CHINESE COOLIE EMIGRATION
TO LATIN AMERICA.

A Thesis Presented for the
Degree of Master of Arts

By


OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
1934

Approved by:

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The Chinese coolie trade was the outgrowth of the abolition of the negro slave traffic and of slavery itself in the Latin American countries. In 1807 the British Parliament passed an act which aimed to prevent the participation in negro slave trade by British subjects. 1 In 1824 another act was passed for the more "effective suppression of the negro slave trade." This latter act made the crime piracy. 2

By 1833 the Imperial government had come to realize that its policy plus the power of public opinion must by their very momentum soon bring complete abolition of negro slavery in the colonies, and in the early months of the year Lord Stanley, Secretary of State, introduced into Parliament a plan for complete abolition in the West Indian colonies. This plan was enacted into law, and was called the Abolition Act of 1833. 3

The Abolition Act provided for a system of apprenticeship to be substituted for slavery, the essential difference between the two being that under slavery the power of punishment was vested in the master while under apprenticeship in a stupendary magistrate. 4 To last for a period of six years, this system secured for the planter a temporary labor force while the negroes were being trained in the responsibilities

of freedmen. The act further provided that compensation should be paid by Parliament, which voted a sum of money to the planters who would be forced to free their slaves.\(^1\)

The system was instituted and the Special Magistrates who supervised its detailed working reported that it worked smoothly.\(^2\) Sir John Carmichael Symith, governor of British Guiana from 1833 to 1838, in a dispatch of March 19, 1836, stated that if the system were permitted to run its full course it would achieve the objects of its institution.\(^3\)

The extreme abolitionists, who had discovered undoubted abuses in the working of the Abolition Act of 1833 in the colony of Jamaica, exasperated the planters of the colony by their agitation and the British government was, on August 1, 1838, nearly two years before the stipulated time, driven to advise the colonial legislatures to terminate the apprenticeship system.\(^4\)

Any hopes that may have been entertained for an easy transition from a slave to a free society soon proved delusive. The abundance of fertile lands in British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica made it possible for the emancipated negroes to win an easy livelihood without the necessity of regular work on the plantations, and their continual withdrawal into the interior left the planters with a steadily

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1. Ibid., p. 394.
2. Ibid., p. 395.
3. Ibid., p. 399.
4. Ibid., p. 401.
diminishing labor force. In 1838 the West Indian planters agreed to follow the example of the Mauritius colony and import Indian coolies into the West Indies. The alleged abuses of Indian emigration led the government of India in 1839 to prohibit further recruitment of its subjects for the Mauritius experiment. Africans from the smaller and more densely populated islands of the West Indies were introduced, but they at once associated themselves with the emancipated negroes. Emigrants were imported from Maderia and Brazil until they proved such easy victims of disease that the West India government had to terminate the uncontrolled experiment. In 1841, the British government put into operation its proposals for the introduction of Africans from the Kroo coast. The scheme, however, was surrounded by such careful safeguards against a recurrence of slave trade that insignificant results were anticipated.

No adequate constructive policy had accompanied the overthrow of the social order founded on slavery. The sugar industry, already burdened by the debts of an artificial past, remained dependent on the irregular and unwilling labor of the freedmen. By 1842 the financial position of the West Indian planters was critical and they demanded relief from the scarcity of labor. Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State, refused to acquiesce in the demands of the planters. He

1. Campbell, Persia C., Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries Within the Empire, p. 87.
would neither remove the safeguard from African recruitment nor disregard the welfare of the Indian coolie, and he was anxious that the renewed Indian emigration to Mauritius should be regarded merely as an experiment.\textsuperscript{1} No decision had been reached on the subject of labor importation when the West India Committee applied, July 14, 1843 for the permission to introduce into the West Indies Chinese contract coolies from the Straits Settlements.\textsuperscript{2}

The application followed the receipt of letters from a British Guiana proprietor who had been visiting the British possessions in the Far East. The object of these letters was to attract the attention of the West India Committee and Lord Stanley to the Chinese immigrants who came into the labor markets of the Straits Settlements from Amoy and other ports in South China,\textsuperscript{3} in spite of the emigration restrictions placed by the Chinese government upon its subjects.\textsuperscript{4} In a letter dated May 12, 1843, the planter said:

\begin{quote}
I am now desirous of speaking about Chinese labor. From China every year from 6000-8000 men leave for the Straits, seeking labor and all men are well made, robust and active, inured to field labor and able to work during the heat of the day; in fact they are equal to our best Creole field laborers; they are eager to gain and will do anything for money. They are quiet and very intelligent for their class, and not lazy. They value money, are shrewd, and I do not think any class of men can be better adapted to our wants than
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., pp. 87-88.

\textsuperscript{2} Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 35, 1844, pp. 244-45.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 245.

\textsuperscript{4} Williams, S. Wells, The Middle Kingdom, Vol.I, p.278.
they are. I have seen them at work in the cane fields, cutting and threshing canes and banking. I have seen them clearing land, digging canals, and no man on Providence could have worked better than this gang of 50 Chinese of a year's import.

He further pointed out that the Mauritius planters had been so favorably impressed by the opportunity that they had imported 1,000 coolies from straits settlements at the beginning of the year. On the other hand, the proprietor warned the West India Committee that there were certain disadvantages in the Chinese character as compared to that of the Indian. The Chinese would not be so likely to subject themselves to the discipline of the plantation; they would probably demand higher wages; they would cause trouble if an attempt were made to keep their wages lower than those current at the time. Nevertheless, he considered them far superior to the Indian coolies. He suggested that it might be necessary to enter into contract with the Chinese coolies for a term of service before they would emigrate with foreigners. The proprietor forwarded for reference copies of the Mauritius contracts, which were valid for two years. The discourse ended with the statement that no difficulty should be anticipated in the transfer of the labor from the Straits to the West Indies. Vessels were easily chartered, freight charges were low, and rice and salt fish could be purchased at Singapore cheaply.¹

The West India Committee was not able to obtain information of the results of the experiment in Mauritius. It could not, therefore, place such confidence in Chinese as in Indian emigration. Nevertheless, since the necessity was great, it requested Lord Stanley to exempt any contracts made with Chinese laborers from the provisions of the Order in Council of September, 1839, which declared invalid any contracts entered into outside the colonies. If this exception were allowed, arrangements would be made for the introduction of a certain number of Chinese, providing that Lord Stanley agreed to the principle of bounty payable for the introduction of immigrants without any special contract or under a contract which they rescinded after arrival.

Lord Stanley gave close attention to the proposed system of Chinese contract labor. The Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners forwarded questionnaires to gentlemen who had experience in China and a body of opinion was collected. As a result, Lord Stanley, in a letter to the West India Committee, admitted that the introduction of Chinese coolies would probably have a better effect on the emancipated negroes than the introduction of members of any other race. From the information he had been able to obtain, he was led to believe that the Chinese were competent to contract for terms that would be most to their advantage. Since present political conditions made it necessary to limit the ports

1. Expense of introduction to be reclaimed from government funds if the coolie rescinded his contract after arrival.
of embarkation to the Straits Settlements, any Chinese coolies engaged for labor in the West Indian colonies would have found their own way to the Straits ports. This fact gave some guarantee that the coolies would understand the nature of the proposals offered them. Lord Stanley agreed with the West India Committee that a contract would be necessary to induce the Chinese laborer to engage himself for labor in the West Indies, but he limited the period for five years and insisted that the coolie should have the power to rescind the contract after arrival in the colony. This privilege was to be the security for the coolie against terms which might seem unjust when compared with those under which resident laborers were engaged.\(^1\) The West India Committee objected to the power of immediate termination. Its desire was to secure the steady labor supply which a contract system offered. Its members argued, moreover, that the coolies would be in no position to make a decision regarding new labor under the new conditions until after some months of residence.

