

Zou Rong: The Revolutionary Army

<http://www.chss.iup.edu/baumler/zourong.html>

1. Introduction

Sweep away millennia of despotism in all its forms, throw off millennia of slavishness, annihilate the five million and more of the furry and horned Manchu race, cleanse ourselves of 260 years of harsh and unremitting pain, so that the soil of the Chinese subcontinent is made immaculate, and the descendants of the Yellow Emperor will all become Washingtons. Then they will return from the dead to life again, they will emerge from the Eighteen Levels of Hell and rise to the Thirty Three mansions of Heaven, in all their magnificence and richness to arrive at their zenith, the unique and incomparable of goals - revolution. How sublime is revolution, how majestic!

I follow thereupon the line of the Great Wall, scale the Kunlun Mountains, travel the length of the Yangzi, follow to its source the Yellow River. I plant the standard of independence, ring the bell of freedom. My voice re-echos from heaven to earth, I crack my temples and split my throat in crying out to my fellow-countrymen: revolution is inevitable for China today. It is inevitable if the Manchu yoke is to be thrown off; it is inevitable if China is to be independent; it is inevitable is to take its place as a powerful nation on the globe; it is inevitable if China is to survive for long in the new world of the 20th century; it is inevitable if China is to be a great country in the world and play the leading role. Stand up for Revolution! Fellow-countrymen, are there any of you whether old or in middle years, in your prime of life or young, be it man or woman, who is talking of revolution or working actively for revolution? Fellow countrymen, assist each other and live for each other in revolution. I here cry at the top of my voice to spread the principles of revolution throughout the land.

Revolution is the universal principle of evolution. Revolution is the essence of the struggle for survival of destruction in a time of transition. Revolution submits to heaven and responds to men's needs.² Revolution rejects what is corrupt and keeps the good. Revolution is the advance from barbarism to civilization. Revolution turns slaves into masters

4. For revolution, race must be clearly distinguished

The yellow and white races which are to be found on the globe have been endowed by nature with intelligence and fighting capacity. They are fundamentally incapable of giving way to each other. Hence, glowering and poised for a fight ³ they have engaged in battle in the world of evolution, the great arena where strength and intelligence have clashed since earliest times, the great theater where for so long natural selection and progress have been played out.

When men love their race, solidarity will arise internally, and what is outside will be repelled. Hence, to begin with, clans were united and other clans repelled; next tribes were united and other tribes repelled, finally the people of a country became united and people of other countries were repelled. This is the general principle of the races of the world, and also a major reason why races engender history. I will demonstrate to my countrymen, to allow them to form their own impression, how our yellow race, the yellow race of which the Han race is a part (and I refer you to the history of China) is able to unite itself and repel intruders.

6. The purport of Revolutionary Independence

The enormous privileges given the nobles, the harm done to the livelihood of the people, the taxes illegally imposed, the extorted public debt and the twice levied ship tax: such were the reasons why the English Parliament would not submit to King Charles, and why revolution was advocated. The excessive use of patents of nobility leading to the widening of the gulf between noble and base, rich and poor.; the abandonment of the principle of the protection of the people; the levies exacted beyond reason; these were the reasons why French militants and men of high principles did not shrink from the terms of insurrection and sedition; such were the causes of the French Revolution. Heavy tea duties, the forcible imposition of a printing tax without the consent of the legislative assembly, the quartering of troops on civilians: such were the themes of the criticisms leveled at the British. Thereafter, the American flag of revolt floated on Bunker Hill; such were the reasons why revolution was advocated so widely until independence was finally achieved.

I do not begrudge repeating over and over again that internally we are slaves of the Manchus and suffering from their tyranny, externally we are being harassed by the Powers, and we are doubly enslaved. The reason why our sacred Han race, descendants of the Yellow emperor, should support revolutionary independence, arises precisely from the question of whether our race will go under and be exterminated.

