role in developing the mining industry on Rand.

⁴² Hoover, “The Kaiping Coal Mines and Coal-Field, Chihle Province, North China,” read at the Eight Ordinary Meeting, Institute for Mining and Metallurgy, June 19, 1902, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Mining Articles Copied.” The article was followed by a discussion, the President of IMM expressed that it was “fortunate for Europe that the Chinese was not a progressive people.”

Journal based in California.⁴³ Both Rickard and Honnold were friends with Hoover and later staunch loyalists in the refutation campaign. Honnold, like Hoover, advocated machinery to be used on the mines whenever possible to make the greatest profit.⁴⁴ However, large portions of Rand were not suitable for machinery. The deep-level mines, i.e. thousands of feet underground with low grade ore, were prone to cave-ins and only hammer and chisel or a hand drill were appropriate tools that prevented large-scale accidents.⁴⁵ The labor needed for these jobs were crude, unskilled men. The use of Chinese labor had been discussed for a while and with Farrar's relentless public media campaign, the project gained favorable traction.

The Chinese Laborers and the CEMC

In 1904, Hoover departed for South Africa on a ship with the luxury accommodations of the day, and once in South Africa he travelled between Cape Town and Johannesburg on train. While Hoover was in South Africa in 1904, two ships arrived from China. One on July 27, SS Ikbal with 1,966 people on board and one on August 3, SS Swanley with 1,988 on board; both ships had embarked from the riverbanks of Taku,

⁴³ Higginson, "Privileging the Machines," 114-115; Nkosi, "American Mining Engineers," 64, 66, 74-77. Other labor solutions were discussed such as ship African Americans in North America back to Africa, as well as the importation of Tatars from Russia; see for example; "Labor Problems," *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 75 no. 19 (1903): 698; "Editorial Comment", *Engineering and Mining Journal* 75 no. 24 (1903): 885. Honnold opposed the African-American option "we require cheaper labor than they can provide."

⁴⁴ Higginson, "Privileging the Machines," 14-17; Herbert Hoover, "Equipment and Ore Reserves," *Engineering and Mining Journal* 78, no. 22 (1904): 859.

⁴⁵ Higginson, "Privileging the Machines," 18; Guterl and Skwiot, "Atlantic and Pacific Crossings," 51.

the city Hoover fled to at the height of the Boxer Uprising in 1900.⁴⁶ Notably, neither ship was equipped with any luxury accommodations.

The 63,695 Chinese laborers shipped to South Africa in 1904-1910 survived hardships. In order to reach the mines, the Chinese laborers endured thirty days at sea in company of upwards of 2,245 fellow countrymen. Once they landed in South Africa, medical examinations were performed, which took place at the former concentration camp that the British had used in the Boer War, namely Jacobs Camp in Durban. Then, the Chinese embarked on a twenty-seven hour train ride to reach the walled mining compound on Rand.⁴⁷ Once the Chinese arrived on Rand, they were assigned to a specific mining concern and were put to work immediately. The workday was 10 hours long for a six-day workweek underground, often in a perpetual rainfall. To reach the surface area after a shift, many had to climb ladders for up to 1000-2000 feet.

Out of the 63,695 Chinese laborers shipped to South Africa to work in the mines, 38,758 (60.8%) embarked from the harbor of Qinhuangdao.⁴⁸ The CEMC had leased land to the CMLIA and had also constructed a depot where all Chinese arrivals had to pass a medical examination before they embarked on their remainder of their long journey. The CEMC used their extensive networks developed under Chinese ownership to recruit labor for the South African mines.⁴⁹ Besides earning money from the lease and from each

⁴⁶ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 114, 192.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 157-164.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴⁹ "Collecting, Preparing, and Transporting Chinese Laborers to the Transvaal Mines," *Far Eastern Review* (March 1906): 283-284; Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 118-120.

Chinese laborer the CEMC had successfully sent to South Africa, shipping was also arranged through a board member of the CEMC.⁵⁰

Initially, the recruitment in China presented challenges. Shipments from southern China had delivered men who suffered from beriberi, and in Tianjin there had been fighting among the Chinese laborers as they awaited embarkment to South Africa. At this critical junction, the CEMC was virtually said to have saved the Chinese labor project in Transvaal; during this time, Hoover was in still in South Africa.⁵¹ On August 18, 1904, an article was published which stated, “It is not improbable that the recruiting of coolies will eventually be limited to Northern China as the men are better adapted to the climatic conditions of the Transvaal...and are much more easily controlled than the Hong Kong and Cantonese coolies.” The article also included pictures from China and elegantly, albeit misleadingly described how well the Chinese were treated; the article was signed “An occasional correspondent,” a signature that Hoover had used in the past.⁵²

It is likely that the article was a joint collaboration between Hoover and the CEMC staff in Tianjin. Furthermore on August 16, 1904, Hoover had sent a letter under the heading “political situation” which was then forwarded to Major Nathan in Tianjin. Nathan held Hoover’s former position as General Manager of the CEMC.⁵³ Then, in the refutation campaign in 1932, Nathan provides a testimonial that Hoover had nothing to

⁵⁰ Phimister, “Foreign Devils, Finance and Informal Empire,” 753.

⁵¹ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 95, 118.

⁵² “Shipping Chinamen to South Africa,” *Engineering and Mining Journal* 78 no. 7, (1904): 256.

⁵³ London Metropolitan Archives, *Chinese Engineering and Mining Company Limited*, Committee Minutes No. 1, CLC/B/046/MS28379/001, Minutes of the Permanent Committee of the Board of Directors, 1904 Nov - 1911 Jun, “19 September, 1904 – 36th Meeting.” Mentioned the letter Hoover had sent on August 16, 1904. Hoover left South Africa, on August 17, 1904.

do with the Chinese laborers. Nathan stated, “nor was he as far as I am aware cognizant of the arrangements made.”⁵⁴ On August 17, 1904, Hoover had left South Africa and shortly thereafter the center of the recruitment of Chinese labor had effectively shifted from southern to northern China. It was said that shift to the CEMC’s Qinhuangdao basically saved the labor project in China.⁵⁵

The Chinese on Rand worked long hours and under deplorable conditions. Physical punishments such as flogging, although not permitted, took place, and received public outcry. Unfair treatments became rampant. Race was at the center of the issue. The Chinese had no voice in legal matters and the Chinese Consul who tried to help was turned away.⁵⁶ Segregation was instituted on the mines, a system that would later be applied to all aspects of South African life. The mining industry tried to cover up the mistreatments of the Chinese via widespread public campaigns, but to no avail.⁵⁷ By 1905, the use of Chinese labor on Rand became a British election issue. The project was called “the biggest scheme of human dumping since the Middle passage was abolished.”⁵⁸ The conservative party who had approved the labor experiment was criticized and consequently Milner in Transvaal fared poorly and ended up being replaced.⁵⁹ In 1906, the liberal party swept the election and worked to improve the

⁵⁴ Walter S. Nathan to Julean Arnold, January 6, 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files “Campaign of 1932 Hoover and Chinese Labor.”

⁵⁵ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 118.

⁵⁶ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 143; Kynoch, “Your Petitioners Are in Mortal Terror,” 531-46.

⁵⁷ Bright, *Chinese Labour*, 163.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

conditions for the laborers on Rand. The liberals ended the project with the last shipment of outbound Chinese labors in February of 1907.

During these troubling times for the Chinese laborers (July 26–August 17, 1904), aided by a letter of introduction from Jennings, Hoover had visited all of the major mines on Rand. He dined with Lord Milner and conversed with Sir. Farrar. Although the archives at HHPL are sparse Hoover was part of the Chinese Labor project on Rand.⁶⁰ He received financial benefits from the project as a stockholder and as a board of director for the CEMC. Additionally, Hoover’s writing on labor efficiency as it stood in 1909 aligned with the recruitment strategy employed at Rand.

Although, by 1909 Hoover promoted the use of machinery and white labor as being more efficient, and cautioned that unskilled laborers increased costs when it came to supervising a large work force, attaining housing, and providing transportation. Furthermore intellectual capacity of the workers was paramount; in the formula for efficiency, white workers were far superior than “labor of a low mental order, such as Asiatic and negroes.”⁶¹ However, hidden in the pages, Hoover pointed out, “The results obtained in South Africa by hand-drilling in shafts, and its very general adoption there, seem to indicate that better speed and more economical work can be obtained in that way

⁶⁰ Higginson, “Privileging the Machines,” 1-34; T. E. Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer and the Economic Development of Southern Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press 1962); Nash, *The Engineer*, 244, 385. Scholarship on Hoover’s direct investments in South Africa is limited. Besides Higginson’s article that connects Hoover and Honnold to the Brakpan Mine (Brakpan was a coal mines and another operation was a deep level gold mine.) Honnold operated the Transvaal Coal Trust, which despite its name operated gold mines as well. Additionally, Bewick, Moreing & Co. had an office in Johannesburg South Africa. Hoover’s name is also connected to the Anglo Continental Gold Syndicate, and Geduld Deeps. In 1917 during the height of the Great War (1914-1918) Hoover met with Ernest Oppenheimer in London, to secure financial support from J. P. Morgan, to form the Anglo-American Cooperation.

