

# 200 Years of British Drug Wars

by Mike Billington

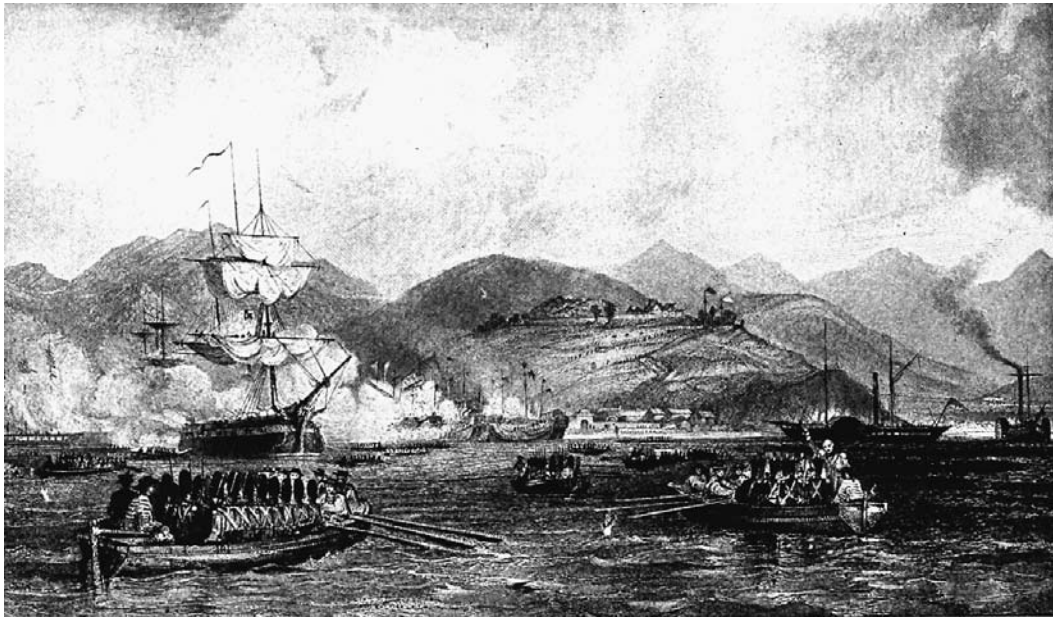
The British Imperial drug war against civilization got its start with the British East India Company's production of opium in British India, and 29 years of Opium Wars against China, to force the acceptance of free trade in deadly opium upon the 5,000-year-old Chinese culture. The 1840-60 Opium War consisted of two phases of direct British military campaigns against China (usually called the First and the Second Opium Wars), and a British-controlled peasant revolt, known as the Taiping Rebellion, which followed the common Imperial pattern of British-instigated religious fundamentalist movements, aimed at disrupting the national unity of the target population. Altogether, these wars effectively left a broken China under the financial control of the East India Company drug dealers, killing more than 20 *million* Chinese along the way.

### **The British East India Company**

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the privately constituted British East India Company established trading houses in Indian cities, and eventually expanded its control over the entire subcontinent, building a 150,000-strong private army in the process, all under the banner of free trade.

The British were less successful in breaking through China's barriers against foreign intervention and trade. The reigning Qing Dynasty strictly forbade foreign presence or trade outside the single trading post in Quangzhou (Canton).

The Chinese banned opium in 1729, a ban that was strengthened in 1799, in the face of British opium smuggling from Bengal. The British ignored the ban, and made lucrative alliances with Chinese merchant families in Guangzhou willing to flout the law, while the Company expanded its smuggling routes to the cities along the southern coast. These criminal activities were led by William Jardine and James Matheson, whose infamous partnership in 1828, Jardine Matheson & Co.,



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*When the scholar Lin Zexu wrote to Queen Victoria, appealing to her to stop the destruction of China with opium, the Empire instead send its navy to “defend the principle of free trade.” Shown, British warships capture Chusan, during a naval battle in 1840.*

became the largest opium business in the world, interlinked with the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, whose current incarnation, the HSBC, is a bank associated with drug-money laundering throughout its history. By 1836, the East India Company was delivering 30,000 chests of opium to China, enough to supply more than 12 million users. The impact on society was devastating, draining the country of silver, while destroying the minds of millions of Chinese.

In 1839, the Emperor sent leading scholar and statesman Lin Zexu as commissioner to Guangzhou, with orders to crush the opium trade. Lin was already familiar with the moral depravity of the southern merchants who were enriching themselves as compradors for the British poison. They were also the sponsors of a school of thought among scholars, called the Han Learning, which opposed the moral traditions of the national government and educational system, based upon the great Song Renaissance of the 11th and 12th centuries. The Han Learning school promoted a pragmatic ideology which served the same purpose as today’s “Open Society” fanatics, financed by drug promoter George Soros on behalf of his British sponsors: “opening” to drugs and financial thievery at the expense of the sovereign state.

Lin set up his headquarters at the school run by the leading Confucian scholar in Guangzhou, moving immediately to arrest the Chinese opium merchants, including the local government officials, confiscating every chest of opium from the British. A grand celebra-

tion was staged before a gathering of the British drug dealers and much of the population of Guangzhou, where over 20,000 chests of opium were destroyed.