With the rapid advances in science, the superstitious doctrine whereby a man becomes an emperor through the gift of heaven and the spirits can be destroyed. With the rapid advance in world civilization, the system whereby the rule of a single man in a despotic form of government can cover the whole country may be overthrown. With the rapid advances in wisdom, everybody will be able to enjoy his or her natural rights. If today our great Han people are to throw off the bonds of the Manchus, to retrieve all the rights we have lost, and is to take its place among world powers (for we wish to preserve in its entirety our natural equality of status and independence), we cannot avoid carrying out a revolution and safeguarding our right to independence. Alas, I am young, ignorant, and brutish, not equal to speaking for the fundamental principles of revolutionary independence. Wary and fearful [4](#) I have carefully modeled (my proposals) on the principles of American revolutionary independence. I have summarized them under a number of headings, and with the utmost deference I offer to my most revered and beloved 400 million countrymen of the great Han people to prepare them for the path they are to follow.

-China is the China of the Chinese. Countrymen, you must all recognize the China of the Chinese of the Han race.

-Not to allow any alien race to lay their hands on the least rights of our China

-Any obligations subordinating people to the Manchus are one and all annulled

-First, to overthrow the barbaric government set up by the Manchus in Peking

-To expel the Manchus settled in China or kill them in order to revenge ourselves

-To kill the emperor set up by the Manchus as a warning to the myriad generations that despotic government is not to be revived.

-To oppose any intervention directed either by Chinese nationals or from foreign soil against Chinese revolutionary independence

-To set up a central government, which will act as a general body to run affairs.

-In each area and province a deputy to a general assembly is to be elected by vote in public elections. From these deputies, one is to be elected by vote to serve as provisional president to represent the whole country. A vice-president is also to be elected, and all chou and hsien are to elect a number of deputies.

-The whole population, whether male or female, are citizens.

-All men have the duty to serve as citizen soldiers

-Everybody has the duty of bearing the burden of taxation.

-The whole country has the duty to show loyalty to the newly established state.

-Everybody in the country, whether male or female, is equal. There is no distinction between upper and lower, base and noble.

-All inalienable rights are bestowed by nature.

-The freedom to live and all other privileges are natural rights.

-Freedoms, such as that of speech, thought, the press, etc. cannot be infringed on.

-All rights must be defended. The government which must be set up by public agreement, must employ all the powers granted purely to defend popular rights.

-If, at any time, the actions of a government lead to an infraction of people's rights, they have the right to carry out a revolution, and overthrow the old government to retrieve their peace and contentment.

-Once these have been obtained, the question of rights must be publicly discussed and a new government set up. This also is to be a right of the people.

...

-To settle the name of the country as the Republic of China

-The Republic of China is a free and independent country.

-A free and independent state has full rights and equality with other great states in the matter of war and peace, treaties and trade, and all other matters pertaining to an independent state.

-The law of the constitution shall be modeled on the American constitutional law, having regard for Chinese conditions.

-The law of self-government shall be modeled on the American law of self-government.

-Likewise in all matters of a national character, negotiations, the establishment of official departments and the determination of the official duties in the state American practice will remain a criterion.

-Let high heaven and the god of the earth both scrutinize it.

7. Conclusion

You 400 million of the great Han race, my countrymen, whether man or woman, aged or elderly, in the prime of life, young or child, carry out this revolution. It is the bounden duty of one and all. Think of it as the food and drink which is your daily necessity. You should not act rashly or throw your lives away. Your lands occupy two thirds of Asia: countrymen, you are a fifth of the peoples of the globe. Your tea can provide drink for the countless millions of the world and more; your coal could provide fuel for the whole world for two thousand years and not run short. You possess the omen of the Yellow Peril, you possess the might of the sacred race. You possess government, run it yourselves, you have laws, guard them yourselves; you have industries, administer them yourselves; you possess armed forces, order them yourselves; you possess lands, watch over them yourselves.; you possess lands, watch over them yourselves; you have inexhaustible resources, exploit them yourselves. You are qualified in every way to revolutionary independence. Lead the 400 million citizens of your countrymen, intercede for their lives, intercede for your native country. Throw caution to the winds, be prepared to lose your lives in the struggle. Gallop against your hereditary enemies the Manchus, your public enemy the clan of Aisin Gioro through the forest of guns and the rain of bullets, after which sweep away the demons from foreign parts who have infringed on your sovereign rights. The stain on your history may be washed away, the honor of your country may soar. Your flag of independence already streams high among the clouds. Your bell of freedom already rings out in the regions of Yu. Your Hall of Independence already stands a stronghold in your midst. Your stele of commemoration already rises on a lofty peak. Your spirit of freedom has emerged, and already grasps for you heaven with his left hand, earth with his right. The sky is clear, the earth bright; thunder breaks, rousing thousands of sleeping lions into movement. This is in revolution, in independence.