⁶¹ Hoover, *Principles of Mining*, 162-164.

in very large shafts than by machine-drilling.”⁶² Hoover commented that the use of machinery in such shafts was complicated and would result in great loss of time, which translated to lower efficiency. Additionally, statistics across gold mines had proven that hand drilling saved 25% on dynamite, which obviously would also have figured into the efficiency equation.⁶³

Hoover, despite his denials, approved the use of Chinese unskilled labor on the mines in South Africa. To maintain the unskilled laborers, the Chinese averaged 45 cents a day and the Africans, who were a bit more expensive, averaged 60 cents a day; both costs, noted by Hoover, included keep, namely food and housing.⁶⁴ For a man who was cost conscientious, it seems that the unskilled Chinese laborers were a better choice. Hoover’s book *Principles on Mining* was based on lectures he had given at Stanford University, as well as at Columbia University. Chinese were still present on the mines at the time of Hoover’s publication; it was not until 1910 that the last Chinese laborer left South Africa.⁶⁵ The racial overtones of the mining industry remained during this time period, and Hoover’s *Principle of Mining* remained in print until 1967 and was used in frequently in higher learning institutions nationwide.⁶⁶ In 1928, as well as in 1932, the

⁶² Ibid., 150-151

⁶³ Ibid., 151.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁶⁵ Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour*, 166.

⁶⁶ Nash, *The Engineer*, 478-479.

Chinese labor project on Rand (1904-1910) became an election issue in the United States. Hoover claimed he had nothing to do with it.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Campaign speech Cleveland, OH, October 15 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign of 1932 – Hoover and Chinese Labor."



Chapter IV.

Herbert Hoover's Apologia of His Chinese Mining Career

To understand Hoover's motivation and methods in the refutation campaign some background on Hoover's relation to the media and his belief in the role of public opinion to achieve his objectives is vital, as well as how, over the course of time, Hoover personally sought after and attained an idealistic American public image. Hoover believed in the formation of public opinion to achieve an end goal. For example, by 1919 Hoover had reached the conclusion that the only way to educate the American public in democracy was through propaganda.¹ During Hoover's time as Secretary of Commerce and as the 31st President of the United States, managing and directing public opinion became a science.²

According to Hoover, public opinion could be shaped to correct what was misunderstood and controlling public opinion was a tool to manipulate a desired outcome. Hoover's tract *American Individualism* in 1922 pushed for equal opportunity for all, yet Hoover declared that only a few with the highest character, was able to lead. Hoover considered himself as one the able leaders, and in turn society should blindly

¹Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover, Forgotten Progressive* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), 61.

² Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert*; Brandon, Rottinghaus, "Limited to Follow: The Early Public Opinion Apparatus of the Herbert Hoover White House," *American Politics Research* 31, no. 5 (2003): 540-556. Charles Walcott and Karen Hult, "Management Science and the Great Engineer: Governing the White House during the Hoover Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1990): 557-579. Lloyd study firmly established that media was used to advance Hoover's career and image, although he down played Hoover's own role in using it for self-promotion. Rottinghaus showed how Hoover's media obsession was a pre-cursor to the political polls.

trust and follow the enlighten leaders, which shows Hoover's adherence to elitism.³ Hoover took the same approach to the refutation campaign, by using propaganda, the masses should blindly trust him and that the narrative Hoover presented in regards to his Chinese mining career was absolute. As a consequence the public and historians were left with a fragmented picture of Hoover. Ultimately, Hoover's lifelong belief in shaping public opinion was epitomized in his three series publication of his autobiography in 1951, which included his apologia of his Chinese mining career rooted in the refutation campaign.⁴

The Rise of Herbert Hoover – 1895-1919

Hoover had been encouraged early in his academic career to publish frequently in order to establish himself professionally.⁵ Arguably by 1902, a year after Hoover had left China, he had entered the transnational business elite of the leading mining market in London. Hoover quickly transitioned to a very efficient mining promoter. By 1905, in a letter to his brother Theodore he stated, "When it is all said and done an engineers reputation does not depend on good technical work but on his ability to do good business in securing mines."⁶ In 1908, Hoover sold his partnership in Bewick, Moreing, & Co. and set out as a consultant on his own. Hoover ventured into the oil business concurrent with

³ Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1922), 22-25; Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life*, 140-142.

⁴ Hoover, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventures*, 37-38, 47, 53-54, 57-65, 87; *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency 1920-1933* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 195, 205-208; *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression 1929-1941* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 224-225, 315.

⁵ Nash, *The Engineer*, 48-49.

⁶ Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, 1905 from London, Theodore Hoover Papers, "London 1901-1907/9."

his continued interests in mining; his primary businesses interest were in Australia, China, Russia, Burma, South Africa, Mexico, as well as in countries in Europe and North- and South America.⁷

By 1909, Hoover the entrepreneur established the Mining Magazine in London with the mining engineer Thomas A Rickard as the editor and Thomas's cousin Edgar Rickard as the managing director.⁸ Thomas A. Rickard had been the editor of the prestigious Engineering and Mining Journal established in New York in 1866, and by 1905 the owner of the weekly periodical Mining and Scientific Press published in California since 1860 that served American engineers who worked across the globe.⁹ With these efforts, Hoover had effectively created his own machinery to sway public opinion in the mining community, whereas previously he had to depend on other publications to carry his views.

The same year 1909, Hoover published Principles of Mining that served as a textbook for future mining professionals.¹⁰ A book, as seen in pervious chapters, that deemed the Chinese and Africans to be of lower mental order. The book remained in print until the 1960s and allowed for these racial over tones to continue in the higher education of mining engineers. In 1912, Hoover and his wife Lou Henry Hoover published their translation of Georgious Agricola's 1556 Medieval Latin text De Re

⁷ Nash, *The Engineer*, 378-383, 385-474; Ian Phimister and Jeremy Mouat, "Mining, Engineers and Risk Management: British Overseas Investment, 1894- 1914," *South African Historical Journal* 49, (2003): 1-26; Ian Phimister, "Jeremy, Mouat and Ian Phimister, "The Engineering of Herbert Hoover," *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (2008): 553-584.

⁸ Mouat and Phimister, "The Engineering of Herbert Hoover," 575; Nash, *The Engineer*, 489.

⁹ "T.A Rickard (Deceased 1953)," American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineer, <http://aimehq.org/programs/award/bio/t-rickard-deceased-1953>.

¹⁰ Nash, *The Engineer*, 478-479.

Metallica – On the nature of metals.¹¹ Academic institutions recognized Hoover and he was invited by various universities to lecture, including at Harvard.¹² Hoover’s image in academic circles was cemented when he became a trustee of Stanford University in 1912.¹³ In essence, by 1914 Hoover had successfully established himself in the mining community on both sides of the Atlantic and across the globe. Hoover’s capitalistic role as a financier and promoter had made him a millionaire by the age of 40.¹⁴

Hoover entered public service in 1914 at the outbreak of the Great War (1914-1918). During the war, Hoover successfully operated large-scale relief efforts, first as the Chairman for the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB.) President Wilson noticed Hoover’s work and in 1917 he asked Hoover to serve as the United States Food Administrator to preserve food in America in order to feed the allied troops in Europe.¹⁵ Favored by President Wilson, Hoover served on the President’s Committee of Economic Advisors at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. In Paris, Hoover continued to successfully feed and rebuild the war-torn Europe.¹⁶ The crisis in Europe allowed Hoover

¹¹ Nash, *The Engineer*, 487-493. Lou Henry Hoover was the one proficient in Latin and she had geology degree from Stanford University.

¹² H. L. Smyth to Herbert Hoover, December 1, 1909, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, “Mining Correspondence – Harvard (Lectures) 1909.”

¹³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 527.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 378, 568-570. Hoover reported that already in 1907 he had a yearly income of “\$5000 as a mining expert and \$95,000 as financial expert,” very large sums for the day. Nash calls Hoover a “modest millionaire,” which downplayed Hoover’s fortune.

¹⁵ Stephen Ponder, “Popular Propaganda: The Food Administration in World War I,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no.3 (1995): 539-550. Ponder’s study shows how Hoover used propaganda very masterfully. Additionally, Hoover came in contact with many journalists during the Food Administration that became life long supporters.

¹⁶ Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary*, 1-26. In one section (p. 12), Clements, pointed out that Hoover in his food relief efforts often acted undiplomatically. He broke rules and offended and bullied people, as Clements stated “all wrapped in noble motifs.” This hints that the business tactics he had developed already in China had not changed much over the years.

to emerge from Paris in 1919 as a man known to every American household, as well as around the globe.