Lord Stanley accepted a compromise. The contract was to be obligatory on the laborer for six months after his arrival. Then, and at the end of every subsequent year, he was to have the option of rescinding it.\(^2\) Although Lord Stanley agreed to a maximum rate of bounty fixed at $65.00, only

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the actual amount spent was to be reclaimed. Despite the West India Committee's strong objection, Lord Stanley was determined to prevent an emigration system from degenerating into a speculative venture. There was further dispute as to whether the full cost of introduction was claimable on contracts rescinded at the end of six months --- a point allowed. The general benefit of the emigrants' services during the first half year was thus regarded as a premium to cover the extra risks of acclimatisation.¹

On October 27, 1843, the Commission of Affairs of India received instructions to issue to the officials in the Straits Settlements such orders as were necessary for the Chinese experiments to be carried into effect, and licenses were issued for the introduction of 2,850 Chinese Coolies into British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica.²

But no Chinese were introduced at this time since the necessity for them no longer existed. The Governor-General of India had acceded to Lord Stanley's request of November 29, 1843, to reconsider the question of Indian emigration to the West Indies under government control, and the regulated emigration of Indian coolies recommenced. Further, a larger immigration from Madeira was allowed under satisfactory regulations.³

² Ibid., pp. 276-78.
³ Bell and Morrell, Select Documents, p. 423; and Campbell, op.cit., p. 72.
The subject of Chinese importation was not reopened by the West Indian planters until the Free-Trade crisis of 1846-49 had transformed the old proprietary and colonial agriculture into a commercial and speculative business. In 1850 the introduction of Chinese coolies into the British West Indies was again sanctioned and the first shipment reached British Guiana in that year.\(^1\)

For our purpose it is necessary to turn from the labor difficulties in the British West Indies and review those of Peru, which resulted from the acts tending toward abolition of slavery on the part of the Peruvian government. On November 24, 1821, a decree was issued by San Martín stating that every slave entering the Republic of Peru became a free person.\(^2\) This decree was incorporated in the Constitution of 1835, but was omitted from the constitution of 1839. In 1844, when the British government questioned the status of slavery in Peru, the Peruvian government stated that it recognized no law which altered the condition of slaves after their arrival in Peru.

On November 19, 1854, a presidential decree was issued which stated that all domestic male negroes and those employed on a farm would receive their freedom and their wives theirs also, providing they (the males) consented to serve

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two years in the new reserve army that the Peruvian government was forming. This decree was a severe blow to the institution of slavery, and a step toward the emancipation which took place in 1855.

The Peruvian planters began to seek compensation for the loss of negro labor. It might seem peculiar that Peruvians should have taken this position, for the splendid farm system inherited from the Incas had for years lain in idleness and decay. But a new enterprise made cheap labor a necessity --- the guano deposits of the Chincha Islands, which are situated a few miles off the port of Pisco.

Peruvian agents, liberally supplied with funds, were dispatched directly to China for the purpose of collecting shiploads of emigrants; several vessels were dispatched to Callao, Peru, from Hong Kong and other ports in South China, each emigrant having, previous to his sailing, signed a contract which bound him to labor for a term of years in the service of the Peruvian employer.

1. Ibid., Vol. 45, pp. 1068-70.
2. Ibid., Vol. 47, pp. 1141-1156.
5. We have no record for the actual sailing dates of these early vessels, nor the number of Chinese coolies carried on each vessel, but we are certain that in the decade following 1842 two thousand and twenty-five Chinese coolies left China for Latin America, the majority of them destined for the guano works on the Chincha Islands. U.S.A. House Executive Document, 123, 33 Congress, 1 Session, p. 116.
At this juncture we turn to Cuba, which by 1854 had entered the field as a rival of the West Indian planters and Peru in the demand for additional and cheaper labor. In Cuba, as in the British West Indies, Great Britain holds an important position in the restriction of the negro slave trade by preventing her nationals from participating in the trade and by entering into agreements with Spain for the suppression of the traffic. In 1817 Spain and Great Britain entered into a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade.  

Similar treaties were concluded between the two countries in 1841 and 1845. 2 On March 2, 1845, the Spanish Cortes passed a law which provided heavy penalties against those who engaged in the traffic of slaves to Cuba. 3

In spite of the suppressive measures mentioned above little was done to the institution of negro slavery on the island. However, a bombshell hurled at Negro slavery came in the Capitation Act of March 22, 1854, which imposed a tax on all male slaves over 12 years of age. Each slave owner was forced to pay a tax of $2.00 on his first slave, $3.00 for his second, $4.00 for his third, and so on up to his fifteenth slave. All slaves over the number fifteen were taxed $8.00 per head. 4 The Capitation Act forced the Cuban

2. Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 424; and Vol. 34, p. 577.
3. Ibid., Vol. 34, p. 577-80.
4. Ibid., Vol. 45, pp. 1091-98.
planters to seek a new source of labor supply. China promised to be the most lucrative field, for in 1847 a Spanish company had induced a body of 800 Chinese coolies to go to Cuba under contract.  

During the war between Great Britain and China in 1841-42, which laid low the pretentions and influence of the Chinese Imperial Government, the people of China came into contact with Europeans at different points. Simultaneously with this conflict came the demand for labor in those sub-tropical countries and possessions to which unhappy Africa had hitherto supplied her bondsmen in unceasing streams, but which at this juncture, through the approaching extinction of the slave trade and slavery itself, began to utter loud complaints of difficulties in the way of agricultural production.

The first shipment of contract coolies direct from China to a foreign port was made in 1845, and in a French vessel sailing from Amoy to the Isle de Bourbon. The shipment was managed by a Frenchman who found he could obtain coolies cheaper in the land of their origin than in the Straits Settlements. We have mentioned that in 1847 a Spanish company had induced a body of eight hundred coolies.

1. Nearly all the Latin-American nations and several of the European nations played some part in the Chinese coolie trade, but we have no record of their parts in the early stages of the trade. Campbell, op.cit., p.94.


to go under contract to Cuba. One authority says that by September, 1859, agents had entered into contract for the shipment to Cuba of 50,123 coolies.¹ By August, 1852, over two thousand coolies had left China for South America, many of them destined for the guano works of the Chincha Islands.² There were over fourteen thousand Chinese imported into the British possessions in Latin America between 1852 and 1874, the majority of them destined for British Guiana.

Large shipments had been effected from Canton by 1852 and contract coolies had also embarked from the British port of Hong Kong. It was Amoy, however, that became the chief port for the early contract trade. The American consul, Bradely, estimated that more than seventeen thousand had been shipped from Amoy under contract in the years 1852-53.³ A contemporary writer says:

..... The main ports of embarkation in this period were Macao, Hong Kong, Canton, Whampoa, Amoy and Swatow. In the years 1847 to July, 1866, 74,251 coolies were shipped from these ports to Cuba.⁴

Whatever the destination of the coolies under the contract system, their method of recruitment was essentially the same. The coolie was enticed into signing a contract similar to the following:

1. Campbell, op.cit., p. 94.
2. Ibid., p. 159.
I, Ching Ho, a free native, at -----, in search of employment do hereby engage with (name of agent) acting for (name of planter) to proceed in British vessel (name of vessel) in which I am to have free passage to British Guiana; and serve for five years, upon any estate they may appoint, as an agricultural laborer or manufacturer of sugar on the following terms, viz: That I will receive from the time commencing work five dollars per month, with the daily allowance of two pounds of rice, a quotis of salt fish and also be provided with lodging and medical advice, it being understood that I shall be allowed three hours during the six days of the week for my meals. And after having performed the said five years service I shall be entitled a free passage back to the port of -----. And it is further agreed that it shall be my option to annul this contract at any time within three months after my arrival in British Guiana.  

The difference between this British contract and the contract used by nationals of other nations, was that the former provided for annulment by the coolie.

