

ONE

Opium for China

The British Connection

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Opium in Chinese history is a large subject, as Jonathan Spence has observed.¹ This chapter is restricted to discussing its international aspects during the “long nineteenth century,” a period usually defined as running from 1789 to 1914 but which I will frame more generously as extending from the late-eighteenth-century “Atlantic revolutions” to the 1920s or, to use other terms of reference, from the British conquest of Bengal to the upsurge of Asian nationalism between the two world wars and the displacement of Britain by the United States as the world’s leading creditor nation. Using these non-Chinese processes to demarcate the subject may serve as a reminder that China’s complex involvement with opium during this period was considerably more than a domestic affair. Organized into a multifaceted series of stages running from production to consumption, the nineteenth-century opium “industry” was a vivid example of transnational enterprise, an instance perhaps of the cultural hybridity that Bruno Latour sees as typical of the modern era.² To capture the industry’s international character as well as to set the stage for later chapters exploring its specifically Chinese dimensions, my discussion must extend geographically beyond East Asia to include Britain, South Asia, and North America.

From the 1780s to the eve of the First World War, the opium trade was instrumental in integrating China into the world market and in harnessing that country to the institutions of European, and especially British, colonialism. During this period the economies of China, India, and Britain were structurally linked to one another in a trade triangle that until the 1860s was one of the most important components of the world economy, and thereafter continued for several decades to play a significant role in world trade. By the first half of the nineteenth century the flow of trade among the three countries involved the export of British manufactures to South

Asia, the export from India of opium and cottons for sale in China, and the purchase by British merchants of Chinese teas, silks, and bullion either for consumption in Britain or for re-export. The sale of Indian opium to China thus constituted a significant part of this triangular structure throughout the nineteenth century; for much of the period it was an essential part.

THE OPIUM TRADE PRIOR TO 1860

The Western trade in opium to China developed through several distinct phases. The earliest began in the seventeenth century and lasted until the 1760s; during this time the drug was mainly shipped either from Portuguese Goa in Portuguese and British vessels, or from Bengal by the Dutch, who held the monopoly on the export opium trade there. In either case it entered China—whether directly or via Macao—through Canton (Guangzhou), which from 1757 was designated by the imperial government as the only port open to European traffic. That opium was already considered a problem by the Qing in this period is evident from the Yongzheng emperor's 1729 edict banning its sale. The ban was vigorously enforced for a time, but became more sporadic in application as the Qianlong period (1736–1795) progressed. The second phase of the trade, lasting from the 1760s until the end of the century, followed British victories at Plassey in 1757 and Buxar in 1764 through which the East India Company (EIC) gained de facto sovereignty over Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and thereby acquired effective control over some of India's major opium-producing regions. The company resurrected the old Mogul monopoly on opium, and between 1764 and 1781 devised several systems for contracting out rights in the drug. At first company officials and other British merchants were allowed to use the trade to enhance their private fortunes, but after passage of the 1773 India Act a new system geared to increasing EIC revenues was introduced with the aim of using the China trade to bolster the company's then precarious accounts. In 1781, as part of Warren Hastings's program of putting the British administration in India on a stable financial footing during the American revolutionary war, the company took over the purchase of all opium produced in its territories. The Bengal administration itself briefly tried selling the bulk of its opium at Canton without the use of intermediaries, as a means for covering purchases of tea intended for the British and American markets. Carrying opium in EIC ships was soon criticized by company directors in London, however, both for incurring losses and for jeopardizing legal forms of Sino-British trade, since opium was contraband in China.³ Having grown rapidly over the previous century, the remunerative tea trade burgeoned after Parliament in 1784 passed the Commutation Act, by which the British duty on tea was reduced from 125

percent to 12.5 percent to counter the new threat of American competition. Thereafter most of the opium trade from Calcutta to China was left in the hands of private merchants working under EIC license; the opium thus traded, however, remained essential to the company not only as its major commodity saleable at Canton for offsetting the increasingly massive purchases of tea but also as its key means for acquiring the bills of exchange that allowed company officials to remit the wealth they accumulated in India back to Britain.⁴

In 1793, when leading the British delegation to Beijing, Lord Macartney, the former governor of Madras, revealed himself to be quite precisely informed about the quantity and value of what he called the “the contraband trade” in opium.⁵ Four years later, with Britain facing the continued pressures of war with France, the company initiated a new phase of the opium trade when it extended its monopoly over the production as well as sale of the drug in those parts of India under direct British rule.⁶ By restricting and regulating production, the company was able to keep opium prices on the Chinese market high while reversing the tendency under the contract system to debasement of the product. According to the new arrangement, the company sold “export opium”⁷ at auction in Calcutta to private merchants known as the “country traders,”⁸ who engaged in taking it to China. This they did under company license until the EIC monopoly on the China trade was abolished in 1833. The 1797 introduction of the monopoly on production coincided closely with important legal changes in China. Edicts issued by the Jiaqing emperor again outlawed the smoking of opium in 1796 and its importation in 1800. Though the ban on imports formally changed the status of the drug, opium by this time was too crucial to British finances in India and too much in demand in China for the trade to be abandoned. To protect its legal forms of trade, the company devised the subterfuge of issuing ships’ orders that on paper forbade the licensed private traders from smuggling opium to China, while at the same time the company administration at Calcutta secretly required those traders to carry Indian opium precisely to that market. In addition, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw growth in exports of opium to China from states in western India under native rule as well as from Persia and Turkey, with American merchants as the main vendors of Turkish opium in 1800–1830. Competition from these sources led the British East India Company to lower prices and increase exports from territories under its control as one strategy of winning a greater market share. At the same time it succeeded in gaining increasing control over the hitherto competing supply of “Malwa” (western Indian) and Persian opium, a feat it managed partly by introducing a system of transit passes for opium moved through its territories and partly by extending the territory under its direct rule.⁹ Indeed, one of the advantages of the trade for the company was that it provided

revenues necessary for the military campaigns by which British rule in India was further extended at this time.

Conditions for trading in opium at Canton meanwhile went through an evolution of their own. Between 1800 and 1821 Western traders continued to carry opium to their factories at Whampoa, just south of Canton, for transfer to Chinese buyers. Morse observes that to ensure the acquiescence of local officials in the contraband trade after the Jiaqing imperial prohibition of 1796, the traders paid bribes instead of the former custom duties.¹⁰ A contemporary British source noted that, of the Bengal presidency's total exports for 1818–1819, China received one-fifth, an amount made up primarily of opium.¹¹ In 1821 a renewed crackdown by the Qing government on opium and the corruption that attended it resulted in the trade being driven out of the Pearl River to a new base on Lintin Island where armed British ships received consignments of the drug from India and passed it on to Chinese fast boats, which carried it off for distribution on the coast. This remained the situation throughout the so-called Lintin era (1821–1839), which lasted until the outbreak of hostilities between China and Britain in 1839. A crucial step in the worsening of relations between the two countries came in 1833–1834 when, along with expanding the electoral roll and abolishing slavery in the British empire, the new reform-minded Whig government in London ended the company's monopoly on direct trade between China and Britain, a privilege that had been left in place when its monopoly on direct trade between Britain and India was abolished in 1813.¹² From 1834 to 1838 the opium trade from British India to China underwent another dramatic spurt of growth. While noting that this trade continued to be essential to the finances of the British administration in India in the 1830s, Michael Greenberg underlines its global significance with the comment that “opium was no hole-in-the-corner petty smuggling trade, but *probably the largest commerce of the time in any single commodity*.¹³ This commodity was crucial to the establishment of what were becoming the great Western trading firms in Asia. Led by William Jardine, the scion of one of those houses, these dealers in Indian opium pushed successive British governments to use force to compel the Qing to change the trading system in ways favorable to British interests.¹⁴ They finally got their way with Palmerston and the Whigs in 1839.