Long live the revolutionary independence of the great Han people

Long live the Republic of China

Long live the freedom of the 400 million fellow countrymen of the Chinese republic.

The Song of the Baked Cake by Liu Po-wen

The hand grasps the great sword ninety-nine

Kill to a man the Tartar, then stay the hand.⁵

1. Born in Sichuan province in West China in 1885 to a merchant family, Zou received a classical education but refused to sit for the civil service exams, preferring instead to work as a seal carver while pursuing his idiosyncratic classical studies. He gradually became interested in Western ideas, and went to Japan to study in 1901, where he was exposed to radical revolutionary and anti-Manchu ideas. This tract, published in Shanghai in 1903, is his most important work and one of the most important radical tracts published in China before the 1911 Revolution. Zou was arrested for publishing the tract, and died in prison in 1905.

2. This is the definition of the word *geming*, revolution, in the *Book of Changes*.

3. Phrase from the *Book of Rites*.

4. Phrase from the *Book of History*.

5. Liu was involved in the overthrow of the Mongol Yuan dynasty and the establishment of the Ming. See Lust, p.127.

Modern History Sourcebook: The Young Turks: Proclamation for the Ottoman Empire, 1908

- 1.** The basis for the Constitution will be respect for the predominance of the national will. One of the consequences of this principle will be to require without delay the responsibility of the minister before the Chamber, and, consequently, to consider the minister as having resigned, when he does not have a majority of the votes of the Chamber.
- 2.** Provided that the number of senators does not exceed one-third the number of deputies, the Senate will be named as follows: one-third by the Sultan and two-thirds by the nation, and the term of senators will be of limited duration.
- 3.** It will be demanded that all Ottoman subjects having completed their twentieth year, regardless of whether they possess property or fortune, shall have the right to vote. Those who have lost their civil rights will naturally be deprived of this right.
- 4.** It will be demanded that the right freely to constitute political groups be inserted in a precise fashion in the constitutional charter, in order that article 1 of the Constitution of 1293 A.H. [Anno Hegira=] be respected.
- 7.** The Turkish tongue will remain the official state language. Official correspondence and discussion will take place in Turkish.
- 9.** Every citizen will enjoy complete liberty and equality, regardless of nationality or religion, and be submitted to the same obligations. All Ottomans, being equal before the law as regards rights and duties relative to the State, are eligible for government posts, according to their individual capacity and their education. Non-Muslims will be equally liable to the military law.
- 10.** The free exercise of the religious privileges which have been accorded to different nationalities will remain intact.
- 11.** The reorganization and distribution of the State forces, on land as well as on sea, will be undertaken in accordance with the political and geographical situation of the country, taking into account the integrity of the other European powers.
- 14.** Provided that the property rights of landholders are not infringed upon (for such rights must be respected and must remain intact, according to law), it will be proposed that peasants be permitted to acquire land, and they will be accorded means to borrow money at a moderate rate.

16. Education will be free. Every Ottoman citizen, within the limits of the prescriptions of the Constitution, may operate a private school in accordance with the special laws.

17. All schools will operate under the surveillance of the state. In order to obtain for Ottoman citizens an education of a homogenous and uniform character, the official schools will be open, their instruction will be free, and all nationalities will be admitted. Instruction in Turkish will be obligatory in public schools. In official schools, public instruction will be free. Secondary and higher education will be given in the public and official schools indicated above; it will use the Turkish tongue. Schools of commerce, agriculture, and industry will be opened with the goal of developing the resources of the country.