The common designation for the system was "the buying and selling of pigs." It centered around the payment of "head money." The firms at the Chinese ports were engaged either by the would-be employer or associations as shown in the contract or by merchants speculate on profit of a sale of contracts to employers. These firms employed Chinese recruiters or coolie brokers, men of questionable reputation who were paid per head for the number of coolies brought to the barracoons. A promise of lucrative work to the half-starved coolies was usually sufficient to get them into the

barracoons or on the receiving ships, from which it was difficult to escape. Moreover, the peculiar laws of China relating to debt and bondage made it an easy method to obtain the coolies either by way of the gambling tables or by a small advance in goods or money. The sudden and competing labor demands of 1852 having forced up the price of coolies, theupidity of the Chinese brokers was stimulated by foreign gold and during 1852 resorts to fraud in recruitment were not infrequent, the brokers having the support of their foreign employers. As the trade grew more and more tempting, piracy and wholesale kidnapping were resorted to for the purpose of filling the barracoons and vessels. Chinese of a low and desperate class were employed in scouring the neighboring districts, where it was their object to decoy under one pretext or another ignorant countrymen either into the land barracoons or on board vessels which lay in wait at convenient points.\(^1\)

Thanks to this sort of recruitment, and the state of misery and lack of employment to which the great masses of redundant population were exposed, it was always an easy task for the crafty crimps employed in the traffic to entrap and supply victims for the unscrupulous agents. To their kidnapping atrocities perpetuated in numberless instances during

\(^1\) Such was the case of the Confucius. In February, 1859, the Confucius was apprehended by government officials near Amoy. Investigation proved that crimps had enticed two hundred and thirty-six Chinese on board by the promise of work in Amoy or Shanghai. When informed of their true destination (Cuba) one hundred seventeen coolies desired to return to shore and their homes. Those that remained were beggars and had no desire to return. U.S.A. Senate Executive Document, 30, 36 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 193-96.
the "nightside" of the trade, fresh opportunities were added in the process of time. The coast line of Kwantung, lying west of Macao, together with a large extent of country at its rear, was occupied by the Puntis, owners of the soil, and the Hakkas, a race from North China, who because of poverty had migrated to Kwantung. For generations hostile feeling had smouldered between these two groups, embittered by the preponderance of the Hakkas in many parts, and clan fights, or village wars, often terminated in serious bloodshed and revolts against civilized authority. At regular trading points along the coast, un guarded by the indolent Chinese officials, native junks or fast sailing Portuguese Lorchas received cargoes of unfortunate persons, Hakkas or Puntis as the fortune of clan warfare determined. The junk, once loaded, made sail for the port of embarkation, usually Macao, where her living cargo was landed, a helpless drove, to undergo the pretense of examination as to the willingness of its members to engage themselves as emigrants.  

When the coolies reached the port of embarkation, they were taken to the barracoons. 2 These barracoons, called "pig


2. Coolies taken to Macao were placed immediately on board ships without entering the barracoons for the period prescribed by the Portuguese law. Additional regulations were issued by the Governor of Macao in 1855. The regulations which if honestly kept say one source, would have gone far in checking the abuses of the coolie trade. Macao was visited by a great period of prosperity and active employment for vessels under almost (Continued on next page)
pens" by the Chinese, were remodeled hong or warehouses in which the spacious compartments were fitted for the reception of the hundreds of temporary occupants. The single entrance, heavily barred, was guarded by a group of villainous-looking halfcastes, by whom all egress was denied the "voluntary emigrant" from the moment of admission until the time arrived for his embarkation. The conditions of these barracoons were filthy. Many coolies died of disease incident to such confinement, and suicides among them were not uncommon. To keep this storehouse filled was the business of the broker, on whose activity the trade depended for its success. 1

The receiving or coolie ships were less enticing than the barracoons. These vessels were constructed so that escape was almost impossible. Over every hatchway except the main or central one, was a set of iron gratings to prevent access from below to the upper deck. The door of the main or central hatchway was made of rough ordinary planking. The gratings over the other hatchways were made of bars of iron, arched in the center and having a circular opening of eight or nine inches at the summit of the arch. A barricade was built across the ship from rail to rail, usually a short distance from the captain's cabin. A platform in most cases twelve feet long and ten feet wide was arranged near the barricade so that a guard of men could command the whole

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The coolies were detained in the land barracoons under restraint until their shipment and the exercise of restraint was increased with the irregularities of the trade. The argument advanced for this increased restraint was that some coolies offered to emigrate, entered the barracoons or receiving ships, received food, or even money, and then made good their escape, as they had from the first intended. This argument could be and generally was invalidated by the questionable methods of recruitment.  

When the time arrived for the signing of the contract, groups of coolies would be brought before the foreign port official, usually under armed escort, and in the presence of this official gave unvarying affirmative in reply to the lists of questions put by the half-caste interpreter. Prior to signing the contract a medical examination was held. Coolies found physically unfit were rejected. Those physically fit signed the contracts drawn up by the foreign consul on behalf of the party seeking coolie labor.  

The foreign consuls often participated in the trade in other than their official capacity. The Spanish consul at Amoy was a shipper of coolies. The acting consul of the United States was until 1852 in the employ of the British firm  


3. Ibid., p. 96.
Messrs. Tait and Company in Amoy. Many times the coolies were placed under contract by the captains of the vessels, who in turn auctioned them off when the vessels reached their destination.  

Before following the emigrants to the allotted spheres of toil, a word might be said about the indifference of the Chinese Imperial Government toward the trade. This indifference is shown in the fact that the Chinese subjects in such large numbers could be carried away from the Empire and cruelly mistreated without any serious effort being put forth to end the evil. The local authorities sought in a feeble way to repress the kidnapping and imposition practiced upon the people, but with little effort, and for many years the trade flourished. Among the documents we have before us is one sent to Washington by Minister Parker, who was a most vigorous champion of the crusade to end the traffic. In this document we find a proclamation issued by the scholars and merchants of Amoy in 1855, warning their country against the kidnappers and the sad fate of those sold into slavery.  

The American Minister at Peking, S. Wells Williams, presented a petition to the Emperor, suggesting a course which might be followed to end the kidnapping of coolies without endangering foreign relations. Mr. Williams said:

1. Ibid., p. 96; and Westminster Review, op. cit., Vol. 100, p. 85.

The officials expressed their sympathy with their suffering countrymen, regretted that they should be enveigled into such a miserable, cruel, servitude, but they made no vivid sense of their responsibilities in the matter, and made no inquiries as to the most desirable means of doing anything.\footnote{1}

To this fact we might add that the interests of the Chinese Empire were not seriously affected by the exodus of a few hundred thousand coolies from the heavily populated southern provinces. During the negotiations of the treaty of 1856 it was suggested to one of the Chinese plenipotentiaries that the Chinese government should send consuls abroad to look after the interests of the Chinese in foreign lands. The Chinese officials said the Emperor ruled over so many millions that he cared nothing for a few persons that had drifted away to foreign lands. It was suggested that many of these Chinese were growing rich from gold mines in America and they might be worth looking after on that account. The reply was that the Emperor’s wealth was beyond computation; so why should he care for those who had left their homes, or for the sands they had scooped together.\footnote{2}

Not infrequently the fraudulent methods of recruitment, the shortage of food and water provided by the agents, the harsh treatment meted out by captain and crew on the long voyage across the Pacific to Peru, across the Indian and

\begin{enumerate}
\item U.S.A. \textit{Papers Relating to Foreign Relations}, 1871, p. 149.
\item Foster, J. W. \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 278-79.
\end{enumerate}
Atlantic Oceans to Cuba, the West Indies, or Brazil, occasioned riot and murder. Though our interest is mainly in the treatment received by the coolies aboard vessels flying the flag of the United States, we cannot refrain from mentioning interesting cases of treatment received on board vessels flying flags of other nations.

The Waverly, an American vessel, sailed from Swatao, bound for Callao, Peru, with four hundred and fifty Chinese aboard. On October 25, 1855 she put into Manila on account of the death of her master, Captain Wellman. Owing to an unfounded rumor that infectious disease was epidemic in the vessel, she was ordered into quarantine, and was sent to Canto, a distance of about six miles from Manila, for "observation," and in order that needful remedies might be applied. The coolies, supposing they had arrived at the end of their voyage, wished to go ashore, and a riot occurred when they tried to get possession of the life boats, but the Acting Master French and members of the crew armed themselves and quickly drove the emigrants below and closed the hatches. When the hatches were opened some twelve or fourteen hours later, it was found that nearly three hundred of the coolies had perished from suffocation. As soon as it was ascertained that no contagious disease existed on board the ship, it was released from quarantine. The captain claimed that he had no idea that there was not enough ventilation between decks.