The story of the Opium War and the events leading up to it has been told often and does not need repeating here.¹⁵ It is useful to recall, however, that the causes of the war have long been the subject of debate. The Indian historian Tan Chung has identified three commonly encountered positions in the historiography regarding this issue.¹⁶ The view that the British initiated the war to force opium on China is commonly associated with Chinese nationalist analyses, including those of a Marxist cast,¹⁷ but Tan documents that it is well attested in the Western literature, for instance in the works

of the influential American missionary Samuel Wells Williams.¹⁸ A second position, which Tan sees represented in the post–Second World War literature by Greenberg and Chang Hsin-pao, is that the war was essentially about balancing trade and gaining access to the Chinese market. On this reading, opium was the item that just happened to be in demand, but the war could have been over molasses if the Chinese government had been impeding access to a market for that.¹⁹ Finally, there is John Fairbank's position that the war resulted from a clash of cultures in which a traditional Chinese sense of superiority and xenophobia had to be broken down.²⁰ Interestingly, essentially similar positions were already found in the nineteenth-century debates about the opium trade and the 1839–1842 war. It was accepted among much of the political class in Britain at the time of the war, and not only among the war's critics, that the opium trade was the *casus belli*. Not only was this asserted by the Earl of Stanhope in his motion against the war in the House of Lords in April 1840, after Gladstone had already made the same argument in a speech against the war in the Commons, but it was also clearly accepted by Lord Melbourne, the prime minister, whose government entered into the state of war.²¹ The “trade war” thesis may be seen as implicit in the instruction of Palmerston, who as foreign secretary oversaw British military activities, to Captain Elliot, the British representative in Canton when the crisis broke.²² It was up to the Duke of Wellington, Tory leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, who during the debate rallied his party against censuring the Whig government for the hostilities, to make the patriotic “cultural” argument that the cause of war was not opium, but the right of British subjects not to be subjected to Chinese law.²³

The British victory in the Opium War resulted, as is well known, in China's being forced to make significant concessions: indemnification for the confiscated opium; the opening of the first five “treaty ports” to Western trade; abolition of the mercantilist Cohong structure and other impediments to trade; and the surrender of Hong Kong.²⁴ What the British victory did not bring was the legalization of opium, as its importation into China remained technically illegal. Continued opposition from the court in Beijing and the strength of anti-opium opinion in Britain can both be plausibly cited as factors explaining why British negotiators did not insist that the Qing government legalize the trade. However, as John Fairbank has pointed out, the main reason for British acquiescence in continued Chinese prohibition was that the negotiators actually did agree on an arrangement that in effect accommodated British desires regarding the trade.²⁵ Originally proposed as a compromise by the chief Manchu negotiator, Qiyang, this arrangement was written into the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing and then institutionalized in the system of so-called bilateral regulation of trade.²⁶ The British side of the trade was accordingly placed under the

authority of British consular agents in the treaty ports, and the Qing authorities refrained from interfering with it. Although the government of the United States, pushed by public opinion, condemned the opium trade in principle, that condemnation was negated in practice by the American administration's granting of consular status to the main U.S. opium trader, Russell & Co., and by inclusion in the Treaty of Wangxia of the principle of extraterritoriality, which prevented Chinese authorities from prosecuting American opium traders.²⁷ Under the system of bilateral regulation the imports of opium from British India to China fluctuated around 30,000 chests per annum between 1841 and 1847, then increased to around 40,000 in the late 1840s, and eventually rose to around 60,000 in the late 1850s.²⁸

OPIUM AFTER THE SECOND ANGLO-CHINESE WAR

Opium was again an issue in the outbreak of the Arrow War in 1856, when the British initiated hostilities over the Qing authorities' seizure of a Chinese opium-running boat after the craft's British registration had expired. The *Arrow* had been operating in a typical manner to exploit the bilateral regulation system. Britain's military victory was diplomatically codified first in the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin and then again, following further hostilities, in the 1860 Convention of Beijing, which was imposed once the British had managed to re-establish their control in India after the so-called Sepoy Mutiny.²⁹ Under trade articles added to the 1858 treaty, the Qing agreed to legalize the importation of opium to China, although how the legalization clause originated remains something of a puzzle. Various accounts depict it as resulting from a proposal by the American representative, W. B. Reed, which contradicted his government's explicit instructions regarding opium, and from the reluctant acceptance of Reed's proposal by the British plenipotentiary Lord Elgin, who had to overcome a professed personal distaste for the opium trade.³⁰ It is not clear whether Elgin's inner struggle continued when he was appointed the first viceroy of India shortly thereafter. In any event, two consequences followed from the new arrangement. First, the amount of opium coming from India continued to rise both in numbers of chests and in its proportion of China's total imports; opium constituted 33 percent of those imports in 1868, and 39 percent in 1880, when the number of chests per annum peaked at 80,000.³¹ Thereafter the number of chests fell to about 50,000 per annum, a level at which it remained until 1905.

This decline in imports was partly the result of a second consequence of legalizing the inflow of Indian opium, namely the rapid growth of domestic opium cultivation. Although remaining illegal for three decades after 1860, Chinese domestic cultivation expanded greatly in those years,

until domestically produced opium was eventually made legal—and taxable—in 1890.³² Expanded domestic cultivation can be seen as a spontaneous form of import substitution undertaken by Chinese peasants, landlords, and merchants. By 1870 it was recognized in Britain as a threat to Indian revenues similar to that posed by Malwa opium forty years earlier.³³ Partly in response to this threat the British forcefully negotiated for Chinese import duties and internal transit (*likin*) taxes to be consolidated in the hands of the inspectorate general of customs.³⁴ Despite British hopes of guaranteeing opium imports by promoting a greater Qing stake in them, the possibility of exploiting this arrangement to increase Chinese imperial revenues was resisted. Although the Qing negotiators were compelled to accept the fiscal consolidation in the Chefoo Convention,³⁵ the regime's continuing disapproval of the opium trade was shown in the 1880 treaty revision with the U.S. government, by which American merchants were forbidden to deal in opium. Domestic Chinese opium nevertheless provided British supporters of the trade with a useful argument for countering Western criticisms of the Indian opium industry and for dismissing Chinese complaints about the opium trade as self-interested, on the grounds that Chinese growers were simply trying to find ways to monopolize the market. When the British ambassador Rutherford Alcock and the Qing chief negotiator Wenxiang proposed an end to the opium trade in 1869, at the time of the renegotiation of the Treaty of Tianjin, the British Parliament rejected that proposal along with the revised Treaty Convention.³⁶ Two arguments frequently advanced in favor of the trade can be called the economic and the cultural. According to the former, prohibition was bound to fail because it contravened the law of supply and demand. Economic rationality required regulation by means of taxes, an approach that was deemed perfectly compatible with free trade in the drug. The cultural argument, on the other hand, held that opium was to the East what alcohol was to the West, a parallel expressed clearly by George Campbell, secretary of state for India from 1868 to 1874, who suggested that Parliament might treat the issue "simply as a matter of race": "as the Aryan races prefer alcohol, so the Turanian consume opium."³⁷