18. Steps shall also be taken for the formation of roads and railways and canals to increase the facilities of communication and increase the sources of the wealth of the country. Everything that can impede commerce or agriculture shall be abolished.

Source.

From: "The Young Turks," trans. A. Sarrou, in *Civilization since Waterloo*, Rondo Cameron, ed. (Paris, 1912), pp. 40-42

Scanned by Jerome S. Arkenberg, Cal. State Fullerton. The text has been modernized by Prof. Arkenberg.

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<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1908youngturk.html>

Modern History Sourcebook:
Dadabhai Naoroji¹:
The Benefits of British Rule, 1871

The Benefits of British Rule for India:

In the Cause of Humanity: Abolition of *suttee* and infanticide. Destruction of *Dacoits*, *Thugs*, *Pindarees*, and other such pests of Indian society. Allowing remarriage of Hindu widows, and charitable aid in time of famine. Glorious work all this, of which any nation may well be proud, and such as has not fallen to the lot of any people in the history of mankind.

In the Cause of Civilization: Education, both male and female. Though yet only partial, an inestimable blessing as far as it has gone, and leading gradually to the destruction of superstition, and many moral and social evils. Resuscitation of India's own noble literature, modified and refined by the enlightenment of the West.

Politically: Peace and order. Freedom of speech and liberty of the press. Higher political knowledge and aspirations. Improvement of government in the native states. Security of life and property. Freedom from oppression caused by the caprice or greed of despotic rulers, and from devastation by war. Equal justice between man and man (sometimes vitiated by partiality to Europeans). Services of highly educated administrators, who have achieved the above-mentioned results.

Materially: Loans for railways and irrigation. Development of a few valuable products, such as indigo, tea, coffee, silk, etc. Increase of exports. Telegraphs.

Generally: A slowly growing desire of late to treat India equitably, and as a country held in trust. Good intentions. No nation on the face of the earth has ever had the opportunity of achieving such a glorious work as this. I hope in the credit side of the account I have done no injustice, and if I have omitted any item which anyone may think of importance, I shall have the greatest pleasure in inserting it. I appreciate, and so do my countrymen, what England has done for India, and I know that it is only in British hands that her regeneration can be accomplished. Now for the debit side.

The Detriments of British Rule:

In the Cause of Humanity: Nothing. Everything, therefore, is in your favor under this heading.

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji was a founding member of the Indian National Congress, the main organ of the Indian independence movement. He was a Parsi (an Indian of Iranian ancestry) and of the Zoroastrian religion. He was the first Asian Member of Parliament in England, serving from 1892 to 1895.

In the Cause of Civilization: As I have said already, there has been a failure to do as much as might have been done, but I put nothing to the debit. Much has been done, though.

Politically: Repeated breach of pledges to give the natives a fair and reasonable share in the higher administration of their own country, which has much shaken confidence in the good faith of the British word. Political aspirations and the legitimate claim to have a reasonable voice in the legislation and the imposition and disbursement of taxes, met to a very slight degree, thus treating the natives of India not as British subjects, in whom representation is a birthright. Consequent on the above, an utter disregard of the feelings and views of the natives. The great moral evil of the drain of wisdom and practical administration, leaving none to guide the rising generation.

Financially: All attention is engrossed in devising new modes of taxation, without any adequate effort to increase the means of the people to pay; and the consequent vexation and oppressiveness of the taxes imposed, imperial and local. Inequitable financial relations between England and India, *i.e.*, the political debt of ,100,000,000 clapped on India's shoulders, and all home charges also, though the British Exchequer contributes nearly ,3,000,000 to the expense of the colonies.