1. U.S.A. Reports of the House of Representatives, 443, 36 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 18 et seq.
to give the coolies air, that he was "fearful of being over-
powered," and that, therefore, the hatches had been closed.¹

In 1857 a similar riot occurred on board the American
vessel Norway, carrying one thousand and thirty-seven coolies
to Havana. The crew quickly quelled the riot, not however,
in time to prevent one coolie from being cut down by a cleaver.
The wounded coolie and four others, principal leaders of the
riot, were brought on deck and chained by their wrists to
the sides of the afterhatch.

A second riot took place two days later, during which
the vessel was set on fire by the coolies. Some members of
the crew covered the hatches with tarpaulins and streams of
water were directed upon them. Other members of the crew
stood at convenient places along the barricade and shot down
with remorseless vengeance those coolies who tried to leave
the hold of the vessel. The coolies, seeing escape impos-
ible and threatened by fire for which they were responsible,
begged for pardon. The crew then ventured below decks, ex-
tinguished fire and removed the dead coolies. Upon arriv-
ing at Havana the mortality of the voyage was found to be
one hundred and thirty.²

In early November, 1857, the American Vessel, the Kate
Hopper, whose home port was Baltimore, Maryland, sailed from
Macao for Havana, Cuba, with six hundred and fifty coolies
aboard. When the vessel reached the straits of Gasper and

land was sighted, a riot broke out. Five coolies were killed outright, several were executed, and twelve were put in chains and jailed when the vessel reached Batavia. John C. Jackson, master of the vessel, realizing the danger of continuing the voyage without additions to his crew, asked Mr. Anthon, the American Consul at Batavia, for more men.\(^1\) Anthon, fearing something besides the sight of land as the real cause for the riot, sought information as to the legality of the trade from Mr. Reed, the American Consul at Hong Kong. Reed, in his reply, stated that there was no written law against the trade, but added the statement "that the law of humanity was." He also said that there was nothing written to prevent him (Anthon) from assisting such a ship in distress.\(^2\) The *Kate Hopper* received the twelve men requested by her captain, was given her clearance, even though the vessel had sailed from a non-treaty port, and continued her voyage to Havana.\(^3\)

In March, 1861, the American vessel *Leonidas*, under the command of Captain Wood, was the scene of an outbreak near Macao. The outbreak occurred in the morning, when the chief mate was sent below to prepare a group of Chinese for the morning meal.\(^4\) The first mate was attacked by the coolies as soon as he reached the lower decks. Captain Wood,  

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2. Ibid., pp. 68-69.  
3. Ibid., pp. 59-60.  
4. The coolies were sent up in groups of eighty or ninety for their meals.
hearing the noise, went to the aid of his first mate. He received a severe blow on the head for his effort; nevertheless he managed to leave the hold and escape to the barricade. Upon retreating to his cabin, he found that his wife had been wounded by one of the coolies. Pulling a gun from the wall he killed the offender. Turning to the door, he fired into a group of coolies who stood staring at the gruesome spectacle. Wood then procured a knife and stabbed a coolie who was wrestling with a member of the crew. Captain Wood immediately sought aid from the British Consul, Mr. Robertson, and the French Consul, Baron de Trequalaye. The request was granted and the two foreign consuls proceeded to the Leonidas. They found the deck of the vessel in a frightful condition, although the riot had lasted only ten minutes. 1

Wounded coolies were found fastened spread-eagle to iron bars. There were marks of fire below decks. Out of two hundred and eighty-nine coolies, only two hundred and one could be accounted for and of these one hundred and ninety-five appeared in no condition to continue the voyage. An investigation was held and fourteen coolies were found guilty of instigating the riot, and were placed in irons. The vessel continued its journey on the next high tide. 2

In May, 1871, the Dolores Ugarte, a Portuguese vessel, prepared to sail from Macao for Callao, Peru. Mr. Bailey,


2. Ibid., p. 31.
the American Consul in Hong Kong, asked the Portuguese port official to prevent the vessel from sailing. The Portuguese official refusing the request, the vessel sailed under a new name - the Don Juan. 1 There were six hundred coolies aboard and when a disturbance took place the hatches were fastened down. Owing to an insufficiently explained cause, a fire broke out in the hold. As the flames could not be extinguished, the captain and crew decided to abandon the ship. The six hundred coolies were left below to their fate while the crew escaped in the boats which were capable of holding only forty men. 2 The statement of a few who managed to escape the burning wreck of the Don Juan showed that they had been induced by acquaintances, on the pretext of work, to make the journey to Macao; but instead of having their expectation realized, they were cruelly treated and threatened by emigration agents. Furthermore, they signed papers which were neither explained nor read to them and were afterwards carried off on board ship against their will. 3

Apart from the riots at sea, the average mortality was high. The vessels, being of small tonnage, lacked all facilities for proper exercise, and were often supplied with bad


2. During a previous voyage of the same vessel coolies had jumped overboard in consequence of ill treatment; twenty-five died from want and forty-three were in such hopeless state that they were landed in Honolulu.

water and insufficient food. A report in De Bow's Review, May, 1858, gives us some idea as to the extent of this mortality. It states:

Information from Havana announces the recent arrival there of four vessels with "Asiatic free colonists." On the 18th the American vessel Ticonderoga, arrived from Macao, with 618 of the passengers. She had 32 deaths on the passage. On the 19th the American ship Kitty Simpson arrived from Swatow with 337 -- 93 having died on the voyage. The same day the British ship, Edwin Fox, arrived from Hong Kong with 269 -- 40 having died. On the 20th the British ship, Admiral, arrived from Hong Kong with 283 -- 90 having died on the passage.

A table in the same article informs us that during the years 1847-58 thirteen American vessels arrived in Havana, carrying six thousand seven hundred and forty-four coolies, eight hundred and fifteen expiring in passage. Twenty-nine British vessels arrived with over ten thousand and seven hundred coolies, one thousand, five hundred and eighty-six dying in passage. Eight other nations participated in this trade. The table shows that the loss of life on the seventy-one vessels amounted to over fourteen per cent.

Another contemporary writer says:

Commencing with the first emigrants from China to British Guiana we find that of 831 Chinese who sailed for that country up to April, 1855, 164 died, a mortality of over twenty per cent. The mortality of the old slave trade was only fourteen percent, although it is now raised to twenty-five percent on account of the risks of capture by ships of war. Of 331 who sailed for Jamaica, at the same period, 43 died on the way, or about fourteen percent.

The same writer informs us that the mortality rate was
high on the voyage between China and Peru, even though the
passage was much shorter. He says:

There have been shipped from China to Peru
since the commencement of the emigration in June,
1849, to June 1854, 7,356 human beings of whom
only 4,754 reached their destination. Of the
remaining 2,602, five hundred and forty-nine died
in the passage, six hundred were lost on Brampton
shoal, three hundred wrecked at Singapore and de-
serted; two hundred and forty-five after having
their tails cut by the captain killed him and
landed back in China; two hundred more rose and
killed their captain and put into Singapore;
three hundred and fifty killed their captain and
landed on one of the small islands of the China
seas. Others returned to China and Manil[7a].

The contracts usually provided that after the comple-
tion of the term of labor the coolie was to be returned to
China if he so desired; however, few coolies returned to
their native land. The chief reason for this was the high
rate of mortality on the return passage. An extract from a
contemporary periodical says:

But misfortune does not end here; for the
pitiful remnant who live to return to their homes
with a few dollars in their pockets, the results
of such enormous risks of life and five to ten
years of hard labor in the tropics, during their
prime of life, a very large number die on the voy-
age. Let us examine for instance the return pas-
sage. Of 4,843 who sailed for the West Indies
between 1850 and 1855, we find that 301, or six
percent died on the voyage. Of these, 83 out of
311 lost their lives in that chamber of death,
the Glentanner. The Eliza, on her return passage
lost 30 out of 342, and 30 more died a week after

29, p. 51.

Session, p. 22.
landing. The Zemobia on her return lost 22 out of 301, 41 more were carried from the ship to a hospital and one-half of the whole number were affected with scurvy.¹

Add this rate of mortality of the return voyage to that of the outgoing voyages, and we have a picture of the coolie trade which is horrible to contemplate; and yet, as cruel as it was, it was only a feature of the nineteenth century system of "free labor."