The media portrayed Hoover as a war hero and as a humanitarian who had fed the needy; the public agreed.¹⁷ Hoover's name recognition was a fascinating feat. Over the span of the Great War and through the peace negotiations in Paris, Hoover was hailed as the Great Humanitarian, the Great Engineer, and the Great Administrator, laudable characteristics that became synonymous with Hoover's name. With these characteristics, Hoover was encouraged to inspire for the highest and most honorable office of the nation, the seat of the Presidency.¹⁸ Ultimately, in 1928 Hoover was elected the 31st President of the United States. The path to the presidency had started already in 1920 and it had not been without obstacles.¹⁹

In mid-January 1920, Hoover initiated a meeting with Stephen Bonsal, who was a war correspondent with Foreign Service experience and who had served President Wilson at the Peace Conference in Paris 1919. Bonsal was asked to swear that he would not position Hoover as a presidential candidate in the newspapers and also stop other editorials from portraying Hoover as a presidential candidate.²⁰ Hoover wanted to control

¹⁷ Robert F Himmelberg, "Hoover's Public Image, 1919-20: The Emergence of a Public Figure and a Sign of the Times," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-23*, ed. Lawrence E. Gelfand (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 213-216; "Hoover Gets Medal "as Civilian Hero," *New York Times*, February 19, 1920.

¹⁸ Kent, Schofield, "The Public Image of Herbert Hoover in the 1928 Campaign," *Mid-America* 51, no. 4 (1969): 279-280; 282-283; 287-288.

¹⁹ Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary*, 49-99; Phillips Payson, O'Brien, "Herbert Hoover, Anglo-American Relations and Republican Party Politics in the 1920s," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 2 (2011): 200-20; "Republican View of the Hoover Boom," *Literary Digest*, April (1920): 22-31. Clements chapter on the 1920 election gives great insights to the early campaign efforts.

²⁰ Stephen Bonsal, "Herbert Hoover, Shunning Publicity, Is Subjected to Its Pitiless rays," *The Sun*, January 17, 1920, 1-2.

how he was displayed in the press. To Hoover's chagrin, Bonsal refused to fall in line. Rather, in an article that described that meeting with Hoover, Bonsal pointed out the inevitable. A closer investigation of Hoover's role in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, his mining job with the Chinese government, and the CEMC's involvement in regards to the Chinese laborers in South Africa 1904-1910 was a matter of urgency. In a matter-of-fact statement, Bonsal summed up the need for such investigations with "Unimportant detail for ordinary mortals, but when affecting a Presidential possibility, of vital, paramount importance."²¹ Hoover clearly had a Chinese problem.

Herbert Hoover's Apologia – Grasping Control of the Narrative

In 1920, Hoover hired the New York lawyer Arthur Train to review the Kaiping Mines lawsuit in order to issue a favorable press statement on Hoover's behalf.²² At this point, Hoover also took more drastic measures to gain control of the narrative of his Chinese mining career. The trial transcript of 1905 contained detailed and damaging information about Hoover's role in the Kaiping Mines transfer. Information Hoover did not want the American public or anyone else to have access to. Therefore, on January 8, 1920, Train cabled Sir T.H.L Berridge, a lawyer in London, and requested that all records in regards to the Zhang lawsuit should be purchased with the following clear instructions, "spare no expense or effort."²³ In April 1920, Sir Berridge reported that they had received

²¹ Bonsal "Herbert Hoover, Shunning Publicity," 1-2.

²² Arthur Train to Herbert Hoover, April 2, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." Even though Train and Hoover had worked on the case for a while this is the first letter stating upfront that Hoover desired to have a legal statement prepared by Train.

²³ Sir T. H. L. Berridge to Arthur Train, January 21, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." A letter addressed to Hoover's lawyer Train, Berridge confirms that he received the letter in which Train instructed him to purchase all records in the Zhang case with the

authority to mail the transcript of the trial with instructions to return it once reviewed.²⁴

Hoover had hired Train to help out with his Chinese problem, yet, Hoover still stayed very much personally involved in the refutation campaign through his entire life.

While Hoover worked with Train in 1920, an unexpected letter arrived from China. Although the letter had no intention to aid Hoover's apologia of his Chinese mining career, it did just that. The letter brought Tang Shaoyi into the center of Hoover's apologia. According to Hoover's memoirs, Tang appeared out of nowhere in 1928 to defend Hoover's China record. George E. Sokolsky, an American journalist who was educated at Columbia University and the manager for the Bureau of Public Information in Shanghai, China, authored the letter dated January 17, 1920.²⁵ Sokolsky, who was inspired by an interview with Tang, asked Hoover to aid China. Sokolsky quoted an interview in which Tang had stated that he desired Hoover to be the next president of the United States. Tang praised Hoover's relief work efforts during the Great War and recalled how Hoover had aided the many Chinese trapped in the foreign settlement in Tianjin during the Boxer Uprising in 1900. Tang received food and water from Hoover.²⁶

instructions, "Spare no expense or effort." Herbert Hoover to Linden W. Bates, August 30, 1915, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." Hoover offered Bates \$5000 to find the cause of the rumors and another \$500 to his informant if they could get to the bottom of the problem.

²⁴ Sir T. H. L. Berridge to Arthur Train, April 16, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

²⁵ George E. Sokolsky to Herbert Hoover, January 17, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920"; Warren I. Cohen, "George E. Sokolsky: A Jew Wander to China." In *The Chinese Connection: Roger S. Greene, Thomas W. Lamont, George E. Sokolsky and American-East Asian Relations*, 71-87. Studies of the East Asian Institute, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. Sokolsky was highly involved in Shanghai both in politics and business, by 1920 he was an informant to the U.S. government. Sokolsky became a frequent correspondent with John V. A MacMurray the U.S. Ambassador in China 1925-1928, and eventually became a life-long supporter of Hoover.

²⁶ George E. Sokolsky to Herbert Hoover, January 17, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

Although Sokolsky, who was anti-Japanese in 1920, recognized that Hoover had conveyed the Kaiping Mines to the British, he stated that at least Hoover had saved one of the greatest Chinese resources from Japanese and Russian aggression.²⁷ The letter served the refutation campaign well. In 1920, nationalism was on the rise in China. At the Peace Conference in Paris, Japan had been allowed to keep Shantung, which was a great disappointment to the Chinese.²⁸ The refutation campaign came to use Sokolsky's theme that Hoover had saved the mines from the Japanese's imperial aggression; it showed the "special relationship" between China and the U.S.²⁹

However, Sokolsky's intent with the letter was not by any means to aid the refutation campaign. Rather Tang had served as a gateway for Sokolsky to appeal for Hoover's aid. China suffered from internal strife among warlords and Japanese aggression; Sokolsky asked Hoover to use his great influences in the world to continue what he had once started in China:

"China needs today in America men who know her and men who sympathize with her. China today needs the friendship of men in America who see beyond the Japanese propaganda. You know China, you know Chinese modesty and her inability to advertise herself, and you know how much China needs the aggressive friendship of United States."³⁰

This was an ironic appeal, as Hoover and Moreing in 1900 had their own territorial designs on China; they attempted to obtain exclusive mining rights for the whole province of Zhili and district of Jehol. There is no evidence that Hoover responded

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 92-93.

²⁹ George E. Sokolsky to Herbert Hoover, January 17, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

³⁰ Ibid.

directly to Sokolsky in 1920. However, George B. Baker, a journalist and Hoover loyalist since the CRB, capitalized on the letter, as it had provided a gateway for the refutation campaign to trace Hoover's humanitarian side all the way back to China.³¹ There is no evidence that Hoover and his loyalists made the humanitarian connection prior to Sokolsky's letter.

By April 1920, the first press statement of Hoover's apologia of his Chinese mining career was ready for circulation. Hoover was a candidate in the presidential primary race in California. His opponent was the Republican Hiram Johnson, the Governor of California. Ralph P. Merritt, presidential campaign organizer in San Francisco, received two documents from Baker: the prepared press statement from Train and Sokolsky's article. The instructions were clear. If the story about Hoover in China broke, publish Train's statement, but have Sokolsky's letter precede it.³²

The letter from Sokolsky had first received extensive edits with the aid from Hoover. Tang had been made the former chief owner of the Kaiping Mines, however, in 1901 it was noted that Tang held only 70 shares in the company, far from a majority owner.³³ Additionally, there is no evidence that Tang consented to his name to be used in such a way. Although it could be inferred from the interview that Sokolsky referenced that he supported Hoover as a presidential candidate. Recall, Tang acted as a personal translator to Yuan Governor General in Zhili in Tianjin. Yuan had demanded the Kaiping Mines transfer to be cancelled and also Tang served as a leader for the Rights Recovery

³¹ George E. Baker to Arthur Train, 29 March, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." Baker wrote, that the Boxer Rebellion had been Hoover's first entrance to feeding foreigners on a large scale.

³² George B. Baker to Ralph P. Merritt, April 28, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

³³ Nash, *The Engineer*, 645, see footnote 120.