BRITISH OPPOSITION TO THE OPIUM TRADE

Despite such justifications, criticism of the opium trade continued to be voiced and, indeed, to grow in both China and the West through the last decades of the nineteenth century.³⁸ If before 1895 the international balance of power allowed British authorities at home and in Asia to turn a deaf ear to protests in China, successive governments in London were steadily subjected to denunciations by the vocal anti-opium movements in Britain and the United States.³⁹ These movements, now comprehensively doc-

umented by Kathleen Lodwick, drew support from several constituencies. From among British manufacturers, for example, concern was repeatedly expressed that opium was soaking up Chinese demand.⁴⁰ However, the most consistent and ultimately the most influential source of opposition, starting in the 1830s, was missionary objections to the opium trade and to the British government's role in it. The missionaries' objections arose both from their personal observation of addicts and from the fact that attempts at conversion were frustrated by the Chinese perception that the British opium trade demonstrated the immorality of Christians.⁴¹ Among physicians, opinion about whether opium was harmful remained divided into the last decades of the century, partly because of the strength of pro-opium views in the Indian medical service.⁴² As more and more medical missionaries reported back from China with evidence of the harms of addiction, however, the missionary case against opium gained increasing credibility in Western public opinion.⁴³ A characteristic feature of the anti-opium literature was its regular incorporation of elite and popular Chinese opinion that was critical of addiction and the opium trade. This feature runs counter to Edward Said's conclusion that the nineteenth-century Western mentality was uniformly one in which "the Orient is all absence."⁴⁴

Throughout the middle decades of the century the British anti-opium movement had spokesmen in both the main parties in Parliament. Its representatives, including such distinguished advocates as Shaftesbury and Wilfrid Lawson, regularly drew attention to the legal, political, economic, and moral objections to the trade and forced successive governments to justify their involvement with it.⁴⁵ In 1874 the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade was founded by Edward Pease, member of one of the great Quaker industrialist families of England.⁴⁶ With Shaftesbury as its first president and with the Liberal MP Joseph Pease as its early champion in Parliament,⁴⁷ this society acted as an umbrella for promoting the increasingly effective opposition to the India-China opium trade. Through its journal, *The Friend of China*, it publicized the growing anti-opium sentiment in clerical and popular opinion in Britain and the hostility to the trade that predominated in missionary communities in China and India.⁴⁸ Clear cross-bench opposition to the trade was demonstrated in 1875, when the Commons debated Conservative MP Mark Stewart's motion on behalf of the Society urging the government to consider withdrawing from the trade. Pease as seconder described the Indian treasury as dependent on opium.⁴⁹ In 1891, with opinion in Britain increasingly aware of the problems of opium addiction, Pease shrewdly introduced a Commons resolution condemning the Indian opium revenue as "morally indefensible." In the ensuing debate the undersecretary of state for foreign affairs was led to declare that if the Chinese government chose to raise a prohibitive duty on opium or even exclude it altogether, Britain would not use force to impose

the drug on China.⁵⁰ Although this may have accorded with a strict interpretation of the treaty situation in 1890, the statement was nevertheless greeted by the anti-opium movement as a significant concession.⁵¹ Though a formal vote on Pease's resolution was adjourned sine die, the Tory government was embarrassed by the clear majority against dismissing this anti-opium motion.⁵²

Because of its importance for Government of India revenues, criticisms of the lucrative opium trade were bound to elicit further attempts at rebuttal. In 1892 the Royal Society for the Arts organized a debate dominated by speakers who favored the trade.⁵³ Then in 1893–1894, under pressure of the 1891 Commons motion and the threat of a potentially divisive new debate on opium, Gladstone's government established the Royal Commission on Opium in India.⁵⁴ Although much of the anti-opium group in Parliament eventually voted against the Royal Commission because its brief was formulated to exclude any investigation into conditions in China, two of the group's members, Arthur Pease and Henry Wilson, nevertheless joined the nine-man body. The final report shows that the opponents of the opium trade were right in perceiving the commission as an instrument intended to rebut criticism of the Indian opium industry and to justify the opium policies of the governments of the United Kingdom, India, and other British colonial holdings in Asia. Among the arguments set forth were the old standards that opium was to Asia what alcohol was to the West, that opium used in moderation was not harmful to Asians, and that the Chinese complaints about the opium trade, which Western critics cited, were simply motivated by anti-Western commercial ambitions.⁵⁵

A minority report condemning the trade was filed by Henry Wilson, drawing on evidence supplied by his assistant, Joseph G. Alexander, who in 1893 had gone to China at the anti-opium lobby's expense. From his discussions with various authorities there, including Zhang Zhidong and Li Hongzhang, emerged the proposal that China and Britain together undertake measures to suppress the opium trade.⁵⁶ Though this idea was buried by the Royal Commission, it would return in the following decade as a basis for negotiation and eventual implementation. In the meantime, the Royal Commission's conclusion that the opium trade was legitimate failed to carry public opinion even in Britain. Instead it elicited a series of strong counterblasts. Arnold Foster's study refuting the Royal Commission's conclusions on the basis of his critical re-examination of its own evidence was endorsed by the archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, and more than one hundred other prominent persons. Similarly, the memorial condemning the Indian opium industry that Joshua Rowntree, head of the Representative Board of Anti-Opium Organizations, sent to all MPs in 1900 was signed by the archbishop of Canterbury and other Church of England leaders as well as by the heads of the Wesleyan, United Methodist, and Free

Evangelical churches. A still more imposing line-up of leading churchmen supported the memorial forwarded by the archbishop of Canterbury to the prime minister in 1902.⁵⁷

BRITAIN'S OPIUM TRADE TO CHINA: THE SUPPRESSION PHASE

In China, the promulgation of a new imperial edict banning opium in September 1906 was succeeded in 1907–1911 by the dramatic reduction in Chinese production and consumption of the drug, aspects of which are treated in part 2 of this volume. Following the movement against foot-binding, the anti-opium campaign promoted by the Qing government reflected the intensification in China over the previous decade of aversion to the drug. That aversion was part of the rise in nationalist sentiment at the turn of the century, stimulated by such factors as the 1895 defeat at the hands of Japan, the subsequent new imperialist incursions by other powers, and the humiliation delivered by the anti-Boxer expeditionary forces in 1900.⁵⁸