Another point now merits our attention -- that of the treatment meted out to the emigrants when they arrived at their destination. Some time elapsed before the public or those in authority became aware that the Chinese coolie trade was nothing less than a wholesale revival of the slave trade. When the coolies arrived at their destination, their contracts were sold to the highest bidders, who became their absolute owners.

In December, 1859, a traveller visited Cuba, and the account of what he saw and heard gives us some knowledge of the treatment of coolies in Cuba. He writes as follows:

.... But the object most revolting, and which continues to haunt my mind, and I think will till I die, was the aspect of the coolies. It seemed to me that human misery could sink no lower. Their doom is vastly worse than that of the slaves. Those wretched Chinese are lured to leave their country, as, we are informed, with the promise that for their service for eight years they would be taken without expense to Cuba, and fed and clothed, and

¹ Wright, W. loc. cit., p. 306.
would receive four dollars a month. Thus at the end of eight years, they would have received three hundred and eighty-four dollars. This seems an immense sum to a poor Chinaman, to whom a cent a day is a very respectable competence. Thousands are thus induced to embark; none probably return. They are sold upon their arrival for about four hundred dollars. If their owner can wear them out in eight years, so that they die, he of course has nothing to pay. If he cannot, he sends them to some distant plantation or sells them again to someone who still claims eight years service from them. They are ignorant, debased, and powerless. There is no one to plead their cause, and their doom is sealed. Seeing a group of several hundred of these wretched coolies, working in the blazing sun upon a road, I requested our driver to take us through them all. Such a spectacle of misery I never conceived of before. Nearly all of them were naked to the waist. They were excessively filthy in person, and their countenances of the most abject debasement and joylessness. Several overseers with limber whips in their hands were standing beneath the shade trees, watching them and directing their work.¹

The wages at which the coolies contracted were, relative to the higher prices for everything in Cuba, less than they could have received in China, and insufficient for their wants, leaving them little or nothing at the end of their term of labor. They were kept at work much beyond the ten hours provided for in their contracts, denied holidays, were beaten, mutilated and insufficiently fed, and from these causes died in large numbers. When their contracts expired, they were treated as vagrants and put upon the public works

¹ U.S.A. House Reports, 443, 36 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 29-30.
as convicts, until they were reengaged or sold into service. At the fulfillment of the second contract, they were subject to the same mistreatment. In many cases murder, suicides and death followed such wretched existence. Out of more than 140,000 coolies that had gone to Cuba from 1847-1875, only 6,000 remained alive at/latter date.\footnote{1}

In 1874-75 a commission sent to Cuba by the Chinese Government reported that nearly all the coolies they met bore evidence of ill-treatment. Although the report of the commission shows a system of fraud, perfidy, and cruelty unsurpassed in the annals of negro slavery, it is quite likely that some of the statements made in the report were untrue and exaggerated; that only the worst features of the traffic were displayed most prominently; and that some things charged as wrongs might have been justified or satisfactorily explained; but after making charitable allowances, there remains a large residue of simple truth, showing such injustice and inhumanity as to make one shudder.\footnote{2}

A contemporary writer describes the treatment of the coolies on the Chinaa Islands in this manner:

... No sooner are they landed from the ships than they see tall Africans placed over them as guards, armed with a lash of four plaits of cow hide, five feet in length, and one inch and a half in diameter. During the forenoons, except for regular offences, this instrument was not much used, but after four o'clock in the afternoon many of the weakest

\footnote{1}{We have no record of the number of coolies who returned to China during this period. U.S.A. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, Part I, 1875, pp. 293-94.}

\footnote{2}{Ibid., pp. 222-223.}
had performed their task work, and the guards freely used it to start those behind. The slightest resistance was punished by flogging little short of murder, as on many melancholy occasions we witnessed. The six to twelve cuts stifled the most agonizing cries - cries that were heard from day to day, but only they knew the agony that called them forth. There was no tying up, The nearest Chinaman being compelled by a cut of the lash to lay hold an arm or leg and stretch the miserable being on his stomach on the guans? The mere weight of the lash made their bodies shake, blacking the flesh with every blow, besides cutting into it like a sabre, and when a convulsive movement took place, a subordinate placed his foot upon the shoulders to keep the quivering body down; two dozen made them breathless, and when released after thirty-nine lashes, they seemed slowly to stagger over, reeled and fell and were carried to the hospital, in most cases if they recovered, committing suicide. During our stay there many sprang over the cliffs, many buried themselves alive in the guans, and many hid themselves in the caves of the islands to starve to death.

The treatment met with by the coolies upon the haciendas of Peru was as unfeeling and cruel as that meted out to those of the Chincha Islands. 2 A petition (January, 1871) sent by the coolies to the American Consul in Lima states:

The petitioners would humbly set forth that the reason why, though born and bred in China, they took service abroad is because they were unable to gain a livelihood at home, owing to the swarm (like bees) of rebels and robbers from the fourth year of Hung Feng (1854). Later in the eighth year Hung Feng (1858) there appeared a joint notification by his excellency Hwang Pih, governor of Kwang Tung, to the effect


2. J. B. Fish, in a report in 1873, stated that the owners of the haciendas had started to raise cotton during the Civil War and had turned to China for the needed labor. U.S.A. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, Vol. 1, p. 205.
that rules had been entered into with England and France, with reference to the engagement of laborers to go to Peru for a period of eight years, in the expiry of this term to be sent home, etc. In choice, when they, the barbarians, were seeking men, they spoke of our taking service as laborers, and designated us as "guests," on landing in their country. However, they said we had "sold ourselves" and called us slaves. Furthermore, they beat and swear at us with great violence, and feed and clothe us insufficiently; they brand two characters on the side of our face as is done in China in the case of banishment; they fasten shackles on the ankles just as if we were captured prisoners. We have to till the soil and dig canals day and night with flogging and beating to death."

Another source tells us the coolies were not permitted to return home (providing they lived through the number of years required in the contract) after the contracts were up. They were forced to remain on one pretext or another. On many haciendas they received only one pound of Indian corn and a cup of beans a day. Their only drink was water, of which they could partake whenever they desired. The clothing provided for the coolies generally consisted of a sort of sack or shirt with holes through which to pass the arms and legs, and tied around the waist with a rope. They were without shoes of any description. Their beds were made of some sort of thin cane tied together to form a kind of mat. The lash was the remedy for sickness and if anyone was unable to work and fell to the ground he received no aid, not even from members of his own race.

In truth, the Chinese suffered the greatest abuses on large estates, as there appeared no justice whatever to punish the owners for their horrible and criminal abuse of the Asiatics. The Peruvian authorities, influenced by the high social position of the planters, paid little or no attention to the abuses meted out to the Chinese; so the Chinese were reduced to almost absolute slavery.

According to one British source the treatment of the coolies in the British West Indies was far different from that found in Cuba and Peru. It must be remembered, however, that the Chinese were being taken by the British into countries where slavery did not exist, and where, consequently, they were under the protection of laws which were equal for them and their employers. An examination of medical records of British Guiana shows us that the coolies were given close attention in regards to their health.\(^1\) Persia Campbell, an authority on Chinese emigration, says the health of the Chinese coolies was better than that of the Indian coolies, though when the former were ill, their disapproval of European doctors retarded their recovery.\(^2\)

Great Britain was the first nation to take steps toward the abolition of the Chinese coolie trade. In July, 1853, the Colonial Land and Emigration officials, shocked at the high rate of mortality found in the first shipments of coolies from China to the West Indies, held several conferences on

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the subject. The Commissioners agreed that future emigra-
tion under contract to the West Indies should be under the
supervision of a government official. A plan which provided
heavy penalties for British vessels that embarked emigrants
from non-treaty ports to British colonies was formulated and
accepted by the Commissioners. It was further proposed that
British vessels should be forbidden to carry emigrants to
foreign colonies since all the odium arising from the cruel-
ties, riots and bloodshed in vessels carrying emigrants to
Latin American countries was attributed to British vessels.
But the Commissioners were of the opinion that any such regu-
lation would not be practical and the proposal was dropped. 1

They agreed, however, to certain regulations for the convey-
anance of emigrants at sea, although the difficulty of giving
effect to such regulations was apparent.