This was the occasion of the famous letter from Lin Zexu to Queen Victoria, appealing to her conscience to prevent her subjects from acting to destroy China with their opium. The Queen refused, choosing instead to follow the instructions of Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, to support the East India Company and the British Navy in “defending the principle of free trade” in drugs. A massive British flotilla arrived in 1840, which quickly destroyed the outmoded military defenses of the Chinese, beginning with Guangzhou, bombarding the city until it submitted and paid tribute. The warships then moved up the coast, repeating the process at every city along the way, including Shanghai, before moving up the Yangtze River to Nanjing, the southern capital. At that point, the Emperor sued for peace.

The Treaty of Nanjing, signed on August 29, 1842, ceded the island of Hongkong to Britain in perpetuity as the headquarters for its drug operations, and opened four other ports to British merchants, where British warships were to be allowed entry “when the interests of trade demanded.” But the Treaty was a compromise, since the Chinese did not give unlimited access to the opium dealers, although they did grant open access to the merchants’ devilish missionaries. This provided the conditions which Lord Palmerston needed to begin

making arrangements for phase two—to take over the country in full.

## The Taiping Rebellion

The Taiping Tianguo (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace) controlled nearly one half of the territory of China at the peak of its peasant revolt, which lasted from 1853 to 1865. It began as a pseudo-religious cult in the countryside near Guangzhou, in the 1840s, in the midst of the spread of opium and demoralization following China's defeat at the hands of the British drug dealers in 1842. Its leader Hong Xiuquan read a Protestant tract from Hongkong, and had a vision that he was the second Son of God, Christ's brother, sent to cleanse China of evil—not the British barbarians, but the Manchurians (who ran the Qing Dynasty)—and Confucianism itself. Their fundamentalist doctrines had Christian wrappings, but had more to do with local Daoist beliefs than anything associated with Christianity. The British quickly took them under their wing.

While the Taiping peasant army rampaged across the countryside, taking over much of the South and seizing Nanjing as their capital, Hong Xiuquan's cousin Rengan was brought to Hongkong, where he receiving intense training from British missionaries, headed by James Legge, the British expert on Chinese religious beliefs. Legge, whose bowdlerized translations of the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist Classics are treated as authoritative still today, labored to subvert and destroy the humanist tradition in Chinese Confucianism, while training the leader of a pagan insurgency to impose British colonial rule over China. British intelligence agent Lawrence of Arabia would have been proud.

In a manifesto written by Hong Rengan upon his return to Nanjing: "At present [England] is the mightiest nation of the world, owing to its superior laws. The English are noted for their intellectual power and national strength, are proud by nature, and averse to being subordinate."

W.A.P. Martin, an American Presbyterian missionary, and close friend of Massachusetts politician Caleb Cushing, whose family had become rich in the China opium trade, and who was playing a leading role in instigating the U.S. Civil War on behalf of the British, visited the Taiping in Nanjing regularly. In a series of public letters to Cushing, Martin wrote: "The Tartars [Manchurians] dynasty, too far gone in senility to afford any encouraging prospect of reformation, will

now, perhaps, consider the expediency of recognizing its youthful rival [the Taiping] which, catching the spirit of the age, may be prevailed upon to unlock the treasures of the interior and throw open its portals to unrestricted trade. . . . Divide and conquer is the stragem to be employed in storming the citadels of oriental exclusiveness."

Although the Western powers were officially neutral in the civil war between the Qing government and the Taiping, British diplomats threatened Beijing that they would grant official recognition to the Taiping, if the government failed to accept all British demands for a new treaty, when the 1842 Nanjing Treaty expired in 1856.

## Second Opium War

The British were not interested in negotiations. As soon as the Nanjing Treaty ran out, they immediately launched a full-scale military operation, this time with French support, occupying Guangzhou, then moving up the coast, reaching Beijing in 1860. While the British-sponsored Confederacy was busy trying to split up the United States, British and French forces were burning and looting Beijing.

The Chinese finally capitulated. Opium was legalized and domestic production was introduced, leading to an estimated 30-40 million addicts by the turn of the century (so much for George Soros's argument that legalization will not lead to greater usage). The customs houses were taken over by the British, demonstrating once again the cold advice of Mayer Amschel Rothschild in 1790: "Let me control a nation's money and I care not who writes the laws."

The task remained of cleaning up the mess left by their sponsorship of the Taiping Rebellion, which was no longer needed as leverage against Beijing. The British re-deployed their military forces, led by Charles "Chinese" Gordon, fresh from burning the Summer Palace in Beijing, to join those of the Qing armies, in one of the great slaughters of the century, wiping out nearly every remaining member of the Taiping.

The British were effectively in full financial, military, and political control of the decaying Qing Dynasty. Only when Sun Yat-sen led a Republican Revolution in 1911, based on the principles of the American System of physical economy, inspired by Abraham Lincoln's defeat of the British war to divide the Union, was China able to begin the long, hard struggle to regain its true sovereignty.