Materially: The political drain, up to this time, from India to England, of above ,500,000,000, at the lowest computation, in principal alone, which with interest would be some thousands of millions. The further continuation of this drain at the rate, at present, of above ,12,000,000 per annum, with a tendency to increase. The consequent continuous impoverishment and exhaustion of the country, except so far as it has been very partially relieved and replenished by the railway and irrigation loans, and the windfall of the consequences of the American war, since 1850. Even with this relief, the material condition of India is such that the great mass of the poor have hardly tuppence a day and a few rags, or a scanty subsistence. The famines that were in their power to prevent, if they had done their duty, as a good and intelligent government. The policy adopted during the last fifteen years of building railways, irrigation works, etc., is hopeful, has already resulted in much good to your credit, and if persevered in, gratitude and contentment will follow. An increase of exports without adequate compensation; loss of manufacturing industry and skill. Here I end the debit side.

Summary: To sum up the whole, the British rule has been: morally, a great blessing; politically, peace and order on one hand, blunders on the other; materially, impoverishment, relieved as far as the railway and other loans go. The natives call the British system "Sakar ki Churi," the knife of sugar. That is to say, there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is the knife, notwithstanding. I mention this that you should know these feelings. Our great misfortune is that you do not know our wants. When you will know our real wishes, I have not the least doubt that you would do justice. The genius and spirit of the British people is fair play and justice.

Source:

From: Dadabhai Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings*, (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887), pp. 131-136.

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**Modern History Sourcebook:
Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920):
Address to the Indian National Congress, 1907**

The Indian National Congress was created by a group of English-speaking urban intellectuals in 1885. The original "moderate" leadership was soon more "militant" group, led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), which demanded "Swaraj [self-rule] for India. What follows is an excerpt from Tilak's address to Indian National Congress in 1907 calling for boycott of British goods and resistance to British rule.

Two new words have recently come into existence with regard to our politics, and they are *Moderates* and *Extremists*. These words have a specific relation to time, and they, therefore, will change with time. The Extremists of today will be Moderates tomorrow, just as the Moderates of today were Extremists yesterday. When the National Congress was first started and Mr. Dadabhai's views, which now go for Moderates, were given to the public, he was styled an Extremist, so that you will see that the term Extremist is an expression of progress. We are Extremists today and our sons will call themselves Extremists and us Moderates. Every new party begins as Extremists and ends as Moderates. The sphere of practical politics is not unlimited. We cannot say what will or will not happen 1,000 years hence - perhaps during that long period, the whole of the white race will be swept away in another glacial period. We must, therefore, study the present and work out a program to meet the present condition.

It is impossible to go into details within the time at my disposal. One thing is granted, namely, that this government does not suit us. As has been said by an eminent statesman - the government of one country by another can never be a successful, and therefore, a permanent government. There is no difference of opinion about this fundamental proposition between the old and new schools. One fact is that this alien government has ruined the country. In the beginning, all of us were taken by surprise. We were almost dazed. We thought that everything that the rulers did was for our good and that this English government has descended from the clouds to save us from the invasions of Tamerlane and Chingis Khan, and, as they say, not only from foreign invasions but from internecine warfare, or the internal or external invasions, as they call it. . . . We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott. We have perceived one fact, that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. This whole government is carried on with our assistance and they try to keep us in ignorance of our power of cooperation between ourselves by which that which is in our own hands at present can be claimed by us and administered by us. The point is to have the entire control in our hands. I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it. Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery. We don't want to become clerks and remain [clerks]. At present, we are clerks and willing instruments of our own oppression in the

hands of an alien government, and that government is ruling over us not by its innate strength but by keeping us in ignorance and blindness to the perception of this fact. Professor Seeley shares this view. Every Englishman knows that they are a mere handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong. This is politics. We have been deceived by such policy so long. What the new party wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your own hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be for ever fallen. So many of you need not like arms; but if you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence in such a way as not to assist this foreign government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what is meant when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow. Some gentlemen who spoke this evening referred to half bread as against the whole bread. I say I want the whole bread and that immediately. But if I can not get the whole, don't think that I have no patience.