The Commissioners appointed the assistant emigration
official at Calcutta, Mr. White, to supervise the embarkation
of coolies at Hong Kong. After arriving at Hong Kong, Mr.
White met with an insuperable difficulty -- the lack of ships.
Seeing little prospects of getting vessels at Hong Kong, White
permitted the British agents of the firm, Messrs. Tait & Com-
pany, at Amoy, to take up any suitable vessels at that port
for the transportation of contract coolies, to British Guiana
and Jamaica. He further permitted the agents to solicit emi-
grants from a non-treaty port -- Namoa. In these acts he

1. The bounty system was abolished during these confer-
went clearly against his instructions and was recalled in June, 1854.

Other difficulties arose. Hong Kong had no large population from which to legitimately recruit coolies. The Chinese officials protested against the methods utilized by the foreigners to collect the coolies. Great Britain had too many interests involved in the affairs of China for the British government to sanction a traffic that was arousing the ugly temper of the Chinese population at the sea ports. The contract system must be established on a new basis if it were to continue in operation. The British Parliament, therefore, in 1855 made the first definite attempt to minimize the abuses of the traffic by passing "A Chinese Passenger Act." Until this act was passed, British vessels, with almost a complete monopoly of the coolie trade, were free from official inspection.

The Chinese Passenger Act was designed expressly for the repression of the abuses in the coolie traffic -- not to suppress the trade. The new emigration act contained detailed regulations which every British vessel must observe on leaving a British port, providing the vessel carried more than twenty Chinese on a voyage of more than three days duration. A government officer was placed under the necessity


of thoroughly inspecting every emigrant vessel with the view of insuring that the emigrants had been shipped voluntarily and that suitable provisions had been made for their accomodations.

The Act, though it lightened the responsibility of the British Government, was inadequate to control and regulate contract emigration. It applied only to British vessels and, up to 1858, was continually evaded by them. The vessels, instead of going to Hong Kong or other British ports for inspection, as the laws required, sailed from Macao and Swatow. Even in Hong Kong the principle of the act was violated by a most inefficient administration. An example of this inefficient administration may be found in the case of the John Calvin, which cleared from Hong Kong for Havana, in March, 1856. The British port official, satisfied that out of two hundred and ninety-eight emigrants only eighty-one were willing to sail, still permitted the vessel to leave port. One hundred and ten of the coolies died in passage, many of them suicides. Twenty-three more died in quarantine in Havana. The total mortality was forty-five percent.¹

In 1856 the political relations between China and Great Britain were threatened by the irregularities of the trade. In Peru the Emancipation Decree of 1855, incorporated in the Constitution of 1856, had resulted in an importation of Chinese coolies on a scale larger than had been

required in previous years to satisfy the demands for a sturdy labor force. The Chinese, in fixing the responsibility for the irregularities, did not discriminate between the nationals of those countries connected with the trade. The British Government, therefore, in 1856, instructed Lord Elgin to discuss the question of coolie emigration with the Chinese plenipotentiaries when negotiating the Treaty of Tientsin. This he failed to do, fearing it should be made an excuse for further delay in negotiations. In 1860 Imperial China was in the power of the allied conquerors. By an emigration clause inserted by Lord Elgin, for Great Britain, and Baron Gros, for France, in the convention of Peking, voluntary emigration under regulation was admitted. The Spanish Government secured similar treaty rights in 1864.  

We should note here that the regulations, when enforced, were sufficient to dispel from Hong Kong the stigma of affording facilities for this new slave-trade under the guise of free contract emigration. However, a foothold for the traffic was still available at the adjacent port of Macao, where its establishment was encouraged with but a slight pretense of official restriction.  

In 1859 emigration officials were established in Kwant-tung province to protect the lives and rights of the people emigrating as laborers, but the large majority of the coolies have gone from Macao, where delay, expenses,

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and surveillance which attend their engagement in the emigration offices were greatly diminished or avoided; so that the laudable efforts of the Chinese rules, were in a great measure, neutralized.

William H. Seward said in 1871:

The Chinese emigration to the United States goes exclusively from the province of Quan-Tong (Canton) through the port of Canton. The Chinese emigration to other countries, the West Indies and South America, goes through the port of Macao.

Let us turn to the efforts of the United States toward regulation of the trade. The Laws of Congress than in force, "regulating the carriage of passengers in merchant vessels," applied to all American vessels engaged in emigration to California. But the provisions of these laws did not apply to the conveying of passengers in American vessels from one foreign port to another foreign port. The laws in force upon the subject were those of February 22, 1847, and March 3, 1849. The intent of these laws was apparently to protect American ports from diseases which might be engendered by the arrival of passenger ships unduly crowded.

The first American crusader against the Chinese coolie traffic was Dr. Peter Parker, the American Minister to China. Dr. Parker's views on the trade were expressed in 1855, in the case of the American vessel, the Hound, commanded by

1. U.S.A. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1866, p. 496.
4. Ibid., p. 5.
Captain Peck. The Hound was the property of a Boston firm and sailed from Stonington, Connecticut. Dr. Parker was asked by Captain Peck if there were any laws which applied to the carrying of Chinese coolies from the Portuguese port of Macao to the Spanish port of Havana. Parker's reply to Captain Peck on March 21, 1855, was vague. Dr. Parker stated that though the vessel was carrying Chinese coolies from one foreign port to another, yet the vessel and its master were still considered American, sailing under the American flag and amenable to American laws. The same interpretation was to be applied to the charter of the vessel, which had been surveyed in New York, as to the number of passengers it could carry under the laws of the United States. Captain Peck was informed that he must obey the provisions of his charter.  

The master of the Hound complied with his charter and carried 230 coolies to Havana. Here, however, the colonization company of Pereda, Machado S. Co. protested to Captain Peck for his carrying only two hundred and thirty coolies when it had contracted with him to have four hundred brought to Cuba. The company officials cared little for the terms of the charter or the consequences that might result from packing four hundred coolies into a vessel of little over seven hundred tons. Captain Peck was disgusted with his part


2. Ibid., 105, 34 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 60-61.
in the affair. He maintained that neither he nor Dr. Parker
was aware of the means used to collect the coolies.¹

In January, 1856, Dr. C. D. Mugford, the Hong Kong
agent for the respectable American shipping firm of Sampson
and Tappan of Boston, requested from Dr. Parker information
as to whether the consuls of the United States would aid
vessels engaged in the Chinese coolie traffic; he also de-
sired to know the attitude of the United States toward the
trade. Dr. Mugford's request was made upon the basis of a
contract that his firm had entered into for the shipment of
2000 coolies to Brazil. Dr. Mugford stated that the trade
had always been obnoxious to him and that his firm was will-
ing to abandon the contract, providing the trade was illegal.²

Three days later (January 10, 1856) Dr. Parker issued a pu-
blie notification stating that the trade was replete with il-
legalities, and revolting in atrocities, strongly resembling
the African slave trade of former years. He said that cor-
respondence of the Chinese Imperial Government evinced a
strong disapproval of the traffic and since it placed the
relations of the two countries in jeopardy he was instructed
to ask all American Citizens to desist from it, "and to make
known to all whom it may concern the high disapprobation of
the Government of the United States, and forewarned all who
may hereafter engage therein that they will forfeit not only

¹. Ibid., p. 69.
². Ibid., pp. 51-58.
the protection of their government while so doing, in whatever consequences that they may be involved, but furthermore render themselves liable to the heavy penalties to which the traffic, if hitherto in some instances conducted, may expose them.\textsuperscript{1} Dr. Parker notified Dr. Mugford on January 14, 1856, that the notification of the 10th clearly expressed his views.\textsuperscript{2} Dr. Mugford's firm abandoned the contract.\textsuperscript{3}

In January, 1856, Dr. Parker received a letter from the firm of Sampson and Tappan stating that the Brazilian government considered the Public Notification flimsy, and was not satisfied with Dr. Parker's information. Furthermore, the Brazilian government requested that the documents stating the objections of the Chinese government be translated and certified by the Spanish consul in China.\textsuperscript{4}