Movement to recover lost mining and railroad concessions. Since then Tang had also served as the first Premier in China in 1912 upon Yuan's request.³⁴ For the publication, large sections of the letter were deleted, such as any references that the mines were British. Hoover was portrayed as the savior of the Kaiping Mines from Russian and Japanese imperial aggression. Yet, foremost the letter highlighted Hoover's early humanitarian work in China. It had provided a gateway to connect Hoover's image of 1920 as the great humanitarian all the way back to China.

Train's press statement, which followed, served primarily to exonerate Hoover from any guilt in the 1905 lawsuit. Most importantly, it contained a testimonial from Baron Emile-Ernest de Cartier de Marchienne, who in 1917 was the Belgian Ambassador to the United States. Baron De Cartier and Hoover had overlapped in China; de Cartier had represented the same financial interests that had been invested in the Kaiping Mines. In August of 1917, President Wilson had granted Hoover authoritative powers as the U.S Food Administrator. The Democratic Senator James E. Reed of Missouri questioned Hoover's powers based on Hoover's integrity as it related to his Chinese mining career and the lawsuit that followed in 1905. In the letter to Hoover, Baron de Cartier stated that Senator Reed must have been misinformed and was appalled by the accusations.³⁵

Baron de Cartier in his letter acknowledged, as a foreign national, he should not intervene in the U.S. Congress and admitted that he "would be the last one to break that

³⁴ Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 76-77.

³⁵ Emile-Ernest de Cartier de Marchienne to Herbert Hoover, 8 August, 1917, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce: Correspondence, "de Cartier, Baron, 1917-1921." De Cartier wrote Hoover as he had learned about the discussion of a Food Bill in the Senate in which Senator Reed attacked Hoover. De Cartier was careful, to note that he would not want to break the rule that no foreign national should intervene in discussions submitted to Congress.

rule.”³⁶ However, on August 29, 1917, de Cartier issued a testimonial that was used repeatedly by the refutation campaign and ultimately recorded in the Congressional Records in 1928. The testimonial stated that Hoover as the chief-engineer and later as the director of the Kaiping Mines in China, had served British, Belgian, and Chinese interests alike with the highest sense of honor. Additionally, Baron de Cartier absolved Hoover from any guilt in the 1905 lawsuit as he stated, “the termination of the litigation was a complete vindication of your conduct and largely turned upon your testimony.”³⁷ Of course, Judge Joyce in 1905 had found Hoover and his associates guilty of breach of contract.

In April of 1920, Train’s prepared press release edited and reviewed by Hoover closed with the following words, “It is time these mis-statements should cease, and on behalf of Mr. Hoover we beg to say that any person guilty of maliciously repeating them will be held responsible, both civilly and criminally.”³⁸ Hoover sent a clear and threatening message.

This first press statement, which was refined throughout the years, was finally read into the Congressional Records in February of 1928. It contained Hoover’s benevolent narrative and the myths had been established. The four major themes that came out of the statement, (1) he took no part in the financial arrangements of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Emile-Ernest de Cartier de Marchienne testimonial of Hoover and the Kaiping Mines, 29 August, 1917, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce: Correspondence, “de Cartier, Baron, 1917-1921”

³⁸ Prepared statement on Hoover’s Chinese mining Career, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files “Chinese Mining Suit 1920”; Arthur Train, December 15, 1927, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files “Campaign of 1928 - Refutations on file, 1920-1928.” Train confirmed the 1920 statement, when he in 1927 wrote “ It is over five years since Hoover’s friends consulted me as to best way to smoke out and punish the unknown person or persons responsible for the political whispering campaign of slander, concerning his connection with the Chang Yen Mao lawsuit.”

reorganization of the CEMC, (2) he always followed the 1901 memorandum, which gave equal rights to the Chinese in the administration of the company, (3) he was the main witness that allowed his former boss Zhang to win the lawsuit in London, and (4) he ended contact with the company when he left China in 1901, he had ended his contact with the company, which as result also meant he did not serve as a board member of the CEMC 1901-1912.³⁹

Additionally by April of 1928, Tang had been sought out in China. The American publisher B. W. Fleisher of the Japan Advertiser, travelled to China with the same press statement prepared by Train that was later read into the Congressional Records.⁴⁰ Using the press statement as a model, a flurry of articles appeared both in China and the United States in which Tang repeated that in 1905 it was Hoover who had aided the Chinese to win the lawsuit.⁴¹ This was in stark contrast to what Hoover wrote to his brother

³⁹ Congressional Records, Seventieth Congress, First Session, February 29, 1928, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Chinese Mining Suit 1928." A letter from the Republican Senator Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin, a lawyer, prefaced the record; he had analyzed the lawsuit and stated that nothing in the matter reflected on Secretary Hoover's honor. The record was reprinted in the press for example, "Hits Hoover Critics on Chinese Lawsuit-Free Puts Letters into Records of Congress, Exonerating the Secretary in the 1905 Case," *New York Times*, March 2, 1928.

⁴⁰ Lawrence Richey to B.W Fleisher, February 7, 1928, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Chinese Mining Suit 1923-1928 – Tong Shao Yi." Richey provided Fleisher with the documents needed to search out Tang, Richey commented that the Chinese case was generally mentioned in the media, but it was a "whispering campaign." Richey was preparing for a possible public attack on Hoover's Chinese mining career and wanted to obtain a statement from Tang.

⁴¹ "Hoover's record in China one entirely creditable, says Tong" unidentified clipping 1928; "Hoover given clean China record by Tong Shao-yi in answer to attacks in the U.S." unidentified clipping 1928; "New Light Shed on Hoover by Tong Shao-yi." *Shanghai Times*, April, 1928, in Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Chinese Mining Suit 1923-1928 – Tong Shao Yi." Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Akria Iriye's account shows that Tang was active in politics in 1920-1930s and even broke away from Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930s as part of the southern opposition. Hoover still used Tang's statements in the election of 1932.

Theodore in 1905, post-trial, when he stated: “I have been very busy 2 months fighting Chinaman but have beaten him.”⁴²

Over and over again, the refutation campaign used the theme of Hoover as a humanitarian during the Boxer Uprising in 1900 to deflect the focus away from the Kaiping Mines transfer, a common tactic used in political apologia.⁴³ There is no denying that Hoover, like many other civilians in the foreign settlement of Tianjin in 1900, did good deeds. However, in the refutation campaign it was purposefully communicated to the American public in the 1920s to merge it with the image of the great humanitarian he had become. Hoover’s humanitarian efforts during the Boxer Uprising are still highlighted in writing today and the authors often stay silent on Hoover’s role in the Kaiping Mines transfer. This silence allows for myths to continue.⁴⁴

In early January 1921, a letter marked private and confidential arrived from England. A clerk named H.W Newill, who had seen Train’s letters, still worked for the law firm that had served Zhang in 1905. Newill stated that he could aid Hoover’s efforts in obtaining the desired records:

“After a considerable amount of personal in convince and trouble, I have found the Pleadings and Briefs which may be of use for your. Of course my Principals are not aware I am writing you, but as I acted as the Late

⁴² Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, London, 1905, Theodore Hoover Papers, Letters to Herbert Hoover 1897-1907, “London, 1901-1907/9.”

⁴³ “Old China Hands” in the U.S. Cabinet,” *Millard’s Review of the Far East* 16, no. 8 (1921): 399. Hoover’s mining career ended with the Boxer Uprising it stated and his career as a food administrator started. “

⁴⁴ Hoe, *Women at the Siege*, 227-235; Hoover, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventures*, 53-54; Rose I. “Getting to Know Herbert Hoover, Enigmatic Humanitarian,” *Springer Science and Business Media*, no. 47 (2010): 529-533; Tom Walsh, “Herbert Hoover and the Boxer Rebellion,” *Prologue*, Spring 1987: 34-40; Hal Wert, “Hoover’s Brush with the Boxers,” *History Today* 61, no. 9 (2011): 36-43. Walsh and Wert carry forth the myth that Hoover guided the American soldiers on July 13 in the Battle of Tianjin, although his wife’s diary put them at Taku at that point. On July 13, 1900, a cablegram arrived with the word “safe” to Hoover’s father-in-law. (See Chapter 2.)

Mr. Haweley's secretary, I am acquainted with all the facts and have access to all the papers."⁴⁵

There is no evidence that Hoover and his associates ever returned the transcripts to London. Rather, by 1926, another confidential letter arrived from Newill addressed to Hoover's loyalist Lawrence Richey. In 1923, Newill had assisted Richey, who had been sent on a mission by Hoover to destroy old records and to obtain testimonials from lawyers connected to the 1905 lawsuit.⁴⁶ Newill, who probably had been assigned the role of Hoover's eyes in London, reported that he had received a request for the 1905 Zhang trial transcript. He stated that he made a search for the papers, "knowing all the time that they had been destroyed so we could not supply copies."⁴⁷ The refutation campaign had successfully gained control of the facts, or at least as they related to the trial transcript of 1905. That is, Hoover and his loyalists engaged in destruction and withholding of evidence in order to control the narrative disseminated to the American public. To date, the only known copy of the trial transcript survives at the archives in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, in the Papers of E. J. Nathan. The same E. J. Nathan the former Chief Manager of KMA who refuted Carlson's study about the Kaiping Mines, in regards to Hoover's service as a director of the CEMC.