The timing of the 1906 edict suggests, however, that it was not only feelings within China that affected the success of the Chinese anti-opium campaign at this time. Leaving aside both the British concerns about political challenges in East Asia and the political impact of Russia's 1905 defeat and subsequent revolution, two developments in the foreign powers' attitude specifically to the opium trade had a bearing on the Chinese movement. The first, of an ideological nature, emerged indirectly from the Philippines Opium Committee. This committee held hearings on behalf of the American government in 1903–1905 and was charged with examining problems of addiction in the newly acquired territory. It eventually recommended a system of opium prohibition there. In weighing the issues involved, however, the committee also examined the prevalence of opium addiction in China, and while roundly condemning the Indian opium trade, it interpreted the apparent weakness of Chinese official efforts to control opium as a sign that the Chinese "race" was bereft of proper national character. This was a view widely discussed in China, where it piqued national pride and intensified the desire to be rid of the drug.⁵⁹

The second development, which had more precise diplomatic implications, involved a change in the attitude of the United Kingdom. In December 1905 the Liberals were returned to power after ten years in opposition, a period during which leading members of the party, including Edward Grey and John Morley, respectively foreign secretary and secretary of state for India in the new cabinet, had associated themselves with the anti-opium associations in criticizing the trade as morally reprehensible.⁶⁰ In April 1906, a private member's motion put by Liberal MP Theodore Taylor again condemned the opium trade as "morally indefensible" and called on the

new government to take measures to bring it to a speedy end.⁶¹ Despite opposition from Morley, who now had responsibility for Indian revenues and who argued that the share of opium in the Indian budget had already been declining over the previous decade,⁶² the motion was carried. These new developments were significant for two reasons. First, in the course of the parliamentary debate Morley had publicly reiterated the pledge previously given in 1891 that if the Chinese government should undertake to suppress the opium traffic, the British government would not resort to force to maintain it.⁶³ Second, after the motion passed, Morley indicated that the Qing should be encouraged to restrict opium imports and that new negotiations should be undertaken with them regarding the trade.⁶⁴ The result was the 1907 Sino-British agreement in which the British government promised to reduce the export of Indian opium to China by 5,100 chests per annum (10 percent of the 1907 total) provided that native Chinese production be stopped first. Successful adherence to the schedule, which was to be considered for renewal after three years, would have brought an end to the trade after ten years.

Ending the trade was not a simple process, however.⁶⁵ Exports to China still made up three-quarters of the Indian government's opium revenue and were not to be sacrificed lightly, especially as the finances of the Government of India were in a difficult state.⁶⁶ The authorities in India and other British colonies in Asia anticipated that the Chinese would prove unable to achieve domestic suppression and that failure on their part would allow the Government of India, against its critics, to justify maintaining its part in the trade. The success of the Chinese suppression campaign in 1907–1910 came as a surprise, but was hard to dispute once confirmation came in 1910 from Alexander Hosie, when he finished his inspection of China's opium-producing provinces on behalf of the British government.⁶⁷ In January 1911 the government of India began issuing certificates on the restricted consignments of opium intended for China, and in May a new Sino-British treaty was signed confirming the two sides' commitment to the 1907 ten-year timetable.⁶⁸ This included reiteration of the British undertaking to end all opium shipments from India to China in 1917, a stipulation pushed through despite strong agitation in both Britain and China for ending the trade even sooner.⁶⁹

In addition, American enthusiasm for the 1909 Opium Conference held in Shanghai and for the 1912 International Opium Tribunal held in The Hague made Whitehall increasingly sensitive to the trade's international reputation, although Delhi tended to be more thick-skinned.⁷⁰ Sir John Pratt's confidential Foreign Office memorandum of 1929 indicates that from 1908 a rift over opium policy was opening between the Foreign Office on one side and the India Office, the Government of India, and the Colonial Office on the other. Eventually, in May 1913, the Indian government

actually did stop the export of opium for the China market ahead of the negotiated schedule, following a dramatic statement by E. S. Montagu, the undersecretary of state for India, that “for the first time in [the] modern history of India, . . . we are selling not an ounce of poppy for China,” and that Britain was prepared never again to sell opium for shipment to China.⁷¹ It is clear, however, that this step was taken then not because of diplomatic considerations or a sense that the trade was immoral, but rather because of pleas from the opium traders themselves to stop the supply. These firms had accumulated extra stocks in the treaty ports on the assumption that either the suppression campaign would fail or prohibition would drive up the price of the drug. Despite an upturn in demand in 1912–1913, they found themselves with a glut when Chinese provincial authorities began excluding opium from entering their jurisdictions.⁷² In order to maintain their hold on the market, the merchants were obliged to continue buying the certified export opium as long as this was put on the market at Calcutta, and this meant in turn that they had to hold the opium in their own warehouses. These considerations led them to demand a stoppage of the Indian supply. In this regard Pratt’s 1929 memorandum confirms the analyses of Owen and Lodwick that the opium traders’ interests were crucial in shifting the British government’s attitude to ending exports.⁷³

WORLD WAR I AND THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The 1913 stoppage of the direct traffic proved to be only a temporary hindrance to Indian opium entering China, where the breakdown of central government control after the revolution of 1911–1912 introduced a new set of circumstances. In May 1913 the foreign and Chinese opium merchants in Shanghai and Hong Kong formed an opium combine and collectively took over the accumulated stocks in the expectation that the stoppage would drive prices up. Chinese banks backed the venture with 1.5 million taels, and the British-owned Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank provided 2.5 million taels. With the glut clearing, prices soon soared. In 1915, confronted by Japan’s Twenty-one Demands and an acute need for funds, the Chinese government entered into a revenue-generating accommodation with the opium merchants whereby it would buy their remaining stocks and market them on its own account. Faced with a public outcry in China as well as with American and British protests, however, the government actually dared sell only a portion of the stocks. The rest it burned publicly at the end of 1918, exactly eighty years after Lin Zexu had carried out a similar operation at Canton. This time the British representative, Sir John Jordan, who for a decade had been arguing against the trade within the Foreign Office, reported with approval: “The foreign trade in opium, which began in the eighteenth century, has thus come to a dramatic end

in the burning of the surplus Indian stocks, and it only remains for foreign governments to keep a strict watch on exports.”⁷⁴

The Government of India, however, proceeded to export increased amounts of “non-certified” opium to the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong (where the monopolies on opium sales were responsible for about half of all government revenues) as well as to Macao, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, and Japan.⁷⁵ From all of these locations opium continued to gravitate in considerable quantities to China. In effect a profitable transit trade had developed, with at least the connivance of the respective colonial governments and with the implicit support of British authorities in India. In 1918 a particular scandal arose over revelations that Japan had been transshipping regular consignments of opium into China through its concession in Tianjin. Over the urgings of Jordan and the Foreign Office that India stop export completely, Delhi continued to hold to the old line, arguing that “they were under no obligation to take drastic measures, at the sacrifice of Indian revenues, to prevent any of their opium from being smuggled by third parties into China, especially at a time when China was not enforcing her policy of suppression.”⁷⁶

