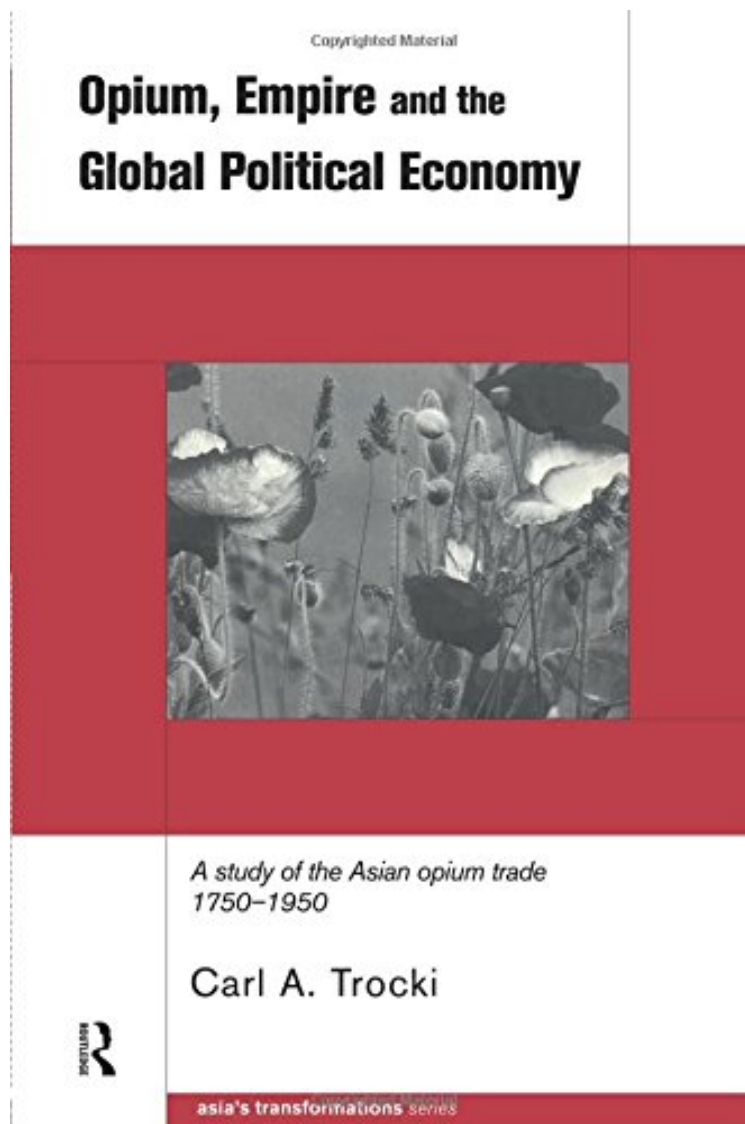


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Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750-1950 (Asia's Transformations)

Carl Trocki

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Carl Trocki : **Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750-1950 (Asia's Transformations)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750-1950 (Asia's Transformations):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The origin of capitalismBy Carol ElkinsProducing opium by forced labor, and addicting huge numbers of customers, made it possible for a few to accumulate enough capital to prime the system for that form of economics.I learned that from this book, and I am very grateful to know it. You won't learn it at school, that's for sure!16 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Excellent study of the Empire as a 'global drug cartel'By William PodmoreThis book is an excellent study of the infamous opium trade, 'the most long-continued and systematic crime of modern times'. And who committed this crime? The pious, canting, hypocritical Christian rulers of the British Empire!Throughout the 19th century, the British ruling class paid for its ever more expensive empire by producing opium in India and exporting it to China. The British state promoted, protected and profited from the trade. Revenue from the opium trade financed all its governments in Southeast Asia.By the 1830s, opium was the largest commerce of the time in any single commodity. In 1860, the British Indian government legalised India's narcotics trade with China as a government monopoly, run by the Opium Department. It became the Indian government's second largest source of revenue.Trocki wrote, "So long as there was considerable profit in the drug, the enterprise was protected and given a safe haven in British India. ... the continued legal production of the drug in British India effectively prevented the eradication of drug use elsewhere." "if Britain did not provide a safe and legal haven for the trade, it could not flourish." "The records show that the Indian government and the Colonial Office were constantly at pains to maximize profits and to protect, at almost any cost, the opium revenue of India. ... British authorities fought tenacious battles throughout the 1890s and into the twentieth century to preserve the opium system against reformers or opponents. So long as the British government profited from and perpetuated the opium industry, there could be no stopping it. It was the persistence in protecting the trade and preserving the revenues that seems the most reprehensible element of British policy during these years."He concludes, "without the drug, there probably would have been no British Empire." "In their dreams, the empire, the Raj, was a great and glorious enterprise. It was also a global drug cartel which enslaved and destroyed millions and enriched only a few. The image of the Raj was itself a delusion created by opium." And now the present pious, canting, hypocritical Christian rulers of Britain have the gall to praise the global drug cartel that was the Empire!9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. colonial history as a systemBy Chai TrekMost histories are about countries, cultures, or some social unit tightly bounded in space and time. Following the history of opium allows Trocki to show the inherent connection between regions (Europe, India, Southeast Asia, China), policies (free trade, monopoly, war), development of capitalism and the material basis of colonial exploitation, and the European hand in the creation of the Third world. Trocki's great strength is that he tells the story with evidence: numbers, charts, photos, and documentation. The result is that a complex, organic, and fascinating world opens up to the reader.This is not a polemical work. However, its evidence and narrative undermine what ever is left of the European claim to bringing civilization. Trocki opens and closes the book with Joseph Conrad's peerless vision into the European heart of darkness.

Drug epidemics are clearly not just a peculiar feature of modern life; the opium trade in the nineteenth century tells us a great deal about Asian heroin traffic today. In an age when we are increasingly aware of large scale drug use, this book takes a long look at the history of our relationship with mind-altering substances. Engagingly written, with lay readers as much as specialists in mind, this book will be fascinating reading for historians, social scientists, as well as those involved in Asian studies, or economic history.

"Going beyond opium's role on the creation of empire, Trocki seeks to establish a global role for what was perhaps the most notorious commodity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." *Pacific Affairs: Winter 2001-2002* ."..." for those interested in the development of imperialism or capitalism, it is certainly a worthwhile read and suitable for undergraduate teaching." *Pacific Affairs: Winter 2001-2002* ."..."A very important argument with implications beyond the social history of drugs, into the broader history of the founding of empire."-Nigel South, University of Essex
About the AuthorCarl A. Trocki is Professor of Asian Studies and Director of the Centre for Community and Cross Cultural Studies at Queensland University of Technology. He is the author of *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore* (1990).