⁴⁵ H. W. Newill to Sir, January 27, 1921, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." The letter is not marked with a name but it was most likely sent to Train. Newill became a contact in London for the refutation campaign.

⁴⁶ Nash, *The Engineer*, 656.

⁴⁷ H. W. Newill to Lawrence Richey, Lawrence Richey Papers, Correspondence 1926-1956, "Rhodes Cecil-Correspondence regarding purchase of letters by Hoover 1926." Newill also mentioned that the he had a letter of Cecil Rhodes and it must have been relayed to Hoover. Rhodes letter was then purchased for Hoover. Edgar Rickard to John Agnew, July 2, 1926; John Agnew to Edgar Rickard, August 26, 1926, Lawrence Richey Papers, Correspondence 1926-1956, "Rhodes Cecil-Correspondence regarding purchase of letters by Hoover 1926."

Baron de Cartier and Tang as political figures had offered testimonials in Hoover's favor. Hoover also sought a Judge or lawyer connected to the trail to attest to his high honor. The British turned down such requests. Sir T. H. L. Berridge told Train no British government official could issue such statements, as it "would render the British government open to criticism as in any way attempting to influence the course of American politics."⁴⁸ Not satisfied with Train's result, Hoover engaged his friend Agnew in London. Yet, Agnew reported back to Edgar Rickard that Justice Younger had stated "it was a certainty that no such opinion would be obtained and that it would be regarded as impolitic to make any attempt."⁴⁹ Again, Hoover persisted.

In 1921, as Hoover was considered for Secretary of Commerce in President elect William G. Harding's cabinet, his integrity as it related to the Kaiping Mines transfer had again become a problem.⁵⁰ Hoover, despite the negative responses in 1920 from the British, appealed for help from the highest office of law, via a middleman, namely his friend John Broad in London. Lord Chief Justice Reading, who had briefly served as Ambassador to the United States (1918-1919) and Hoover's lawyer in 1905, was approached. Included in the letter intended for Lord Chief Justice Reading, Hoover had

⁴⁸ Sir T. H. L. Berridge to Arthur Train, April 16, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." Sir Mathew Ingle Joyce the Judge of the 1905 trial was alive. The refutation campaign had suggested a testimonial from Judge Joyce.

⁴⁹ John Agnew to Edgar Rickard, 20 April, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

⁵⁰ Herbert Hoover to John Broad, January 31, 1921 Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920." Guy M. Walker to Senator Warren G. Harding (President elect) December 20, 1920, Folder 58 correspondence – Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana; Guy M. Walker to Senator James Reed, (Democrat, MO.) February 25, 1921, Folder 63 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana. Walker sent his concerns about Hoover to Senator Harding and Senator Reed, as he was truly concerned about Hoover's actions in China 1900-1901.

drafted the suggested testimonial he desired.⁵¹ Many of the testimonials in the HHPL were authored by Hoover himself; the draft served to show that Hoover intentionally wanted to change the narrative of his Chinese mining career to match the honorable office he was aspiring for. The draft for Lord Reading's desired testimonial to sign closed with the words:

“As I was one of the barristers in this trial, I would like to go on record as saying that in the tangled skein that was developed there there was nothing that reflected upon your integrity or honor, and in fact, that your participation in the mater was largely accidental as an important witness to negotiations that had been carried on by the principals some years before.”⁵²

Once again, Hoover received a negative response from the British. The British had made it clear they were not to interfere in the United States elections. However, in 1923 when Lawrence Richey travelled to London, equipped with a testimonial, he managed to finally obtain a signature from T. R. Huges who had been Hoover's chief defense lawyer in 1905. In 1928, T. R. Huges' testimonial was merged in to the statement preserved in the Congressional Records.⁵³ There was no mention that he had been Hoover's lawyer or that all other surviving legal professionals had turned down Hoover's requests on political grounds.

⁵¹ Herbert Hoover to John Broad, January 31, 1921 Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Chinese Matter 1917-1920.” Herbert Hoover to John Agnew January 31, 1922, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files “Chinese Matter 1917-1920.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Harry G. Abrahamson to Secretary of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover, April 26, 1923, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation “Chinese Mining Suit 1923.” Abrahamson had been Hoover's own lawyer in 1905. He issued a testimonial that again was based on Train's statement and in regards to the allegations of Hoover's involvement in the 1905 lawsuit Abrahamson stated, “that you in some way acted improperly. This allegation is entirely unfounded.”

Hoover's questionable labor practices, as they related to CEMC and the Chinese labors in South Africa in 1901-1910, were refuted with the same methods. The blame was deflected away from Hoover. Interestingly enough in 1906 it had been suggested to use the facilities in Qinhuangdao to import labors to the construction of the Panama Canal, but it had been turned down.⁵⁴ Labor was clear on their stance on Chinese labor. All acquisitions were denied and testimonials from fellow mining engineers were collected.⁵⁵ Labor unions demanded an answer, as it did not seem that Hoover's labor records matched the ideals he stood for.⁵⁶ The Hoover campaign issued several press statements in regards to his labor history, which again pitted Hoover as the righteous man and a friend of labor.⁵⁷ In 1932, Edgar Rickard wrote John Agnew in London. Rickard had obtained a testimonial from Honnold that stated that Hoover had nothing to do with the Chinese laborers in 1904 while he visited South Africa. One problem remained. Rickard in referring to Honnold's statement said, "it does not clear the Chief of the charge that the Chinese Engineer and Mining Co. participated in the movement of labor and charged ten

⁵⁴ "Chinese Labor at Panama," *Washington Post*, August 12, 1906; "Collecting, Preparing, and Transporting Chinese Laborers to the Transvaal Mines," *Far Eastern Review*, March 1906: 283-284. U.S. Consul James W. Ragsdale of Tianjin had presented the content of the article about the Transvaal Mines in Washington DC in the spring of 1906. It was clearly an "advertising" to the U.S. government to use an already established network, although it was ultimately turned down. The U.S. public did not approve of Chinese labors.

⁵⁵ William L. Honnold Statement in Regards to Chinese Labor in South Africa, December 21, 1931, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign 1932 Hoover and Chinese Labor." Honnold, to protect his own reputation, stated that the project was, "under the direction and conducted under the supervision of the Governments concerned." That is, the mining industry was not at the center of the project, which was far from true.

⁵⁶ Arthur A. Quinn to Herbert Hoover, October 25, 1928; C. L. Jarett of Charleston, West Virginia to Herbert Hoover; Robert Smith of Cheyenne, Wyoming to Herbert Hoover, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign 1928 Hoover and Chinese Labor." Quinn, President of New Jersey State Federation of Labor, stated if not reply is issued in regards to the charges of mistreatment of labor it would be assumed they were true and that they would be guided accordingly.

⁵⁷ "Calls labor talk slander on Hoover," *New York Times*, October 26, 1928. This article answered attacks on Hoover's labor practices in China and Burma.

dollar a head on each coolie.”⁵⁸ The labor attacks were refuted in the same tone as the Kaiping Mines affair; “It represents the type of slander and defamation being circulated in increasing intensity by desperate men in efforts to *deceive* the public. There is not one item of truthful statement in it.”⁵⁹ In 1932 Hoover who usually acted from behind the scene broke his silence and denied any connection the Chinese labors in South Africa.⁶⁰ Hoover equally deceived the American public with the methods he applied in the refutation campaign and the narrative he created.

Hoover believed himself to be above criticism, due to his admirable track record.⁶¹ Therefore, all attacks on his Chinese mining career were deemed as unwarranted. Hoover consistently described the attacks as libel, ancient falsehoods, absolute malice, whispering slanders, and above all, that the people who spread those messages had been misinformed.⁶² Foremost, the refutation campaign operated via Hoover’s favored medium, the printed press. The carefully placed publications in the

⁵⁸ Edgar Rickard to John Agnew, January 21, 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, “Richey-Hoover File Statements and Refutations Relief 1916-1932”; Edgar Rickard to John Agnew, February 26, 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, “Richey-Hoover File Statements and Refutations Relief 1916-1932.” Richard a month after sending his first request was concerned he wrote to Agnew again in February, he needed a denial, “from your side can we get a direct answer to the allegations that the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company actually contracted for the Chinese labor in South Africa.”

⁵⁹ “Calls labor talk slander on Hoover,” *New York Times*, October 26, 1928. This article answered attacks on Hoover’s labor practices in China and Burma. The Chinese labor on Transvaal became more to the forefront when John Hamill’s book was published in 1931.

⁶⁰ Campaign speech Cleveland, OH, October 15, 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, “Campaign of 1932 – Hoover and Chinese Labor.” In Cleveland Hoover for the first time addressed the attacks on his CEMC record publicly by denouncing any involvement with the Chinese labors.