For such thinking the governments of Britain, India, and the Straits Settlements were subjected to criticism throughout the 1920s. Article 23 of the League of Nations Covenant stipulated general supervision of previous international undertakings on opium and narcotics as falling within the League’s mandate. The League consequently organized two conferences on opium and narcotics; these were held in 1924–1925, with the United States agreeing to participate. The ostensible task of the conferences was to examine how things stood with regard to agreements reached at the 1912 Hague Convention.⁷⁷ Within this framework, strong objections to the opium policies of Britain and the other colonial powers were pressed not only by China, but also by the United States; and both countries eventually withdrew from the conferences, the U.S. over Government of India resistance to limiting opium production to amounts necessary for medical and scientific uses.⁷⁸ When they eventually ran their course, the League conferences had two formal outcomes: on the one hand, the Geneva Conventions of 1925,⁷⁹ by which the signatories committed themselves to regulate their participation in the international commerce in opium and industrial narcotics; and, on the other, the establishment of the League’s controversial Opium Advisory Committee. Comprised of representatives of the main colonial powers and officially responsible for monitoring the production, manufacture, and trade in opium products, the Opium Committee, however, had a major credibility problem. Lacking American and Chinese support, it was soon dubbed “the Smugglers’ Reunion” by American journalists at Geneva, who charged the states represented on it with collusion in the trade.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, having promoted an opium restriction campaign in Assam as part of the 1919–1921 Non-Cooperation Movement, the Indian National Congress in 1924 established its own Assam Opium Enquiry Committee, with a mandate to present evidence to the Geneva conference. Backing up its arguments with a hitherto confidential Government of India assessment, the Enquiry's report charged the Indian government's representative in Geneva with having misled the international conference about the extent to which opium smoking constituted a problem in India. Marshalling an impressive roster of Indian witnesses—including former addicts—who favored total prohibition, the Assam Enquiry Committee proposed a new anti-opium mass campaign to be led by Gandhi.⁸¹ “We believe that if opium, as a poison, is regarded as a dangerous drug in the West, it should equally be regarded as a dangerous drug in the East,” wrote Gandhi’s confidant, C. F. Andrews, on behalf of the committee. “We do not think that human nature in the East is different from human nature in the West.”⁸² The statement exemplified the nationalist reaction across Asia to imperial definitions of “separate identity.”⁸³

Throughout the 1920s informed observers of world drug trends saw that the production and consumption of opium was again on the rise in China. Colonial governments and European communities in Asia accordingly reacted to criticisms of their involvement in the opium trade with charges that a congenital Chinese need for opium, as well as the difficulty of controlling opium smuggling, made all plans for prohibiting smoking or stopping the trade to neighboring territories unfeasible.⁸⁴ In contrast, confidential Foreign Office reports at the time indicated that the use of opium was more widely condemned by Chinese in the Straits than by the foreigners, who stubbornly argued that their Chinese work force, and hence the economy of the territories, simply could not do without it.⁸⁵ The allegations about Chinese character and behavior made by the Colonial Office and by most colonial governments—British and otherwise—typically went together with claims that government monopolies on opium were the sole effective means for regulating consumption, and with denials that such monopolies played any important role in generating colonial revenues. The Foreign Office response formulated by Pratt was that these denials were “believed by no one.”⁸⁶

Under siege on so many fronts, the Government of India in 1926 finally adopted a policy of gradually reducing opium exports for other than scientific and medical purposes until the export ceased altogether.⁸⁷ American anti-drug campaigner Ellen La Motte nevertheless revealed that rather than curtailing the cultivation of opium in its territories the Government of India was actually proposing to increase production, for despite previous denials it had been found that Indian opium made high-quality heroin.⁸⁸ By 1930 the Indian export of opium for other than medical and scientific

purposes had officially shriveled to a negligible amount.⁸⁹ As pointed out at the time, however, the colonial power's perpetration of the view that opium use was an exotic Chinese vice served to obscure the fact that the world's main drug-related danger was now the new "industrial" narcotics—morphine, heroin, and cocaine—produced in the capital-intensive pharmaceutical laboratories of the "civilized" West and Japan.⁹⁰

CONCLUSION

The history of opium testifies to the possibility that the logic of social change can run counter to purely formal expectations. One would think that of the two main approaches to drug control developed over the last three centuries—prohibition and criminalization on the one hand, and legalization and licensing on the other—the latter would be a more subtle and flexible form of regulation that ought to rely less on legal and physical coercion. It is perhaps a historical irony that in nineteenth-century Asia legalization was instead associated with the military impositions of the world's hegemonic state and was cemented by force into the bifurcated framework of formal colonialism and the "imperialism of free trade." Born with Britain's Asian empire and lasting to within two decades of Indian independence, the long nineteenth-century opium trade can be seen as a multinational, collaborative institution that bound Indian peasants, British and Indian governments, a vast mass of Chinese consumers, and an array of Western, Parsee, Sephardic, and most of all Chinese merchants together in an immense revenue-generating system. It was also a system that gave rise to a genuinely cross-cultural opposition, for from the outset it elicited a broad front of international resistance that included otherwise ideologically disparate groups around the shared view that legalization in the service of colonial power was politically, economically, physically, and especially morally unacceptable. By the beginning of the twentieth century this alliance linking rising nationalist movements in China and India with religious anti-imperialist and temperance forces in Britain and the United States put increasing pressures on British and British Indian governments. Whether these forces would by themselves have been sufficient to undermine such a long-standing pillar of the colonial order is difficult to say. In the event, however, they were reinforced by several other factors, namely, the growing need for British governments to respond to domestic and international criticism; the official American promotion of prohibition both domestically and internationally; the emergence of the United States as a global financial and diplomatic power after World War I; the proliferation of opium production within China; and, finally, the growth of demand for new industrial drugs. All of these factors played a role in turning the historical page on the trade in processed Indian opium.

At the outset of this chapter I suggested that the opium industry of the “long nineteenth century” might be considered a cultural hybrid of the sort that Bruno Latour sees as typical of “modernity.” In his view, “modernity” is a phenomenon constituted by two linked but contrary processes, namely, the proliferation of culturally constructed hybrids and the simultaneous quest to identify isolatable “essences,” with the latter quest tending to obscure the process of hybridization. Leaving aside the question of how much light this model sheds on “the modern constitution” as such, one can argue that Latour’s analysis does at least evoke the structure of imperial power during the late colonial era. Within the “formal” colonial order, his paired processes of hybridization and essentialization can be seen as institutionalized in the structural bifurcation between the institutions of Western law governing citizens under direct colonial rule and the officially sanctioned institutions of “customary law” applicable to subjects organized under various forms of indirect rule.⁹¹ In this system, which the British elaborated in India and then applied, with desired modifications, to Africa, the symbiosis of the two sets of institutions was typically obscured by the process of conceiving each subsystem as the expression of distinct cultural or racial essences. Beyond the “formal” empires of the European powers, China, Persia, and the Ottoman empire were also subjected to Western economic and political hegemony as spheres of Europe’s nineteenth-century “informal empire,” and within this framework they too were transformed through interactions with Western imperial power.⁹² Many of the new institutions—economic, political, social, and cultural—that emerged from such interactions can be considered hybrids in the sense that they sprang from such common (if unequal) relationships, and while fusing features of previously distinct societies, they constituted phenomena of new and unique character.

