frame—enters to the very core—saps the foundation of the best constitution—and lays our strength prostrate in the dust. In the 4th place, by protracted labour there is an alarming increase of cripples in various parts of this town, which has come under my own observation and knowledge.

* * *

Are all these cripples made in the silk factories?—Yes, they are, I believe.

* * *

TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM HARTER

What effect would it have on your manufacture to reduce the hours of labour to ten?—It would instantly much reduce the value of my mill and machinery, and consequently of far prejudice my manufacture.

How so?—They are calculated to produce a certain quantity of work in a given time. Every machine is valuable in proportion to the quantity of work which it will turn off in a given time. It is impossible that the machinery could produce as much work in ten hours as in twelve. If the tending of the machines were a laborious occupation, the difference in the quantity of work might not always be in exact proportion to the difference of working time; but in my mill, and silk-mills in general, the work requires the least imaginable labour; therefore it is perfectly impossible that the machines could produce as much work in ten hours as in twelve. The produce would vary in about the same ratio as the working time.

Questions

1. The medical examiners directly linked child labor to poor physical health. What conditions did they cite as particularly harmful, and what remedy did they propose?
2. John Wright did not directly challenge the length of the workday. What complaints about workplace conditions did he raise? Would a reduction in work hours have improved the consequences of those conditions? Why or why not?
3. How did William Harter justify a twelve-hour workday? What can you infer about the government's sympathies from the provisions of the 1833 act?

Commissioner Lin Zexu, Letter to Queen Victoria (1839)

In 1839, Lin Zexu (1785–1850) was named by the Daoguang emperor—the sixth emperor to rule over Qing China—to put an end to the opium trade. Opium had long been used in China, but that use increased dramatically when Dutch and British traders imported large quantities to pay for tea, silk, porcelain, and other items in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the early nineteenth century, addiction had become a major social problem. Lin confiscated more than 2.5 million pounds of opium without compensation and penned the following letter to Queen Victoria. The British objected to the seizure and inflicted a decisive military defeat on China in the First Opium War (1839–1842). The emperor dismissed Commissioner Lin and sent him into exile.

It is only our high and mighty emperor, who alike supports and cherishes those of the Inner Land, and those from beyond the seas—who looks upon all mankind with equal benevolence—who, if a source of profit exists anywhere, diffuses it over the whole world—who, if the tree of evil takes root anywhere, plucks it up for the benefit of all nations;—who, in a word, hath implanted in his breast that heart (by which beneficent nature herself) governs the heavens and the earth!

* * *

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[D]uring the commercial intercourse which has existed so long, among the numerous foreign merchants resorting hither, are wheat and tares, good and bad; and of these latter are some, who, by means of introducing opium by stealth, have seduced our Chinese people, and caused every province of the land to overflow with that poison. These then know merely to advantage themselves, they care not about injuring others! This is a principle which heaven's Providence repugnates; and which mankind conjointly look upon with abhorrence! Moreover, the great emperor hearing of it, actually quivered with indignation, and especially dispatched me, the commissioner, to Canton, that in conjunction with the viceroy and lieut.-governor of the province, means might be taken for its suppression!

Every native of the Inner Land who sells opium, as also all who smoke it, are alike adjudged to death. Were we then to go back and take up the crimes of the foreigners, who, by selling it for many years have induced dreadful calamity and robbed us of enormous wealth, and punish them with equal severity, our laws could not but award to them absolute annihilation!

* * *

[W]e have heard that in London the metropolis where you dwell, as also in Scotland, Ireland, and other such places, no opium whatever is produced. It is only in sundry parts of your colonial kingdom of Hindostan, such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, Malwa, Benares, Malacca, and other places where the very hills are covered with the opium plant, where tanks are made for the preparing of the drug; month by month, and year by year, the volume of the poison increases, its unclean stench ascends upwards, until heaven itself grows angry, and the very gods thereat get indignant! You, the queen of the said honorable nation, ought immediately to have the plant in those parts plucked up by the very root! Cause the land there to be hoed up afresh, sow in its stead the five grains, and if any man dare again to plant in these grounds a single poppy, visit his crime with the most severe punishment. By a truly benevolent system of government such as this, will you indeed reap advantage, and do away with a source of evil. Heaven must support you, and the gods will crown you with felicity! This will get for

yourself the blessing of long life, and from this will proceed the security and stability of your descendants!

* * *

Suppose the subject of another country were to come to England to trade, he would certainly be required to comply with the laws of England, then how much more does this apply to us of the celestial empire! Now it is a fixed statute of this empire, that any native Chinese who sells opium is punishable with death, and even he who merely smokes it, must not less die. Pause and reflect for a moment: if you foreigners did not bring the opium hither, where should our Chinese people get it to re-sell? It is you foreigners who involve our simple natives in the pit of death, and are they alone to be permitted to escape alive? If so much as one of those deprive one of our people of his life, he must forfeit his life in requital for that which he has taken: how much more does this apply to him who by means of opium destroys his fellow-men? Does the havoc which he commits stop with a single life? Therefore it is that those foreigners who now import opium into the Central Land are condemned to be beheaded and strangled by the new statute, and this explains what we said at the beginning about plucking up the tree of evil, wherever it takes root, for the benefit of all nations.

* * *

Our celestial empire rules over ten thousand kingdoms! Most surely do we possess a measure of godlike majesty which ye cannot fathom! Still we cannot bear to slay or exterminate without previous warning, and it is for this reason that we now clearly make known to you the fixed laws of our land. If the foreign merchants of your said honorable nation desire to continue their commercial intercourse, they then must tremblingly obey our recorded statutes, they must cut off for ever the source from which the opium flows, and on no account make an experiment of our laws in their own persons! Let then your highness punish those of your subjects who may be criminal, do not endeavor to screen or conceal them, and thus you will secure peace and quietness to your possessions, thus will you more than ever display a proper sense of respect and

obedience, and thus may we unitedly enjoy the common blessings of peace and happiness. What greater joy! What more complete felicity than this!

Let your highness immediately, upon the receipt of this communication, inform us promptly of the state of matters, and of the measure you are pursuing utterly to put a stop to the opium evil. Please let your reply be speedy. Do not on any account make excuses or procrastinate.

Questions

1. What was the Chinese punishment for smoking opium?
2. Summarize the ethical argument Commissioner Lin advances in this letter.
3. Identify the letter's purpose. What did Commissioner Lin hope to achieve and how?

Chapter 16

Alternative Visions of the Nineteenth Century

Honda Toshiaki, A Secret Plan of Government (1798)

Honda Toshiaki (1744–1822) was born in the provinces but traveled to Edo (now Tokyo) at age eighteen to study mathematics. Within a few years he was a renowned mathematician with his own school. Dissatisfied with Japanese mathematics, he traveled to Nagasaki (Japan's one semi-open port) to learn Dutch, and through Dutch he learned European math, astronomy, and physics. Subsequently, Honda became even more interested in practical issues connected to navigation, shipping, commerce, economics, and government reform. Whenever possible, he tried to analyze these matters quantitatively; he would have been very much at home among some of his western European contemporaries who described their studies as "political arithmetic." And—again like some contemporaries, in both Europe and China—Honda became concerned that Japan's increasing population would soon put an intolerable strain on the society's resources. For this reason he became a strong advocate of both commercial and territorial expansion, and of technologies that would facilitate such expansion. His policy recommendations were not adopted and remained little known during his lifetime, but they attracted greater attention in the nineteenth century. In his 1798 book, Toshiaki discussed why Japan needed to think about competition with other powers and learn European ways to compete successfully.