⁶¹ Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary*, 419.

⁶² Lloyd, “*Aggressive Introvert*,” 166-167; Herbert Hoover to John Agnew, January 25, 1921, Pre-Commerce Subject Files, “China,”

United States as well as in China served to pacify Americans, as well as the educated Chinese that questioned Hoover's integrity and fitness for the presidency.

Hoover used testimonials by men whom Hoover considered untouchables. These prominent men in society, many of whom were closely related to the Kaiping Mines, defended Hoover but also preserved their own reputations. Moreover, Hoover as stated above wrote or at least drafted many of the testimonials himself. The below experts from a Hoover friendly publication nicely captures Hoover and his loyalists' attitudes in regards to the attacks on his Chinese mining career.

“History relates few instances of a great man escaping the envy, hatred, and malice of a section of his contemporaries. Mr. Hoover's record of scholarly attainment, engineering achievement, administrative success, and humanitarian service has seemingly brought to light the innate meanness of character of those in whom initiative of the better kind is lacking, and whose judgment of their fellow is warped, possibly by an uncomfortable realization of their incapacity and the smallness of their intellectual and moral stature.”⁶³

Guy M. Walker a Voice for the American and the Chinese People

In 1920, Guy M. Walker (1870-1945), a successful New York lawyer who spent ten years with his Methodist Missionary parents in Beijing China, was of the same opinion as Bonsal. Hoover's Chinese mining career needed further clarification. In a letter to Arthur W. Page, the editor of *World's Work*, Walker addressed the 1920 December issue that had featured Hoover. Walker requested that a thorough investigation be made into Hoover's Chinese mining career.⁶⁴ Walker, who has unfairly been called

⁶³ “Mr. Hoover and the China Incident” in *Engineering and Mining Journal* 125, (1928) 441-442.

⁶⁴ Guy M. Walker to Arthur W. Page, November 29, 1920, Folder 81 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

anti-Hoover, admitted that he had no personal knowledge of Hoover's time in China, but his informants did. However, Walker was clear on one point, if the stories were true, he too worried about having a man unfriendly to China (i.e., Hoover) to serve as a cabinet member so close to President elect Harding.⁶⁵

The informants, two Chinese gentlemen named Dr. Wang Hou Chai and Dr. Chen Wai Ping and who were both educated in the United States, had in 1920 travelled to Des Moines, IA as the Chinese delegates to attend a Methodist Church conference. Dr. Wang was a successful businessman who worked with the Kailuan Mining Administration, which administered and sold the coal of the Kaiping Mines.⁶⁶ The Kailuan Mining Administration in 1920 was still headed by Major Nathan, who had taken over in Hoover's position as General Manager of the Kaiping Mines in 1903. Dr. Wang also worked with the Chinese American Industrial Development Company and served as the President of the Y.M.C.A in Tianjin. Dr. Chen was the editor of the Chinese Christian Advocate at Shanghai, as well as a childhood friend to Walker; the two had played while growing up together in Beijing⁶⁷.

Chen and Wang objected Hoover's candidacy for the presidency. They cautioned Walker about Hoover's integrity. Walker learned that Hoover in the employment of the Chinese Mining Bureau in 1900 had broken his trust to the Chinese imperial government when he conveyed the rich Kaiping Mines to British ownership and the lawsuit that

⁶⁵ Nash, *The Engineer*, 166, see footnote 48; Guy M. Walker to John M. Moore, January 12, 1921, Folder 14 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

⁶⁶ Guy M. Walker to Herbert Hoover, January 7, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

followed. Mr. Walker, although concerned, encouraged both gentlemen to back up their charges with copies of records to prove their objections to Hoover.⁶⁸ Dr. Wong had remained in America until September of 1920 and secured interviews with journalists, as well as travelled to Washington D.C. to meet with Republican leaders.

In the meantime, Page World's Works editor, who was a Hoover supporter, turned to Hoover and relayed the letter from Walker. Hoover, relieved to finally have an actual source for the attacks on his Chinese mining career, instructed Page to address Walker in the simplest matter. Tell Mr. Walker that his informants were misinformed. Walker refused to fall in line. Hoover got personally involved and his secretary sent instructions to Train:

Mr. Hoover hopes that you can get this man Walker and corner him in any way you see fit. If you can pin him down to the exact statements he has received from his Chinese friends it might help, but in any case Mr. Hoover gives you a free hand to deal with him in any way you see fit and as much aggressiveness as you consider wise.⁶⁹

It appears to be clear that besides the Democratic Senator Reed and Bonsal, Walker was another American who had received intimate knowledge of Hoover's Chinese mining career. Neither of them fit the description of the refutation campaign's charge that "lower characters" in society spread slanderous malice charges against Hoover. Walker had a real concern for China and was a protector of her interests via the many friendships he had formed as a young man in the Empire. In 1900, post the Boxer Uprising, Walker's knowledge was put to work as he consulted President McKinley on

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Christian A. Herter to Arthur Train, December 7, 1920, Herbert Hoover Papers, Pre-Commerce Subject Files "Chinese Matter 1917-1920."

China questions. His deep relation to China was seen in 1909, as Walker's name was circulated for consideration as the American Minister in Beijing.⁷⁰

Clearly, in this case, Hoover realized that Walker was an equal in society and got involved in a letter exchange. Hoover expressed his gratitude and relief that he finally had found the sources of these inflammatory rumors, and libelous propaganda.⁷¹ Walker had stated to Richey that Hoover ought to "make a definite statement" on his Chinese mining career in order to show his true character.⁷² Yet, Hoover persisted and insisted that Walker's informants spread extraordinary statements and were the "result of wild imagination built up by the so-called young Chinese against the old Chinese and do not contain enough of truth to make their analysis worthwhile."⁷³ Hoover blamed the nationalistic movement that was on the rise in China. However, he proceeded to explain his annoyance of being attacked and requested that Walker "write to your correspondents stating that you are satisfied that you have been misinformed and the charges are without

⁷⁰ Guy M. Walker may get post in Peking, *New York Times*, October 19, 1909.

⁷¹ Herbert Hoover to Guy M. Walker, January 12, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence – Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana. Hoover recognized Walker's standing in society when he closed his letter with, "Needless to say your own standing and sincerity are the only reasons why I am troubling you about the matter at all."

⁷² Guy M. Walker to Herbert Hoover, January 7, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana. This letter indicates that Lawrence Richey Hoover's close loyalist had met with Walker before the letter exchange started. Walker had stated to Richey that Hoover needed to make public statement in regards to his Chinese mining career.

⁷³ Herbert Hoover to Guy M. Walker, January 12, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana. Hoover recognized Walker's standing in society when he closed his letter with, "Needless to say your own standing and sincerity are the only reasons why I am troubling you about the matter at all."

foundation.”⁷⁴ Walker responded, and pointed out that Hoover had provided no evidence on the contrary. “You could not therefore, expect me to say that I am satisfied that a statement made by him was without foundation when you have made no explanation of it in your own behalf at all.”⁷⁵

Rather, Walker sought answers to the questions his Chinese friends had raised. He wrote John M. Moore in China who duly responded in regards to Walker’s requests into Hoover’s role in China.⁷⁶ Moore stated that he was “unable to give the exact detail of the scandal he [Hoover] was implicated in. The only thing I can tell you that legally he cannot be convicted but morally he was wrong.” Moore was encouraged that the deeper answers to Walker’s questions laid in the records of the lawyers in London. Moore referred to the very same records that Hoover was in the process of controlling via monetary means, that is, the trial transcripts.⁷⁷ In 1928, the Republican Party sought Walker’s support. Walker stated that he did not know the full truth about the Chinese mining suit, yet Hoover’s statements were not satisfactory. Walker spoke for the

⁷⁴ Herbert Hoover to Guy M. Walker, January 12, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

⁷⁵ Guy M. Walker to Herbert Hoover, January 18, 1921, Folder 158 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

⁷⁶ Guy M. Walker to John M. Moore, January 12, 1921, Folder 14 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

⁷⁷ John M. Moore to Guy M. Walker to March 2, 1921, Folder 14 correspondence – Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

American people, “until this matter is fully explained to the American people I feel that Mr. Hoover has no claim for support as a candidate to the presidency.”⁷⁸

Yet, the statements Hoover had issued had muddled the truth and the American people had cast their vote for a re-engineered image of Hoover’s time in China, not the true narrative. The American public was made to believe that Hoover’s Chinese mining career was truly nothing by honorable. In 1928, and arguably still today, the American public did not know about Hoover’s and Moreing’s even grander design in China, namely their repeated attempts for exclusive mining rights in the whole province of Zhili and the district of Jehol.