Dr. Parker's notification did little in preventing the participation of American citizens and their vessels in the trade to foreign ports. Despite the requests of American officials in the Far East urging the necessity of penalties to fortify their proclamations against the irregularities,\textsuperscript{5} no legislation was passed by Congress affecting the traffic until 1862. In this year Congress passed an act to prohibit

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the participation of American citizens and the use of American vessels in the "Chinese Coolie Trade." The act stated that no citizen or resident of the United States could prepare any vessel to engage in coolie transportation; any vessel owned by citizens in whole or in part that participated in the trade would be confiscated; persons who built or equipped such a vessel would be punished; persons taking coolies on board a vessel transporting them from one foreign port to another to dispose of them would be punished. The act was designed not to interfere with voluntary emigration of Chinese; but consular certificates must be provided in such cases; the President of the United States might order vessels of war to examine vessels supposed to have coolies aboard; any vessel employed in violation of this act was to be sent to the United States; and the act was to take effect six months after its passage -- February 19, 1862.\footnote{U.S.A. Statutes at Large, vol. 12, pp. 340-341.}

This act for the prohibition of emigration under contract was evaded by loose interpretation of its terms. On February 7, 1870, the Chinese emigrant ship Ville de St. Lo sailed from Hong Kong for New Orleans, Louisiana, with two hundred "free emigrants" destined to work in the Arkansas valley. The coolies had been subjected to a "severe" examination by Dr. Goulding, the American consul in Hong Kong. He reported that the coolies were all not only willing but anxious to sail for the United States. However, the coolies
were not permitted to sign any contracts until they reached the United States.

Let us now review the steps leading to the abolition of the Chinese coolie traffic at Macao. In 1853 and 1855 the Portuguese governor at Macao established regulations to correct the abuses of the trade at that port, but the regulations proved to be ineffective because of the inefficiency of the Portuguese officials. In 1860, the Governor of Macao declared his intentions of ridding the Macao traffic of its abuses. But the coolie trade was the most staple of the trades at Macao, and there were too many powerful interests concerned to allow much hope for its improvement. So bold did the agents engaged become that in 1866 the Chinese government requested the British mercantile community to refrain from engaging in contract emigration from that port, and distinctly specified Macao as the seat of the evil. Great Britain, seeing the possibility of her interests being harmed, viewed the Macao traffic with great concern.

The British government took diplomatic action, and information relative to the Macao conditions was forwarded to Lisbon. The defense made by the Portuguese officials in Macao to the Lisbon government was that all the abuses had occurred in Chinese territory, and were therefore beyond the control of the Macao authorities.¹

Nevertheless, the governor of Macao, in September, ¹

1868, instituted a board of Superintendence of Chinese Emigration. A new code of regulation was adopted and a government emigration depot, in which the coolies were housed prior to the signing of the contract, was established. These regulations were already in operation when the horrors of the contract emigration was forced on the public by a tragedy at sea. On October 1, 1870, a French vessel, La Nouvelle Penelope, left Macao for Callao, Peru, with three hundred coolie emigrants. Within a few days the coolies rioted and took control of the ship. When one of the coolies (Kwok-a-sing) responsible for the riot was captured in Hong Kong, his extradition from Hong Kong to Macao was not allowed by Justice Smalle. 1 Judge Smalle impugned the extradition on the ground that the captain of the vessel was engaged in slave trade, having the ship's hatchways fitted with iron gratings and part of the crew armed. 2 The Governor of Macao replied to the attack made by the British Judge on contract emigration from Macao by forwarding to Lisbon full explanations of the manner in which the traffic was controlled. The Lisbon government stated the position of its colony in relation to the trade by saying it was better regulated than the contract emigration from Hong Kong. The armed precaution taken on the Chinese emigrant ships clearing Macao were of the same nature as those taken by the British on the

short voyage between Canton and Hong Kong.\footnote{Campbell, op. cit., p. 156.}

The allegations were serious and the British Colonial Office requested a report on the conditions at Hong Kong. The Governor admitted that during the war with China armed guards watched the hatchways and gangways of river steamers, but in 1870 this precaution was taken only "under peculiar circumstances." No reference was made to the Portuguese allegation that residents in Hong Kong profited by the Macao trade. The Governor's defense was accepted by the Colonial Office in March, 1872. However, the matter did not end here. Sir A. Kennedy, the new Governor at Hong Kong, reported that the machinery for the administration of the coolie traffic was very imperfect and the iron gratings used on the British vessels were "made in Hong Kong, and fitted at sea." As a result, three new ordinances were introduced by the new Governor in 1873. The first gave the harbormaster powers for regulation, and forbade the use of iron fittings on passenger ships; the second required every emigrant vessel leaving Hong Kong to obtain a license from the Governor; and the third provided for better treatment of Chinese women and female children. The act expressly forbade the decoying of persons from China to Hong Kong for the purpose of shipment from some outside port (i.e. Macao).\footnote{Ibid., pp. 156-157.}

The three ordinances were directed actually, though
not nominally, against the Macao trade. The result was the expulsion of seven emigrant ships outfitting in Hong Kong for Macao. The vessels made their way to the Whampoa anchorage. Here the Chinese authorities forbade the use of the harbor and ordered those in the harbor to leave.\(^1\)

The effect on the Macao coolie trade of closing the ports of Hong Kong and Whampao to the Macao emigrant ships would in itself have been serious. But the Portuguese Government decided to close Macao altogether to the traffic, and on December 27, 1873, the Governor's proclamation was issued prohibiting all coolie trade after a period of three months\(^2\) and at the end of March, 1874, contract emigration from Macao ceased.\(^3\)

From this point our story deals with the abolition of the abuses incident to the treatment of Chinese coolies in Peru and Cuba and the efforts of these countries to encourage the emigration of Chinese to Latin America.

The government of Peru, in March, 1856, attempted to control the importation of Chinese coolies into Callao. The attempt was a failure due to inefficient administration on the part of the Peruvian officials. The possibility of Peru becoming important as a cotton producing nation because of the Civil War in the United States furnished stimulus for

\(^1\) U.S.A. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1873-74, p. 203.

\(^2\) Ibid., 1873-74, p. 807.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 807.
an act passed by the Peruvian legislature in October, 1861, which permitted all nations to participate in the importation of Chinese coolies to Peru. But after the termination of the Civil War in the United States, the importation of coolies dropped considerably.¹

In September, 1870, a serious insurrection occurred on one of the large cotton estates near Pativila, about 180 miles north of Lima. The Chinese coolies, numbering nearly 2,000, committed every barbarity possible, murdering nineteen whites and wounding forty. Troops were immediately sent out from Lima to the scene of the insurrection and dispersed the insurgents, killing two hundred. The damage done to property was great and so intense was the popular feeling that a resolution was introduced in the Peruvian Congress prohibiting the further importation of Chinese and expelling those already there, but the resolution was never passed.²

The success in abolishing the abuse of the Chinese in Peru and the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Peru belongs to Dr. S. Wells Williams, the American Charge d'Affairs in China in the early 1870's.³ Petitions concerning the treatment meted out to the Chinese coolies were sent to Dr. Williams, who in turn saw that they

¹ U.S.A. Reports of the House of Representatives, 443, 36 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 11-12; and Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1866, pp. 495-97.
² U.S.A., House Ex. Documents, 1, 41 Congress, 3 Session p. 510.
³ Foster, op. cit., p. 278.
were placed before the Imperial Ministers. His work was rewarded in 1874, when China announced her readiness to negotiate the desired treaties with Peru --- but not until the Peruvian trade had been halted by the Chinese authorities in the treaty ports, and by the Portugese at Macao.