I will take the half they give me and then try for the remainder. This is the line of thought and action in which you must train yourself. We have not raised this cry from a mere impulse. It is a reasoned impulse. Try to understand that reason and try to strengthen that impulse by your logical convictions. I do not ask you to blindly follow us. Think over the whole problem for yourselves. If you accept our advice, we feel sure we can achieve our salvation thereby. This is the advice of the new party. Perhaps we have not obtained a full recognition of our principles. Old prejudices die very hard. Neither of us wanted to wreck the Congress, so we compromised, and were satisfied that our principles were recognized, and only to a certain extent. That does not mean that we have accepted the whole situation. We may have a step in advance next year, so that within a few years our principles will be recognized, and recognized to such an extent that the generations who come after us may consider us Moderates. This is the way in which a nation progresses, and this is the lesson you have to learn from the struggle now going on. This is a lesson of progress, a lesson of helping yourself as much as possible, and if you really perceive the force of it, if you are convinced by these arguments, then and then only is it possible for you to effect your salvation from the alien rule under which you labor at this moment.

Source:

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920): Address to the Indian National Congress, 1907, reprinted in William T. de Bary et al., *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 719-723.

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Paul Kennedy: *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, Vintage Books, 1989

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/kennedy-risefall.html>

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The story of the "rise and fall of the Great Powers" ... maybe summarized here. The first chapter sets the scene for all that follows by examining the world powers around 1500 and analyzing the strengths and weakness of each of the "power centers" of that time-- Ming China; the Ottoman Empire and its Muslim offshoots in India, the Mogul Empire; Muscovy; Tokugawa Japan; and the cluster of states in west-central Europe. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was by no means apparent that the last-named region was destined to rise above all the rest. But however imposing and organized some of those oriental empires appeared by comparison with Europe, they all suffered from the consequences of having a centralized authority which insisted upon a uniformity of belief and practice, not only in official state religion but also in such areas as commercial activities and weapons development. The lack of any such supreme authority in Europe and the warlike rivalries among its various kingdoms and city-states stimulated a constant search for military improvements, which interacted fruitfully with the newer technological and commercial advances that were also being thrown up in this competitive, entrepreneurial environments. Possessing fewer obstacles to change, European societies entered into a constant upward spiral of economic growth and enhanced military effectiveness which over time, was to carry the ahead of all other regions of the globe.

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....Indeed, placed alongside these other great centers of cultural and economic activity, Europe's relative weaknesses were more apparent than its strengths. It was, for a start, neither the most fertile nor the most popular area of the world; India and China took pride of place in each respect.

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Technologically, and therefore, militarily, the Ottoman Empire, China under the Ming Dynasty, a little later northern India under the Moguls, and the European states system with its Muscovite offshoot were all far superior to the scattered societies of Africa, America and Oceania...

Of all the civilizations of premodern times, none appeared more advanced, none felt more superior, than that of China. Its considerable population, 100-130 million compared with Europe's 50-55 million in the fifteenth century; its remarkable culture; its exceedingly

fertile and irrigated plains, linked by a splendid canal system since the eleventh century; its unified, hierarchical administration run by a well-educated Confucian bureaucracy had given a coherence and sophistication to Chinese society which was the envy of foreign visitors...

To readers brought up to respect "western science", the most striking feature of Chinese civilization must be its technological precocity. Huge libraries existed from early on. Printing by movable type had already appeared in eleventh century China, and soon large numbers of books were in existence. Trade and industry, stimulated by the canal building and population pressures, were equally sophisticated. Chinese cities were much larger..and Chinese trade routes as extensive. Paper money had earlier expedited the flow of commerce and growth of markets. By the later decades of eleventh century there existed an enormous iron industry in northern China, producing around 125,000 tons per annum, chiefly for military and government use--the army of over a million men, was for example, an enormous market for iron goods. It is worth remarking that this production figure was far larger than the British iron output in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, seven centuries later ! The Chinese were probably the first to invent true gunpowder; and cannons were used by the Ming to overthrow the Mongol rulers in the late fourteenth century....the magnetic compass was also another Chinese invention..In 1420, the Ming navy was recorded as possessing 1,350 combat vessels, including 400 large floating fortresses and 250 ships designed for long- range cruising..

The most famous of the official overseas expeditions were the seven long-distance cruises undertaken... between 1405 and 1433. Consisting on occasions of hundreds of ships and ten thousand men, these fleets visited ports from Malacca and Ceylon to the Red Sea entrances and Zanzibar....