Even after Hoover successfully won the presidency in 1928, the attacks on his Chinese mining career did not abate. Rather the attacks intensified and reached a zenith in the period of 1930-1933 when multiple books, in the form of biographies, were published that documented Hoover’s private career with a heighten focus on his Chinese mining career. The refutation campaign persisted. Hoover and his loyalists labeled all of these books as the smear books.⁷⁹ This was an unfair label; as for example, Walter Liggett’s depiction of Hoover’s time in China in his book *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* was thoroughly researched and was almost identical to Carlson’s later Harvard University monologue.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Guy M. Walker to George K. Morris, January 20, 1928, Folder 36 correspondence - Guy Morrison Walker Papers, Class of 1890. MS. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana. Morrison was the head of the Republican State Committee, New York, NY. Walker cautioned that Hoover had betrayed China’s trust

⁷⁹ Rosanne Sizer, “Herbert Hoover and the Smear Books, 1930-1932,” *Annals of Iowa* 47 (1984): 345-346.

⁸⁰ Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines*; Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover*, 66-83,98-124. Liggett was an author, journalist and editor. The Walter W. Liggett Papers, New York Public Library <http://archives.nypl.org/mss/1760>.

Yet, Liggett, as well as other authors, were accused of libel by the refutation campaign, a theme that was continued by Seizer in 1984 when Liggett again was bunched together with two of the more questionable and sensational smear book authors Hamill and O'Brien. Liggett's daughter pointed out the unfair treatment.⁸¹ In February of 1932, Hamill and O'Brien, were two of the authors exposed in an article written by Train. In the article in which Hoover and his loyalists had contributed to and reviewed, O'Brien and Hamill were cast as persons with low moral character.⁸² Hoover and his loyalists obtained FBI records for the authors with the aid of the young J. Edgar Hoover. In addition, Hoover's loyalists Lewis Strauss and Lawrence Richey arranged for a break-in into O'Brien's office, as it was said Hoover wanted to know what materials O'Brien had. However, the assistants from the Navy encountered an empty office.⁸³ Indubitably, the refutation campaign overstepped and misused power. Ultimately, Hoover and the refutation campaign obtained an affidavit from Hamill. Hamill withdrew every statement from his book as false.⁸⁴

⁸¹ John Hamill, *The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover under Two Flags* (New York: 1931); Sizer, "Herbert Hoover and the Smear Books, 1930-1932," 351-352; Marda Woodbury, *Stopping the Presses: The Murder of Walter W. Liggett* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 32-34. Although, Hamill's narrative was written with sensational prose, much of what he stated about the Chinese mining career of Hoover was true.

⁸² "The Strange Attacks on Mr. Hoover, by Arthur Train" *Colliers*, February 20 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Chinese Mining Suit 1931-1932." Other articles that also came to Hoover's defense in regards to the attacks on his mining career and the smear books; George Bronson Rea, "The Tragic Ending to a Daly Opera," *Far Eastern Review*, April (1932): 153-155; Edward Hunter, "The Kailan Mines and Hoover," *China Weekly Review* 57, no. 7 (1931): 262.

⁸³ Barton J. Bernstein, "Hoovergate (Hoover Administration Scandal)," *American Heritage* 43, no. 3 (1992): 106.

⁸⁴ Sizer, "Herbert Hoover and the Smear Books, 1930-1932," 359. The 188-page affidavit from Hamill in which he withdrew everything he had written exists in HHPL, Sizer stated that it was most likely obtained involuntary.

On March 4, 1929, President Herbert Hoover was sworn in and in his Inaugural Address he stated, “Those who have a true understanding of America know that we have no desire for territorial expansion, for economic or other domination of other peoples. Such purposes are repugnant to our ideals of human freedom.”⁸⁵ The Kaiping Mines that Hoover had conveyed to British ownership in 1900 were still under British ownership in 1929.

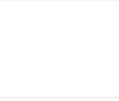
Seven years earlier in 1922, at the Washington Naval Conference and during a meeting of the Committee on Pacific and Far Eastern Questions, which was attended by nine nations to discuss arms control, Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador to the United States addressed his Chinese colleagues. Sir Auckland Geddes inquired about the status of the Anglo-Chinese and Sino-American treaties of 1902 and 1903, as it applied to mining investments. Article IX in the treaties had stated that China would update her mining code to, “while promoting the interests of Chinese subjects and not injuring in any way the sovereign rights of China, shall offer no impediment to the attraction of foreign capital or place foreign capitalist at a greater disadvantage that they would be under generally accepted foreign regulations.” Sir Auckland Geddes stated that as far as he was aware an attempt had been made in 1914 to update the code but with no success.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Herbert Hoover, “Inaugural Address of Herbert Hoover ” March 4, 1929. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, <https://hoover.archives.gov/info/inauguralspeech.html>; Herbert Hoover, “Address to the Gridiron Club” April 26, 1930. American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=22173>. Hoover stated in 1930, “We know there is neither financial, territorial, nor military imperialism in the American heart. We know that such ideas are anathema to the American mind, and no man could be elected a county commissioner on such a platform.”

⁸⁶ Thirtieth Meeting of Committee on Pacific and Far Eastern Questions, Thursday, February 2, 1922, in *Conference on the Limitation of Armament*, Document no. 126, 67th Congress, Washington Government Printing Office, 757-758.

Alfred Sao-Ke Sze of the Chinese legation to the U.S. issued his reply and reminded Sir Geddes that the present mining code was quite generous. Foreigners could invest 50 percent capital in a given mining venture and he felt Britain was well represented. Then Sze asked for permission to mention an example, namely, the Chinese Engineering & Mining Co., which he had been told in the year 1919 “had made a profit so large that they had paid income tax and super tax to the British treasury amounting over £1,000,000.” Sze closed “if a company could pay a tax of that amount to the treasury, it showed that the mining laws at present in force in China could not be very far in the wrong.”⁸⁷ That is, in the 1920s China still suffered a loss of profits and autonomy from the faithful Kaiping Mines transfer that Hoover had been so instrumental in carrying through in the years 1899-1901. China had not forgotten.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 758.



Chapter V.

Conclusion

Herbert Hoover's apologia of his Chinese mining career has been explained as a typical political defense having little to no impact on the presidential elections. Hoover's behavior and actions as it related to the refutation campaign have been excused by his well-known inability to tolerate criticism; in other words, Hoover's personality was the problem. As a result Hoover's commendatory narrative of his Chinese mining career, which sprung from his refutation campaign and epitomized in his memoirs, has been allowed to remain in the public sphere as myths.

With this delimited view of the refutation campaign, coupled with how the refutation campaign has been analyzed in the literature, a gap in the historiography existed. Neither the American public nor the historical events that the attacks referenced were placed at the center of the examination; by including both, the refutation campaign takes on a new meaning. Having examined the refutation campaign in direct relation to the historical events, it is evident that while Hoover was a public servant he deliberately concealed his true role in his Chinese mining career. Hoover concealed his past in order to maintain his highly idealistic American image and to earn the vote from the American public in the presidential elections of 1920, 1928, and 1932. As a consequence, the American public was deceived by Hoover, as they did not have a balanced and complete depiction of the person they had cast their vote for.

Additionally, Hoover's aggressive refutation campaign, which lasted beyond the presidential elections, had long-term consequences as it fractured the narrative of Hoover

in China and his continued role as a director of the CEMC. The fragmented picture of Hoover's Chinese mining career is evidenced by Hoover's absence in the Sino-American narrative at the turn of the twentieth century; Hoover does not forcefully enter the scene until his presidency during the Manchurian Crisis in 1931-1932. Factually, as an American, Hoover acted as a decisive force in the battle of concessions in China 1899-1901.¹ Rather, more commonly, Hoover is described as a statesman with the utmost experience of Chinese culture attributed to his residence in the Chinese empire in 1899-1901.² Therefore, this research strongly supports Michael Hunt's stance in the 1970s that in the study of Sino-American studies, individual American actors, such as Hoover who acted for British and Belgian interests, need to be included in the narrative to better understand that American businessmen were not a benign force in China during the battle of concessions in 1895-1900.³

Similarly, Hoover's directorship with the CEMC, when concurrently in 1904-1910, 63,695 Chinese laborers worked and lived in deplorable conditions in the British colony Transvaal in South Africa, needs to be incorporated in the narrative of Hoover's Chinese mining career. Hoover sanctioned the Chinese Labor project through his directorship at the CEMC 1901-1912. Although Hoover did not directly supervise the Chinese laborers in South Africa, he earned monetary compensation from the project.

¹ Hunt, "The Forgotten Occupation: Peking," 501-529; Michael Hunt, *Making of a Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 198-199, 205; Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 65-66, 69. Neither Hunt or Cohen's narratives mentions Hoover during the time period 1895-1905, Hoover does not enter the Sino-American narrative forcefully until the Manchurian Crisis in 1931.

² Michael E. Chapman, "Ironies of Character Hoover's Foreign Policy with Asia." In *A Companion to Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover*, ed. Katherine A. Siobhan, (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 502-504; Jerry Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door: America and China, 1905-1921* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 20, 186; Ninkovich, "Herbert Hoover: Culture vs. Civilization," 89-91.

