

Anti-Drug Campaigns and State Building : China's Experiences in the 1950s

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RÉSUMÉS

China's anti-drug crusade in the 1950s successfully eliminated the centuries-long epidemic of opium abuse. This paper, using newly available materials, reconstructs a brief history of the campaign and answers the question that why the crusade was kept invisible to the outside world until the mid 1990s. By focusing on the ways the crusade was carried out in the historical contexts of the early People's Republic, it demonstrates that the crusade was a presentation of the Communists' desire for a "new China" identity and was an integral part of the state-building process. The second part of this paper challenges the common assumption that China succeeded in eradicating its drug problem in the early 1950s, and examines how and why prolonged drug suppression campaigns were conducted differently in the Yi and Tibetan areas in the mid to late 1950s. The paper argues that the application of different policies was consistent with the CCP's state-building efforts at that time.