At the economic level, the history of the opium trade between British India and China illustrates the degree to which markets are socially constructed. While the opium industry served as an all too obviously constructed institutional nexus binding China, Britain, and India together for a century and a half, there always existed throughout the period—in accord with the Latour model—persistent attempts to deny the collaborative nature of the opium network by portraying it as essentially the result either of Chinese depravity and corruption or of the overweening greed of British governments and merchants—in either case, as deriving from some trait characteristic of one participant only, which the other was only accommodating or submitting to. The Chinese case in this regard was perhaps stronger before 1870, the British after 1913; but over the long nineteenth century each side contributed to, and was shaped by, the cohesive trade structure that linked them. Explaining that cohesive system adequately calls

for the study of each country's changing involvement with opium across time, the specification of evolving international power relations, and the analysis of the long interplay between the push of British Indian supply and the pull of Chinese demand for the drug.

One further feature of the international opium trade that has been obscured by the focus on national interests and antagonisms is the prominent degree of collaboration involved in the opium system. However, collaboration did not only involve those tied into the chain of production and distribution of the drug, and those who profited from it in various ways; it was also a strategy cultivated by those opposed to the trade. In other words, collaboration was important not only for initiating and maintaining the trade, but also for bringing about its demise, as Kathleen Lodwick points out when she observes that "opium suppression became a reality only when public opinion in Britain and China favored it."⁹³ By contributing to the mobilization of broad political movements that converged in their opposition to the trade, the coordination of anti-opium agitation across cultures played a key political role in bringing about the demise of the trade in Indian opium to China, though mercantile and diplomatic conditions no doubt shaped the timing of the 1913 British stoppage. The fact that from the 1830s on Western anti-opium agitators regularly confronted their audiences with Chinese objections to the drug and exposed British interests behind the trade shows that, as in the anti-slavery and women's rights movements,⁹⁴ and despite clear ideological differences, cross-cultural communication could be effective among those fighting against the opium trade in their respective societies.

NOTES

1. Spence, "Opium Smoking in Ch'ing China," p. 228.
2. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, pp. 10–12.
3. These criticisms figured in the impeachment of Warren Hastings; cf. Lambert, ed., *House of Commons Sessional Papers*, vol. 140, 9th Report, pp. 55ff.
4. Fearful of fluctuation in the company's liquid funds, company headquarters at Leadenhall Street in London placed strict restrictions on direct remittances from India to Britain.
5. For 1792, 2,500 chests worth £250,000 (Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, p. 260).
6. Dodwell, *Indian Empire*, p. 86.
7. "Provision opium" was the corresponding phrase designating opium for sale within India. Among Chinese users, opium was typically smoked; in India, it was usually eaten, except in Assam, where it was also smoked.
8. Country traders engaged in the intra-Asian trade, as opposed to the trade between England and India, or England and China, over which the company

exercised its monopoly directly until Parliament opened those routes to private competition in 1813 and 1833 respectively.

9. Between 1780 and 1830 the EIC tried various mechanisms to control the export of opium from the native states. These included a system of attempting to buy all the opium they produced and another of regulating their trade through treaty. The device finally adopted involved facilitating shipment of native states' opium through Bombay in exchange for a transit fee not to exceed the cost of sending the opium further afield for export; cf. Beveridge, *Comprehensive History*, 3: 197–99. The 1843 British conquest of Sind enabled the company to control all opium exports from the subcontinent by this means; Inglis, *Opium War*, pp. 188ff.

10. Morse, *Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire*, pp. 340–41.

11. Prinsep, "Remarks on the External Commerce and Exchanges of Bengal," p. 84.

12. The 1834 legislation deprived the company not only of its monopoly on the China trade but of any international trading role (Davis, *The Chinese*, 1:102), though it governed India until 1858. The 1813 termination of the monopoly on direct trade to India was a victory for British textile manufacturers intent on exporting to the subcontinent; Lloyd, *British Empire*, p. 133.

13. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China*, p. 104 (his italics); similarly, Wakeman, "Canton Trade and the Opium War," p. 172. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 1:556, shows the average number of chests of opium imported annually into China growing from about 4,000 in 1800–1810 to about 8,000 in 1821–1828, and to 30,000 in 1835–1839.

14. Discussing the Lintin era, Paul Johnson claims that no British merchant then felt there was anything wrong with selling opium to China (*Birth of the Modern*, p. 682). If true before the 1830s, this was only because merchants dismissed the well-known views of Chinese officials, Protestant missionaries, and D. W. C. Olyphant, the American merchant who financed the anti-opium missionary journal *The Chinese Repository*. For the decades after 1830, Johnson's claim is untenable. Qualms were emerging even within the core houses. Hugh Matheson refused to join Jardine, Matheson & Co. in 1834 because of his moral objection to opium. Donald Matheson left the firm in 1849 when he too repudiated the trade; he went on to join the executive committee of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, for which he testified before the 1893–1894 Royal Commission on Opium. Cf. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 95, 193; Latourette, *History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 231.

15. Standard accounts include Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*; Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*; Inglis, *Opium War*; Wakeman, "Canton Trade"; Fay, *Opium War*; Tan, *China and the Brave New World*; and Rodzinski, *History*, vol. 1, chapter 27. The much-debated phrase "opium war" was coined by *The Times* on 25 April 1840.

16. Tan, *China and the Brave New World*, chapters 1 and 2.

17. E.g., Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics*.

18. S. Wells Williams, *Middle Kingdom*, 2:564.

19. Tan, *China and the Brave New World*, p. 10; Chang, *Commissioner Lin.*, p. 15.

20. Tan, *China and the Brave New World*, pp. 6, 13. Although Tan's typology is useful analytically, these positions did not always exclude one another, even in the

writings of the authors just mentioned. Tan himself notes (p. 12) that Chang gives evidence supportive of the “opium” thesis. Fairbank’s description of the role of British opium traders in the outbreak of war and his view of the opium trade as “the most long-continued and systematic international crime of modern times” (“Creation of the Treaty System,” p. 213) might also lend weight to that thesis.

21. *Hansard*, 1840, vol. 4: for Stanhope, cols. 1–26; for Melbourne, cols. 27–34, esp. 31. That Stanhope was president of the Royal Medical-Botanical Society and a fellow of the Royal Society indicates that within the medical profession there was already at this time strong condemnation of the opium trade based on recognition of the drug’s deleterious effects.

22. Secret instruction, 18 Oct 1839 (F.O. 17/37), cited in Costin, *Great Britain and China*, p. 60: “H.M. govt by no means disputes the right of the Government of China to prohibit the importation of opium. . . . But these fiscal prohibitions ought to be impartially and steadily enforced.” However, it is quite conceivable that what Palmerston thought opportune to dispute in negotiations was not the same as his motive for entering hostilities.

23. For Wellington, *Hansard*, 1840, vol. 4, col. 34–43, esp. 38. He also stressed the importance of opium to British Indian finances.

24. A consequence in British India was the expansion of tea cultivation, in which a large role was played by Robert Fortune’s massive 1851 importation of plants from China; cf. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion*, p. 27.

25. See Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, chapter 9 and pp. 222–23.

26. Immediately before signing the treaty, British plenipotentiary Sir Henry Pottinger suggested that opium be legalized, and in the following years he and John Davis as the first two governors of Hong Kong regularly repeated the idea. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 1:546ff.

27. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, p. 208.

28. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 1:556.

