



This is a sample of the book

China. The Pulsating Cradle of Civilization
by **Piotr Plebaniak**

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Note on this translation: this is a first draft working copy.

The book's motto:

At the bidding of a Peter the Hermit millions of men hurled themselves against the East; the words of an hallucinated enthusiast such as Mahomet created a force capable of triumphing over the Greek-Roman world; an obscure monk like Luther bathed Europe in blood. The voice of a Galileo or a Newton will never have the least echo among the masses. The inventors of genius hasten the march of civilization. The fanatics and the hallucinated create history.

— Gustave Le Bon,
French psychologist and sociologist

Introduction I

The Force of Those Endowed with Will Power.

A vision

A right moment in history, a right idea, and a right man sometimes converge on the ocean of history to create a super-wave, a destructive, historical force that changes the face of the world. Combined in synergy, these three elements of violent nature grip the hearts of millions and put into their minds and hands tools of murder in the name of the Cause... They push human beings one against the other in an orgy of spawning a new order of things. They push into motion chains of events that turn the old world upside down-- and cover it with a forests of graves. (or "yet another layer of mass graves")

These powerful Forces are patiently waiting under the fragile cover of everyday life. Still, every few generations they build up and explode to the surface of the world. They

then fill up the old bed of the rushing river of history with a heap of corpses. And the red unstoppable masses of water, the river of history, redirected, rush into a new riverbed the dark future of uncertainty... Iterating again and again the governing principle of human destiny: there is nothing stronger than an idea whose time has come¹.

In an interview with Edward R. Murrow in 1955, the co-inventor of the U.S. atomic bomb program Robert Oppenheimer stated impressively, but not entirely accurately: "There are no secrets about the world of nature. There are secrets about the thoughts and intentions of men."² History is an account of events. But it is also a tool of ethical judgment and a powerful weapon for those who fight narrative wars. What then is history? Who should be let to study it? Who can understand it? A sociologist? A psychologist? Or perhaps a poet? A primatologist! No, this one is too pessimistic.

Who has greater power to direct history? Individuals such as Napoleon and Genghis Khan? Or perhaps, being products of their times, they merely filled up a niche that the Mechanisms of History³ created not for them by name, but for their kind? The Chinese have a proverb for this dilemma: "A world in chaos begets heroes". (See →). These men, driven by ambition, jumped, to use another Chinese proverb presented later in this book, onto the back of an angry tiger to ride it as far as luck, determination, and talent would allow.

What drove Oppenheimer when he led the project to build the instrument of mass death, and then summarized his team's success with the immortal, flashy "I have become death, the destroyer of worlds"⁴? What are intentions? What is ability to foresee the consequences of one's own actions? Or perhaps the courage to see them? Who is to judge? Who has the right to judge what is good and what is evil in history? "Victims!" someone might throw in as the answer, paraphrasing the words "only victims are never wrong" from the song *Yalta* by Jacek Kaczmarski⁵.

But we still don't know how to judge a great man. "Who knows for sure what he is aiming at, what are the the motives behind his actions and what will be the consequences?" asks the narrator in Cyril M. Kornbluth's novel *The Syndicate*. Great men who bring a Great Change do it at the collateral cost of laymen victims, tempted to participate in the act by a cleverly, artly orchestrated ideology. The Revolutionaries offer a package deal: for me, fame and power. For you, my instrument of inflicting the change-- You may lose your lives, but in return, as part of the "rabble in arms"⁵ you

will feel, at least for a moment, that you too are important. That you are creating a better world for future generations. That you are a man of morals and have moral high ground over those you murder, torture or enslave on my command (or "while being obedient to my Will". And thus I will let you to quench your own thirst for power.

Who will dare to judge that building a foundation for the next Han dynasty atoned for the totalitarian crimes of the First Emperor of Qin? Who will judge Luther, weighting on the scales the need for reform of the Church on the one hand, and on the other, the piles of victims of the religious wars that ravaged 17th century Europe? Kornbluth exclaims further from the pages of his novel⁶:

We can venerate Cromantius for the invention of the bow, and at the same time we can venge on him for starting the race armaments. We can be grateful to the stocky Sumerians for making magnificent mirrors of gold and discovering lapis lazuli, and at the same time rebuke them for burying handmaidens alive in the same grave with their mistress; thank Shi Huang Di for building the Great Wall, separating the barbaric north from the southern culture, and slander on him because he ordered all the books in China to be burned. We can praise King Minos for building water toilets at Knossos and curse him for giving the Greeks a man for a living sacrifice every year (...). We can be grateful to the Greeks for imposing taxes that kept them rich military outposts in the west, and at the same time curse them for prostitution, sodomy, and colonization wars serving We can (...) thank Justinian for the first code of law or curse him for the countless betrayals that gave rise to the shameful Byzantine millennium. (...) We can thank the sailors who opened the roads to the New World for famine-stricken Europe, and at the same time curse them for syphilis; praise the redskins for growing corn, the only salvation for the starving masses, or curse them for the same corn that most severely sterilizes the soils. We can We may praise the Virginia planters for the best varieties of tobacco or reproach them for leaving behind red swamps in place of the old forests.... We can praise the boys of the Fourth Squadron for exterminating the malarial mosquitoes of Ceylon or curse them for giving birth to so many Sinhalese that even five Ceylonese could not feed them.

One effect has a thousand causes, and one cause - thousands of consequences. Good and bad events occur regardless of the intentions of those who knocked over the first domino brick in the chain of events, sometimes being and sometimes not being "historical necessity". But are they good or bad? Or evil? For how many victims and beneficiaries? For whom? With hindsight after what period of time?

The vision of the bizarre logic at work in such moments was masterfully captured by American activist Brigitte Gabriel in her famous speech:

Most Germans were peaceful, yet the Nazis drove the agenda and as a result sixty million people lost their lives (...). The peaceful majority was irrelevant. (...) Most Russians were peaceful as well. Yet the Russians were able to kill twenty million people. The peaceful majority were irrelevant. (...) Most Chinese were peaceful as well. Yet the Chinese were able to kill seventy million people. The peaceful majority were irrelevant. When you look at Japan before World War II, most Japanese were peaceful as well. And Japan was able to butcher its way across South East Asia, killing twelve million people, mostly killed with bayonets and shovels. The peaceful majority were irrelevant.[7](#).

“Names obscure things,” says Polish writer Krzysztof Kąkolewski. Words obscure things. Our perception of history obscures facts. Our perception entraps us in our emotional attachment to *foundational lies*. Our perception of our own identity often enmeshes us in an aggressive defense (I love oxymorons) of tissue of lies... lies that allow us to live at peace with what we are. With what we were manipulated to be.

In this book you, the reader will find my lies on what history is. My mental picture of what China's history is. In this collection of historical accounts and words of immortal wisdom of antiquity I have tried to look at China's history not through the eyes of academics, but through the eyes of its participants and witnesses. These witnesses are emotionally-charged and emotionally driven living-flesh people like us. For the benefit of our illumination, they bring from their own hearts and their time to our hearts and times words of warning and guidance for the future. Their teachings and experiences are carved into the form of maxims, adages, historical accounts that cast light on convoluted human destinies and patterns of history.

I am now on the Kinmen Island, just 3 miles away from the Mainland China, controlled by the CCP. Next to me is a granite statue of Koxinga, a Ming Dynasty loyalist. I am sitting on the tiny Isle of Great Deeds (Jiangongyu 建功嶼, Jiangong, lit. Great Accomplishment, being Koxinga's Chinese name). Over the years, he continued to resist the Manchus, who under the Qing Dynasty took control of the Middle Kingdom in 1644.

The islet is built up with a complex of bunkers at the will of Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the regime that lost the civil war with Mao Zedong's communists in 1949 and evacuated the Government of the Republic of China to the island of Taiwan. Just as Koxinga, Chiang lived with the ambition to return to the mainland. In 1952, he delivered a famous speech here on Kinmen Island, barely a few miles off the coast of the mainland, announcing his return from the temporary safeheaven. History is not repeating itself. History adds rhymes.



We look westward. Me, Koxinga and the hovering spirit of Chiang Kai-shek. Together there are three of us. We gaze in silence into distance. We gaze at the multitude of skyscrapers of the city of Xiamen. But we don't see skyscrapers. We see the rhymes that China's history has written over millennia.

Kinmen Island,
August-September of 2019

The above impression is an adapted extract for this volume from the introduction to my book *Forces of Psychohistory* (2021). The phrase “together there are three of us” in the last paragraph of the text alludes to the iconic, melancholy poem by the Tang era poet Li Bai, titled *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* (月下獨酌).

The original passage, which appears in the volume *Wandering Counsellors' Dao*, will be recognized by virtually every Chinese person:

*I raise my cup to the Moon for her to join me --
With the Moon, my Shadow, and I : We're people three.*

(translated by Frank C. Yue)