Despite the opportunities that beckoned overseas, China had decided to turn its back on the world...

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...

But the greatest Muslim challenge to early modern Europe lay, of course, with the Ottoman Turks, or rather, with their formidable army and the finest siege train of the age... Almost as alarming, in many ways, was the expansion of Ottoman naval power....

The Ottoman Empire was, of course, much more than a military machine. A conquering elite (like the Manchus in China), the Ottomans had established a unity of official faith, culture, and language over an area greater than the Roman Empire, and over vast numbers of subject peoples. For centuries before 1500 the world of Islam had been culturally and technologically ahead of Europe. Its cities were large, well-lit, and drained, and some of them possessed universities and libraries and stunningly beautiful mosques. In mathematics, cartography, medicine, and many other aspects of science and industry-- in mills, guncasting, lighthouses, horsebreeding--the Muslims had enjoyed a lead. The

Ottoman system of recruiting future Janissaries from Christian youths in the Balkans had produced a dedicated, uniform corps of troops. Tolerance of other races had brought many a talented Greek, Jew and Gentile into the sultan's service--a Hungarian was Mehmet's chief gun caster in the Siege of Constantinople. Under a successful leader like Suleiman I, a strong bureaucracy supervised fourteen million subjects--this at a time when Spain had five million and England a mere two and a half million inhabitants. Constantinople in its heyday was bigger than any European city, possessing over 500,000 inhabitants in 1600....

External enemies and personal failings do not, however, provide the full explanation. The system as a whole, like that of Ming China, increasingly suffered from some of the defects of being centralized, despotic, and severely orthodox in its attitude toward initiative, dissent and commerce...Without clear directives from above, the arteries of the bureaucracy hardened, preferring conservatism to change, and stifling innovation. The lack of territorial expansion and accompanying booty after 1550, together with a vast rise in prices, caused discontented Janissaries to turn to internal plunder....[more stuff on internal problems]

To a distinct degree, the fierce response to the Shi'ite religious challenge reflected and anticipated a hardening of official attitudes toward all forms of free thought....

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For this political diversity Europe had largely to thank its geography. There were no enormous plains over which an empire of horsemen could impose its swift dominion; nor were there any broad and fertile river zones like those around the Ganges, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Yellow, and Yangtze, providing food for masses of toiling and easily conquerable peasants. Europe's landscape was much more fractured, with mountain ranges and large forest separating the scattered population centers in the valleys; and its climate altered considerably from north to south and west to east. This had a number of important consequences. For a start, it both made difficult the establishment of unified control, even by a powerful and determined warlord, and minimized the possibility that the continent could be overrun by an external force like the Mongol hordes.

Conversely, this variegated landscape encouraged the growth, and the continued existence, of decentralized power, with local kingdoms and marcher lordships and highland clans and lowland town confederations making a political map of Europe drawn at any time after the fall of Rome look like a patchwork quilt. The patterns on that quilt might vary from century to century, but no single color could ever be used to denote a unified empire.

Europe's differentiated climate led to differentiated products, suitable for exchange; and in time, as market relations developed, they were transported along the rivers or the pathways which cut through the forests between one area of settlement and the next. Probably the most important characteristic of this commerce was that it consisted primarily of bulk products timber, grain, wine, wool, herrings, and so on catering to the

rising population of the fifteenth century Europe, rather than the luxuries carried on the oriental caravans. Here again geography played a crucial role, for water transport of these goods was so much more economical and Europe possessed many navigable rivers. Being surrounded by seas was a further incentive to the vital ship building industry, and the later Middle Ages a flourishing maritime commerce was being carried out between the Baltic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This trade... in general continued to expand, increasing Europe's prosperity and enriching its diet, and leading to the creation of new centers of wealth like the Hanse towns or the Italian cities. Regular long distance exchanges of wares in turn encouraged the growth of bills of exchange, a credit system, and banking on an international scale. The very existence of mercantile credit, and then bills of insurance, pointed to the basic predictability of economic conditions which private traders had hitherto rarely, if ever, enjoyed anywhere in the world. (rather slow and inelegant) vessels capable of carrying large loads and finding their motive power in the winds alone. Although over time they developed more sail and masts, and stern rudders, and therefore became more maneuverable. North Sea "cogs" and their successors may not have appeared as impressive as the lighter craft which plied the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and the Indian ocean; but as we shall see below, they were going to possess distinct advantages in the long run.