³ Hunt, "Americans in the China Market," 306-307.

Moreover, the CEMC recruited the Chinese men transported to South Africa, leased the land for the depot in the harbor of Qinhuangdao, then erected the building for the depot, and provided the shipping for the Chinese laborers. By 1906, the Chinese labor project had been cast as modern day slavery when the British liberal party came to power.

The methods applied in the refutation campaign were designed to deflect attention away from the negative aspects of Hoover's Chinese mining career. Therefore, the narrative of the refutation campaign advanced Hoover's popular image achieved in the years 1914-1928 as the great humanitarian, the great engineer, and the great administrator, and re-engineered Hoover's Chinese mining career to be equated with a praiseworthy narrative. Coupled with Hoover's adherence to elitism, the attackers of his Chinese mining career were cast as persons of low moral character and accordingly their words were automatically nullified, while Hoover's words should be seen as absolute.

In this study, three major themes that developed out of the refutation campaign were examined against the actual historical events they referenced. This examination served to show that Hoover was calculated in how he concealed his role as it related to his Chinese mining career. First, the refutation campaign highlighted Hoover's humanitarian side during the Boxer Uprising. With the aid from the Chinese politician Tang Shaoyi, Hoover's humanitarian side was given support in his Chinese narrative. Although, there is no denying that Hoover did provide aid to Chinese refugees, it was accentuated to purposefully pivot and shift the focus away from Hoover's business involvement with the Kaiping Mines during the same time period.⁴ Stated differently, the

⁴ Oscar Davis to his wife, July 8, 1900, Tianjin, China, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign of 1932 – Hoover and the Boxer Rebellion." Davis mentions how Hoover helped the Chinese leave Tianjin to safety.

humanitarian actions taken in China were elevated while Hoover's business actions were deemphasized.

Second, in regards to the Kaiping Mines Hoover developed a four-point narrative that exonerated him from the center of events. In Hoover's apologia of the Kaiping Mines transfer, he emphasized the special relationship between China and America. In his carefully designed press statements, as well as in the articles placed in newspapers and magazines, Hoover was re-cast as the savior of the Kaiping Mines from the aggressive imperialistic powers of Russia and Japan. In the court case of 1905, Hoover assigned himself the role of the main witness; that is he purportedly helped his former employer Zhang win the lawsuit. Successfully, Hoover's time in China was assigned a benevolent narrative. Hoover's early humanitarian actions taken in China in 1900 naturally merged with his glowing image of the great humanitarian in the 1920s.

Lastly, in the 1928 and the 1932 presidential campaigns and with the aid of his loyalists and aggressive testimonials, Hoover completely denied the charges of his alleged connections to the Chinese labor experiment. Hoover promoted himself as a friend of labor, but labor leaders continued to demand answers to Hoover's questionable labor history. Denial was Hoover's chosen option. The Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 had banned Chinese coolies in the United States and, therefore, in 1932 Hoover personally and openly rebutted any involvement in the Chinese Labor experiment in South Africa; a rare tactic for the refutation campaign.⁵ All of Hoover's other rebuttals of his Chinese mining career were directed from behind-the-scenes; the apologia was

⁵ Campaign speech Cleveland, OH, October 15 1932, Herbert Hoover Papers, Misrepresentation Files, "Campaign of 1932 – Hoover and Chinese Labor."

carefully placed in publications and press statements or carried by men recruited by Hoover.

These three themes served to show that Hoover, in his private persona, was able to stretch his moral limits in order to achieve an end goal. In the refutation campaign, Hoover exhibited an uninhibited and flexible moral compass that deviated far from the highly idealistic man the American public knew. For Hoover, the refutation campaign was less about honesty and more geared toward achieving his ambitious goal of obtaining the highest office in the land, the presidency. It was necessary to persuade the American public and have them believe that Hoover had always been a righteous man, a great humanitarian, a great engineer, and a great administrator. The refutation campaign was Hoover's way of controlling and manipulating the information disseminated to the American public. It was his way of concealing a troubled past.

Hoover was used to triumphant narratives and he truly believed in his own innocence, as his biographer Kendrick stated, he was above critique.⁶ The analysis presented in this study is hardly the triumphant account Hoover desired. Yet, it is a long overdue narrative for history. Importantly, this study only represents a small segment of the copious archival records preserved in the HHPL that documents Hoover's response to the attacks he experienced, that is in regards to his private mining career, his work with the CRB, the Food Administration, his Russian food relief, and other topic areas, all of which are open for scholarly inquiry.

For Hoover, the only way to remake his Chinese mining career was to refute it and, re-engineer it. The only way to cease Hoover's narrative from being propagated is to

⁶ Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary*, 419. Clements wrote that Hoover felt that "he never made any mistakes and ought to be spared all criticism."

reposition the records of the refutation campaign in direct relation to the historical events they referenced, as was done in this study. This repositioning is crucial, as it showed that when the geographic and temporal axis were stretched, that is Hoover's private career was analyzed in tandem with his public career, a more comprehensive understanding of Hoover's role in history emerged. The analysis of the refutation campaign showed the importance of how historical events are connected through time, space, and society.⁷ Hoover was a transnational figure and to understand Hoover he need to be studied in such an environment.

As Bonsal so pointedly stated in his 1920 article when he demanded an inquiry into Hoover's Chinese mining career, "Unimportant detail for ordinary mortals, but when affecting a Presidential possibility, of vital, paramount importance" stated differently in the American democracy the citizens deserves to know the truth.⁸ In 1920 Hoover started the Sisyphean task to suppress the truth of his Chinese mining career.

Undoubtedly, one of the last attempts of the refutation campaign was the published rebuttal of Carlson's scholarship in which E. J. Nathan refuted Hoover's directorship of the CEMC (1901-1912), claiming that it had ended in 1901, plain and simple.⁹ Yet, Hoover's Chinese mining career was far from plain and simple. Hoover was not an innocent actor in the battle of concessions in China; rather he purposefully exploited the Chinese mining resources and the cheap Chinese labor for his own financial gains. A statement from Moreing in 1904 can serve to capture Hoover's instrumental role

⁷ Anthony G. Hopkins, "The Historiography of Globalization and the Globalization of Regionalism," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53 (2010): 20-25.

⁸ Bonsal, "Herbert Hoover, Shunning Publicity," 1-2.

⁹ Nathan, review of *The Kaiping Mines*, 106-107.

in the Kaiping Mines transfer. Without a doubt, Moreing was most satisfied with his new business partner's performance:

“When I look back upon the history of this Company, and remember the time when I brought the business from China to London, it certainly conveys some curious impressions in my mind...Although I say I was the originator of the enterprise, I know that the Shareholders and the Directors owe a great debt of gratitude to two men in bringing this business to a successful issue—namely, my partner, Mr. Hoover, and Mr. de Wouters, of Brussels. Both these gentlemen had a great deal to do with the successful inauguration of this Company.”¹⁰

Therefore, this study contributed to illuminate the importance of viewing Hoover's role in history through a global lens. Only with the world as the canvas, can the veil be lifted to uncover the transnational networks of Hoover's fascinating world that spanned his professional and public careers. Only then, can Hoover be fully understood.

¹⁰ *The Chinese Engineering and Mining Company Limited: Report on the Proceedings at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company Held at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, London, 1904 E.C.* London: Waterlow and Sons Limited, London Wall. In Chinese Engineering and Mining Company Limited (CLC/B/046) Minute Book No. 1CLC/B/046/MS28378/001 Minute book of the board of directors, including proceedings of ordinary and extraordinary general meetings.

VI.

Epilogue

This study joins Phillips Payson O'Brien's study that suggested that Hoover manipulated the rubber crisis in 1925 to shake off his British label.¹¹ A more recent study by Myles McMurchy demonstrated how Hoover during the 1927 Mississippi Flood denied that the African Americans were mistreated; rather he used his role in the Mississippi flood to merge it with his great humanitarian seal.¹² This paper is the third study to show how Hoover was willing to manipulate his image for his political advancement. When Hoover aspired for the highest and most honorable office the Presidency of the United States, he concealed his business past, denied ethical wrong doings, and manipulated narratives to make the man Hoover match the image of Hoover. Hoover worked tirelessly to preserve his idealistic legacy as the great humanitarian, the great engineer, and the great administrator. These three studies combined serve to show a pattern that Hoover deliberately concealed, manipulated, and covered up facets of his life that did not fit the legacy he desired. In turn, the American citizens cast their vote for an image of a man and not the true man, and the historiography of Hoover became fragmented.

¹¹ Phillips Payson, O'Brien, "Herbert Hoover, Anglo-American Relations and Republican Party Politics in the 1920s," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 2 (2011): 200-218.

¹² Myles McMurchy, "The Red Cross Is Not Alright!" Herbert Hoover's Concentration Camp Cover-Up in the 1927 Mississippi Flood," *Yale Historical Review*, Yale University. <https://historicalreview.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/McMurchy.pdf>.

VII.

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