On June 26, 1874, two treaties were signed between the powers concerned. The first treaty established diplomatic relations between Peru and China. The second treaty was a special agreement concerning the treatment of Chinese emigrants to Peru. It provided for an investigation into the conditions of Chinese emigrants; tribunals were established to settle all controversies arising out of the investigation; Chinese emigrants dissatisfied with the decision of the tribunals were to be permitted to appeal their cases to the higher courts of Justice in Peru for further investigation; Chinese emigrants were placed on an equal footing as regards the legal procedure enjoyed by the subjects of the most favored nation in Peru; and the coolies whose contracts had expired were to have their passage paid to China if they desired to return.¹

The treaty of June 26, 1876, had as its objective the encouragement of Chinese emigration to Peru. The Peruvian government agreed to subsidize a line of steamships to bring Chinese to its shores. The subsidy was $250,000.00 annually. Beyond this the government promised to pay the steamship

¹ British and Foreign State Papers, vol. 66, pp. 1130-32.
company an agreed price for each laboring Chinese landed in Peru, the coolie receiving passage without charge and the government recouping its outlay from the farmers who took the coolies under contract price of his labor not to be less than eighty cents a day. ¹ This plan made a great improvement in the status of the Chinese in Peru. They could now come to Peru as emigrants, and not under the former odious system of colonist slaves, which permitted abuses both in China and Peru.²

The abolition of the coolie contract trade to Cuba and the steps taken to end the cruel treatment meted out to the coolies by the planters next receives our attention. We have mentioned that in 1847 a Spanish company induced a body of eight hundred coolies to go under contract to Cuba and that it was estimated that by July, 1852, agents had entered into contracts for the shipment to Havana of coolies to the number of from eight to fifteen thousand.³ The Spanish, having become alarmed at the increase of the number of Chinese imported to Cuba, ordered the Spanish consul at Macao to refuse further ratification of coolie contracts.⁴ It was hoped that this action would contribute much toward the termination of the trade. But this hope was short lived. On

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¹ U.S.A. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1876, p.48.
² Ibid., 1877-78, pp. 436-437.
³ Campbell, Chinese Emigration, p. 95.
⁴ U.S.A. Senate Executive Document, 30, 36 Congress, 1 Session, p. 488.
the 24th of September, 1858, Gidion Nye, deputy consul of
the United States at Macao, in an official note stated the
following: "I have now the honor to acquaint your excellency
(Mr. Reed) with a complete reversal of the policy of Spanish
authorities ... the last mail having brought a dispatch to
the consul general of Spain rescinding the former order for
the suppression of coolie shipments to the island of Cuba." In
February, 1860, Secretary of State Cass was notified by
the American Vice-Consul, Mr. Savage, of Havana, that the im-
portation of contract coolies to Cuba had been forbidden and
would cease after December 1, 1861. In July of the same
year, in a dispatch from the British Foreign Office, Lord
John Russel stated that Spain had entered into an agreement
with Great Britain to suppress the coolie trade. However,
the Spanish government in the agreement stated that of all
the labor experiments attempted "the Chinese coolie" pre-
sented the least number of objections and hoped that a treaty
providing for voluntary emigration of Chinese coolies to Cuba
might be formulated in the near future. Voluntary emigration
for service in the Spanish territories was sanctioned by a
treaty between Spain and China in 1864.

1. U.S.A. Reports of the House of Representatives, 443,
Session, p. 22.
Session, pp. 441-43.
292.
In 1872, the Chinese government, moved by the information of the maltreatment of its people in Cuba, stopped further emigration to that island. The Spanish Charge d'Affaires at Peking immediately complained of a violation of Article X of the Spanish treaty concluded in 1864, which provided for free emigration. At the advice of S. Wells Williams, the acting charge d'affairs for the United States, and of Mr. Wade the English minister, and with the consent of Mr. Otín, representative of Spain, the Chinese government agreed to send a commission to Cuba to inquire into the condition of the Chinese on that island, both Spain and China agreeing that the report of the commission should be submitted to the representatives of Great Britain, Russia, the United States, France and Germany, who, as arbitrators, were to decide whether China was justified in suspending emigration; if not, whether she was liable for indemnity therefore.

In November, 1873, the Tsung li Yamen appointed as chief commissioner to Cuba a native of the rank named Chin San Pen. He was accompanied by two European officers in the customs service, Mr. A. Macpherson and Mr. A. Huber, and several Chinese clerks and attendants. This commission reached Cuba in March, 1874, and after carefully studying the conditions of Chinese coolies in that island, returned to Peking in January, 1875. On February 5, 1875, the Tsung li Yamen sent to all the foreign legations in Tien-tsin a lengthy communication detailing the evidence on which the action preventing emigration of Chinese to Cuba had been based.
When the representatives of the five powers came to study the case as presented in the documents submitted to them and reflected how closely the Spanish official was likely to contest every point in the indictment against the Spanish, it was evident that arbitration would be long and laborious. The representatives met on March 11, 1875, for the last time and presented to the ministers of the Yemen a convention which, though it did not concede all desired, nevertheless offered great advantages to China, and should have been accepted. It would have put an end to a quarrel that might have had serious consequences. The Convention abandoned all claims to indemnity. It abandoned the Spanish treaty-right to make labor contracts in China, leaving the laborer free to engage himself before his consul in Havana and for a limited period. It closed the barracoons and put an end to kidnapping. It permitted Chinese coolies, accompanied by the Chinese consuls, to carry their complaints to the Spanish tribunals. It enabled the Chinese government to dictate the regulation of details as to terms of service, rate of wages, and repatriation. It returned a considerable number of coolies to China and opened the way for the return of others. Besides all this, Mr. Otín engaged to move his government to direct its attention to the laws affecting the treatment of coolies in Cuba and the five representatives promised to invoke the good offices of their respective

1. Ibid., 1875-76, pp. 292-96.
governments in the same direction.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 306-7.}

The representatives of the Chinese Imperial Government admitted that the convention contained some good features; but they could not be brought to accept it. The Chinese ministers demanded the repatriation of all the thousands who had served out one contract. They insisted that Chinese whose contracts, whether for five years or less, had expired, should be given certificates of complete service, funds for return, and permits for departure. They demanded repatriation for all Chinese who were under age when they embarked for Cuba, and of all aged persons – above fifty or sixty – whether the contracts had expired or not. They proposed, besides many things in detail of an impracticable character, or which should have been matters of regulation under the negotiation of the convention. Moreover, they seemed to hold the mediators responsible for the procurement from Spain of all they demanded.\footnote{Ibid., 1875-76, pp. 296-97.} In their memoranda they assumed that the tribunal had admitted the truth of all they had stated in their report of the Cuban situation, which the tribunal emphatically denied.\footnote{Ibid., 1875-76, pp. 307-10.}

The Arbitration Conference ended without any further result, except for the recommendation sent by the mediators to the Yemen encouraging it to accept the convention, and
declining further efforts at mediation unless it did so.¹

In November, 1877, a treaty was finally concluded between China and Spain in regards to emigration of Chinese to Cuba and treatment there. Contract emigration was not to be permitted in the future, and voluntary emigration was provided for by guarantees suitable to the contracting parties.² The American consuls in Cuba were requested to represent China until Chinese consuls could be established in that island. The American government granted the request. The outcome of these measures was the remediying of the conditions relative to the treatment of Chinese in Cuba.³

How the problem of the traffic of Chinese coolies to the British West Indies and Peru was settled has already been mentioned. Now, with the termination of the Macao traffic by the Portuguese, and the successful treatment of the problem with Cuba, contract emigration could only take place at the treaty ports, or at Hong Kong, if the destination of the emigrants was a British colony. Until the end of the century, however, the treaty ports were effectively closed to the system by the Chinese government, which after the presentation of the Cuban report, demanded guarantees for the welfare of the Chinese subjects from the prospective employers or governments that desired the emigration of the Chinese to their countries.

1. Ibid., 1875-76, p. 297.
2. Ibid., 1878-79, pp. 98-100.
3. Ibid., 1878-1879, p. 219.
For a further supply of Chinese coolies the planters of the British West Indies were forced to rely upon the operation of the contract system at Hong Kong. But the opposition of the Foreign Office to a continuation of Chinese contract emigration and the pressure of public opinion aroused by the Anti-slavery Society in Great Britain were effective, and the British West India Emigration Agency, the activities of which had been suspended since 1874, was finally closed down.

So ends a period of history in emigration to Latin American countries, a period of which those countries concerned cannot be proud.
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