...But the basic fact was that there existed no uniform authority in Europe which could effectively halt this or that commercial development; no central government whose change in priorities could cause the rise and fall of a particular industry; no systematic and universal plundering of businessmen and entrepreneurs by tax gatherers, which so retarded the economy of Mogul India..

The fact was that in Europe there were always some princes and local lords willing to tolerate merchants and their ways even when others plundered and expelled them; and as the record shows, oppressed Jewish traders, ruined Flemish textile workers, persecuted Huguenots, moved on and took their expertise with them. A Rhineland baron who overtaxed commercial travelers would find that the trade routes had gone elsewhere, and with it his revenues. A monarch who repudiated his debts would have immense difficulty raising a loan when the next war threatened and funds were quickly needed to equip his armies and fleets. Bankers and arms dealers were essential, not peripheral members of society. Gradually, unevenly, most of the regimes of Europe entered into a symbiotic relationship with the market economy, providing for it domestic order and a non arbitrary legal system (even for foreigners), and receiving in taxes a share of the growing profits in trade...

Once again, the existence of a variety of economic and military centers of power was fundamental. No one Italian city state could strive to enhance itself without the others intervening to preserve the equilibrium; no "new monarchy" could increase its dominions without stirring its rivals to seek compensation....religious antagonisms were added to the traditional balance of power rivalries, thus making the prospects of political centralization even more remote. Yet the real explanation lies a little deeper; after all, the simple existence of competitors, and of bitter feelings between warring groups, was evident in Japan, India and elsewhere, but that in itself had not prevented unification. Europe was

different in that each of the rival forces was able to gain access to the new military techniques, so that no single power ever possessed the decisive edge. The services of the Swiss and other mercenaries, for example, were on offer to anyone who was able to pay for them. There was not a single center for the production of crossbows, nor for that of cannon whether of earlier bronze guns or the later, cheaper cast iron artillery; instead such armaments were being made close to the ore deposits on the Weald, in central Europe, in Malaga, in Milan, in Liege, and later in Sweden. Similarly, the proliferation of ship building skills in various ports ranging from the Baltic to the Black Sea made it extremely difficult for any one country to monopolize maritime power, which in turn helped prevent the conquest and elimination of rival centers of armaments production lying across the sea.

...The forces possessed by the new monarchies in 1500 have seemed puny if they had been deployed against the enormous armies of the sultan and the massed troops of the Ming Empire... For the explanation of this shift one must again point to the decentralization of power in Europe. What it did, above all else, was to engender a primitive form of arms race among the city states and then the larger kingdoms...

...But because the Ming government had a monopoly of cannon, and the thrusting leaders of Russia, Japan, and Mogul India soon acquired a monopoly, there was much less incentive to improve such weapons once their authority had been established... Clinging to the untraditional methods of fighting, the Janissaries of Islam scorned taking interest in artillery until it was too late to catch up to Europe's lead. Facing less advanced peoples, Russian and Mogul army commanders had no compelling need for improved weaponry, since what they possessed overawed their opponents. Just as in the general economic field, so also in this specific area of military technology, Europe, fueled by a flourishing arms trade, took a decisive lead over the other civilizations and power centers.

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It was a combination of economic laissez faire, political and military pluralism, and intellectual liberty however rudimentary each factor was compared with later ages which had been since the miracle was historically unique, it seems plausible to assume that only a replication of all its component parts could have produced a similar result elsewhere. Because that mix of critical ingredients did not exist in Ming China, or in the Muslim Empires of the Middle East and Asia, or in any other of the societies examined above, they appeared to stand still while Europe advanced to the center of the world stage.