

Opium is a good example. Opium commerce in wider Asia gained from British and Indian trade in the article in the 19th century, and in turn, from the British Indian government's sponsorship of the trade. Opium revenue sustained the governments in India and British territories in Southeast Asia. Asians controlled the trade, and Asians were the main consumers of opium. Colonialism helped the trade grow if the governments shared an interest in the trade. When they did not, colonialism killed the trade. By the end of the 19th century, the international campaign against opium smoking had become intense, and the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indochina and the British in India did what they could to suppress the trade. By then opium profits had moved into other channels, including cotton mills in India and tin mining in Malaya.

*The Economic History of Colonialism* by Leigh Gardner and Tirthankar Roy (2020)