29. On the British need to re-establish control in India first, see Costin, *Great Britain and China*, p. 275.

30. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 1:553–56. A more plausible scenario comes from W. A. P. Martin, one of Reed’s translators in China. According to him, it was Elgin who convinced Reed to omit the article forbidding the opium trade from the U.S. draft treaty; cf. Foster, *American Diplomacy*, p. 299. Reed’s other translator, S. W. Williams, condemned the legalization of opium and especially criticized the British for imposing a tariff rate “lower than that paid on tea and silk entering England” (*Middle Kingdom*, 2:657).

31. Hyde, *Far Eastern Trade*, p. 217. Rothermund, *Economic History*, p. 39, indicates that in 1871 opium constituted 20 percent of India’s exports. That the lion’s share of these opium exports continued to be for the China market is shown by the Government of India’s judgment in 1872 that its income from the monopoly on the sale of opium to China had averaged about one-sixth of total government revenue in recent years (Moulton, *Northbrook’s Administration*, p. 23). Feuerwerker, “Economic Trends,” indicates that opium remained China’s single largest import until 1890, when it was overtaken by cotton goods (pp. 9, 48–49). The long

symbiosis of the opium and tea trades makes it worth noting that 1890 was the year India and Ceylon overtook China in providing most of the world's tea; Lloyd, *British Empire*, p. 227.

32. Feuerwerker judges it impossible to calculate the increase in land given to domestic production ("Economic Trends," p. 9). However, Rev. Arthur Moule, a forceful critic of the British opium trade, did estimate that in 1882 imported opium was equivalent to a third of the native crop (*New China and Old*, p. 93).

33. *Hansard*, 1870, vol. 3, col. 495; Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 248ff.

34. The consolidation proposal was negotiated by Sir Thomas Wade following a suggestion by I.G. director Sir Robert Hart; see Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 251ff; Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 2: 294–304.

35. The Chinese put the negotiated stipulations into effect from 1877, but British ratification of the opium clause was delayed until 1885 because of the feeling among opium traders and their supporters that better terms should be won; see Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 272ff; Morse, *Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire*, p. 350.

36. Turner's *British Opium Policy* included translations of Wenxiang's speech and memorial (pp. 123–27); see also Owen, *British Opium Policy*, chapter 9; Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 2:217ff.

37. *Hansard*, 1875, vol. 4, col. 600.

38. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 262ff.

39. Among the many critiques of the opium trade two pre-1890 works that deserve special mention are: *China and the Chinese . . . The Evils Arizing from the Opium Trade* (1849) by the London barrister Henry Sirr, and *British Opium Policy* (1876) by F. S. Turner, secretary of the Anglo-Oriental Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade.

40. At the time of the First Opium War two hundred thirty-five British manufacturers and merchants protested against the trade on the grounds that opium was supplanting Chinese demand for British manufactures. Cf. S. W. Williams, *Middle Kingdom*, 2:562–63. Over later decades anti-opium advocates in Parliament and elsewhere regularly reiterated this point. Karl Marx similarly noted in 1858 that Chinese imports of British manufactures since 1840 had remained stationary while opium imports had grown (*Marx on China*, pp. 62–64).

41. See, for example, Medhurst's influential discussion in *China*, p. 371.

42. The 1895 Royal Commission found that medical opinion within the Indian Service was itself divided (Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 318). Note that in reviewing the late-nineteenth-century medical literature, Terry and Pellens found in 1928 that lax prescribing by physicians was cited as one of the major causes of opium and morphine addiction in the West (*Opium Problem*, pp. 98–101, 122–23).

43. See Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, p. 65. Arthur Moule's 1902 book, *New China and Old*, p. 98, cites among others the missionary scholar Joseph Edkins on the medical damage wrought by opium in China. Edkins's own 1899 historical study of opium cited extensively from Chinese botanical and official literature as well as from Western works in coming to the conclusion that opium was "a universal poison" in the China of his day (*Opium*, p. 53).

44. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 208. Suffice it to say that Chinese views about opium and the opium trade were cited favorably in the parliamentary speeches (referred

to elsewhere in this chapter) by Stanhope in 1840, Ashley in 1843, Lawson in 1870, Stewart in 1875 and 1891, Pease in 1875 and 1891, and Taylor in 1906.

45. A Tory Evangelical and promoter of both foreign and domestic missions, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801–1885) was Victorian England's most effective social reformer, the driving force behind the Factory Acts, the Collieries Regulation Acts, the Lodging House Act, the Ten Hours Act, etc. His detailed indictment of the opium trade (*Hansard*, 1843, vol. 3, cols. 361–405) after the First Opium War (when he was still styled Lord Ashley) was often cited by later advocates of suppression. In 1857 he maneuvered unsuccessfully to have the trade declared illegal by the Law Lords (*Hansard*, 1857, vol. 1, pp. 2027ff.); on his controversial attitude to Palmerston during the Arrow War, see Finlayson, *Shaftesbury*, pp. 446–47. The Liberal radical Wilfred Lawson led the charge for the anti-opium societies in a powerful 1870 speech that recalled Shaftesbury's objections (*Hansard*, 1870, vol. 3, cols. 480–90), and that thereafter was itself frequently cited as a landmark in the cause of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade (e.g., *Hansard*, 1875, vol. 4, cols. 617–18).

46. The Pease family had been active for generations in movements for social and political reform. Joseph Pease (1772–1846), a founder of the Peace Society, was also one of the more egalitarian members of the Anti-Slavery Society; in the 1830s he also campaigned for “the protection of the natives of India” and against the emerging “coolie trade.” His daughter Elisabeth was a prominent feminist who involved herself deeply in campaigns against slavery in India and the United States as well as against the Indian opium industry; cf. Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, pp. 90–96.

47. Joseph Whitwell Pease (1828–1903), Liberal MP from 1865 until 1903—not to be confused with his father, also named Joseph (1799–1872), the first Quaker Member of Parliament—was a great-nephew of the Joseph Pease discussed in the previous note.

48. Paul Johnson's *Birth of the Modern* ironically singles out a few early-nineteenth-century Quakers for selling medicinal opium in Britain (p. 768), but neglects to mention that Quakers played a central role in agitating against the opium trade later on.

49. *Hansard*, 1875, vol. 4, cols. 571ff; col. 587 on Treasury dependence. Stewart's motion was followed up the next year in a passionate speech by the MP for Methyr, who approvingly cited Prince Gong's lengthy criticism of the opium trade (1876, vol. 4, cols. 550–52).

50. *Ibid.*, cols. 316–17.

51. On treaties: Fergusson in *Hansard*, 1890–1891, vol. 4, col. 315. On anti-opium satisfaction: Pease, *ibid.*, col. 901; Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, p. 57; Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 312–13.

52. *Hansard*, 1890–1891, vol. 4, cols. 285–344, 383–84. Government and anti-opium spokesmen alike noted the rise of public concern about opium (cols. 308–9, 315). The anti-opium motion stood partly because pro-opium MPs demanding a Royal Commission on Opium tactically refused to support the government (cols. 340, 382).

53. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, p. 76. Despite his youthful eloquence against the opium trade, Gladstone condoned it in 1860 after joining Palmerston's cabinet the previous year. According to Owen (*British Opium Policy*, pp. 314–15),

Gladstone's firm support for the trade in 1893 may have been motivated by a political desire not to alienate powerful cabinet ministers at a time when party unity was imperative for his Irish Home Rule Bill. Although this might have been the case, M. J. Gilbert shows that a similar calculation to solidify Liberal support for the Irish bill led Gladstone and the party whips to concede anti-opium MPs a free vote on the initial motion for a Royal Commission on Opium (Gilbert, "Lord Lansdowne in India").

54. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, chapter 11; Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 85ff.

55. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 85–97.

56. Ibid., pp. 58–59. While noting that the origins of the proposal are unclear, Lodwick observes that Moule suggested it at the 1877 London missionary conference and Zhang spoke of it in 1883 (p. 193n. 80). Li insisted that Britain end Indian exports before China suppressed domestic production; Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 326.

57. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 52, 63, 101. Papal condemnation of opium use and the trade came only in 1892, but the head of Britain's Roman Catholics, Cardinal Manning, had already joined Shaftesbury and the archbishop of Canterbury in condemning the trade in 1881, and Roman Catholic bishops in the U.K. published memorials against the trade in the following decade; Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 263, 312.

58. Hevia, "Making China 'Perfectly Equal,'" documents the Western powers' intention to humiliate the Qing.

59. Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 22, 40–46; Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 112–15. It is hard to imagine that Chinese reactions to the Opium Committee were unrelated to the extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese immigration to the United States and animated the mass boycott of U.S. goods in China in 1905.

60. Milner's program of bringing indentured Chinese laborers to work in Britain's newly acquired South African gold districts was a heated issue in the January 1906 election campaign. British public opinion was indignant at conditions approximating slavery there, and among the British working class there was resentment that the exploitation of degraded Chinese workers was displacing white Britons from employment. The Liberals stopped the influx of coolies after taking power, but whether opinion about the opium trade affected the election's outcome is unclear. Opium was an important part of the image of Chinese degradation at the time; cf. Lloyd, *British Empire*, p. 262.

61. *Hansard*, 1906, vol. 7, col. 505.

62. Ibid., col. 507.

63. Ibid., cols. 513–14; Newman, "India and the Anglo-China Opium Agreements," p. 534.

64. Wolpert, *Morley*, pp. 219–20.

65. Richard Newman's "India and the Anglo-China Opium Agreements" considers the issues and developments from 1907 until 1914 in detail. See also Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, 3:436–38.

66. Dodwell, *Indian Empire*, p. 326; Wolpert, *Morley*, pp. 218–19. Pratt, *Memorandum*, p. 24, specifies the Indian export for 1906 as 67,000 chests, of which 51,000

were intended for sale in China, and 16,000 for non-China markets. The Straits Settlements took a large proportion of the latter. Opium was still the Qing government's largest source of customs duty and the Government of India's third largest source of revenue (Newman, "India and the Anglo-China Opium Agreements," p. 525).

67. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 341–42; Newman, "India and the Anglo-China Opium Agreements," p. 548.

68. Newman, "India and the Anglo-Chinese Opium Agreements," pp. 550–51.

69. Chan, "Government, Merchants and Industry," pp. 410–11, recognizes the role of popular pressure in Britain and China. One work that no doubt contributed to aversion to the opium trade was *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (1899) by the widely read Isabella Bird Bishop. Her chapter on the problems of opium reinforced themes well established in the missionary literature, such as the association of drug addiction with ill health, impoverishment, and the selling of wives and children. Depicting Chinese opinion on the subject, Bird wrote: "The Chinese condemn all but the most moderate smoking and gambling as twin vices, and not a voice is raised in defense of either of them, even by the smokers themselves. The opium habit is regarded as a disease" (2:283–84).

70. The Shanghai conference was chaired by the Anglican bishop of the Philippines, Charles Brent, one of the three members on the Philippines Opium Committee, whose record of moral opposition to opium is discussed by Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 37–38 and passim. He later represented the American government at the 1912 and 1924–1925 international opium conferences. In 1910 he was one of the moving forces in the ecumenical movement at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference.

71. *Hansard*, fifth series, 1913, vol. 52, col. 2190; Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 348.

72. Dodwell, *Indian Empire*, p. 326; Newman, "India and the Anglo-Chinese Opium Agreements," pp. 553ff; Pratt, *Memorandum*, pp. 20, 35, the latter regarding the temporary upturn in demand.

73. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 347–48; Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, pp. 175–76. There are two curious parallels here. One is with the British 1807 abolition of the slave trade, which served as an inspiration for the later anti-opium movement. After decades of anti-slavery agitation, the slave trade was finally outlawed when sugar markets became glutted and a variety of British commercial interests including West Indian planters stood to suffer from further importation of slaves to the Caribbean (E. Williams, *Capitalism*, pp. 149–50). A second parallel is with 1839, when an opium glut in Calcutta threatened to bring down the Indian economy (Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 144; Inglis, *Opium War*, pp. 123–24).

74. Pratt, *Memorandum*, pp. 23–24.

75. Ibid., pp. 30–31.

76. Ibid., pp. 19–20, and p. 36 for India's similar attitude in 1907.

77. Buell, *Conferences*, pp. 80, 103–5. Article 23 of the League Covenant had stipulated general supervision of previous international undertakings on opium and narcotics, particularly those agreed at the 1912 Hague Convention. The two League conferences ran more or less concurrently from November 1924 to February 1925. The first was devoted to the suppression of opium smoking, the second to limiting

opium production and the manufacture of related drugs. Conventions on both were signed in February 1925, but without agreement on limiting production.

78. Ibid., pp. 99, 111. On the rekindling of British-American animosities over opium and colonialism in Asia, see Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 216–17.

79. Reproduced in Buell, *Conferences*, pp. 176–90.

80. Inglis, *Forbidden Game*, pp. 165ff.

81. *Assam Opium Enquiry Report*: for recommendations, see pp. 51–52. The charge of misleading the Geneva Conference was made (pp. 38–39) against John Campbell, the first representative of the Government of India, who had been replaced after clashing sharply with the Americans; see Buell, *Conferences*, pp. 104–6; Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 187–89.

82. Introduction, *Assam Opium Enquiry Report*, p. 4. Andrews's comparison referred to Great Britain's Dangerous Drugs Act of 1920.

83. See Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, for similar reactions to constructed identities in late colonial Africa.

84. See Buell, *Conferences*, pp. 94–95, for the British motion criticizing China at the 1924 conference. Pratt, *Memorandum*, p. 35, observed that the Chinese might well think the “duty to cooperate in preventing smuggling” a remarkable new discovery on the part of the Western powers, since even during World War I, when Yuan Shikai’s government had made serious attempts to suppress the domestic cultivation and use of opium, the smuggling had clearly been into China, not out.

85. Pratt, *Memorandum*, pp. 32, 41.

86. Ibid., p. 41.

87. Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, p. 302.

88. Inglis, *Forbidden Game*, p. 164.

89. Rothermund, *Economic History*, p. 81. Even in 1944, the British still resisted American pressure to stop exports of “quasi-medical” opium; Taylor, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 325–26.

90. Gavit, *Opium*.

91. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

92. Kesaba, “Treaties and Friendships.”

93. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium*, p. 66.

94. Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, chapters 2–3.