



The Matter of the Philippines

Student Name _____ Date _____

Manifest Destiny Continued, W. McKinley, (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5575>)

In 1903, a Civil War veteran, General James Rusling, published his recollection of an 1899 meeting he attended between McKinley and a delegation of religious leaders, during which the President raised the issue of the Philippines. Some historians dispute the accuracy of Rusling's account, particularly its overtly Christian argument (to "uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died.") If one secularizes that point, however, the account does seem to reflect McKinley's general sentiments about the acquisition of the Philippines in late 1898-early 1899.

Hold a moment longer! Not quite yet, gentlemen! Before you go I would like to say just a word about the Philippine business. I have been criticized a good deal about the Philippines, but don't deserve it. The truth is I didn't want the Philippines, and when they came to us, as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them. When the Spanish War broke out Dewey was at Hongkong, and I ordered him to go to Manila and to capture or destroy the Spanish fleet, and he had to; because, if defeated, he had no place to refit on that side of the globe, and if the Dons were victorious they would likely cross the Pacific and ravage our Oregon and California coasts. And so he had to destroy the Spanish fleet, and did it! But that was as far as I thought then.

When I next realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps I confess I did not know what to do with them. I sought counsel from all sides—Democrats as well as Republicans—but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then other islands perhaps also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France and Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office), and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!

Americanism vs. Imperialism, Andrew Carnegie: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/neps:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ABQ7578-0168-3\)\)::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/neps:@field(DOCID+@lit(ABQ7578-0168-3))::)

Andrew Carnegie was one of the most important American industrialists of the late 19th and early 20th century, the founder of U.S. Steel, and a major philanthropist. Late in life he advocated various causes associated with international peace and cooperation. He was a prominent opponent of American annexation of the Philippines.

FOR several grave reasons I regard possessions in the Far East as fraught with nothing but disaster to the Republic. Only one of these, however, can now be considered -- the dangers of war and of the almost constant rumors and threats of war to which all nations interested in the Far East are subject. . . . There is seldom a week which does not bring alarming reports of threatened hostilities, or of new alliances, or of changes of alliances, between the powers arming for the coming struggle.

It is only four years since Japan defeated China and had ceded to it a portion of Chinese territory, the fruits of victory. Then appeared upon the scene a combination of France, Russia and Germany, which drove Japan out of China. Russia took part of the spoils for herself, and Germany later took territory near by. Japan got nothing. Britain, the most powerful of all, stood by neutral. Had she decided to defend Japan, the greatest war ever known would have been the probable result; the thunderbolt would have fallen. Were the question to be decided to-day, it is now considered probable that Britain would support Japan. . . . Into this magazine the United States proposes to enter and take a hand in the coming contest. It is obvious that what was done with Japan in regard to Chinese territory may be done with the United States in regard to her territory, the Philippines, and for the same reason, that the dictator is overwhelmingly strong and the victim helplessly weak.

The relative strength of the powers contending for Empire in the Far East is as follows: Great Britain has 80 first class ships of war, 581 warships in all; France has 50 first class warships, and a total of 403; Russia has 40 first class warships, 286 in all; Germany has 28 first class warships, a total of 216. Japan will soon rank with Germany, and be stronger there because close to the scene of action. The United States proposes to enter into the zone of danger with 18 first class, and a total of 81 ships. These would hardly count as half that number, however, owing to her greater distance from the battle ground. . . .

I say, therefore, that no American statesman should place his country in any position which it could not defend, relying only upon its own strong right arm. Its arm at present is not much to depend upon; its 81 ships of war are too trifling to be taken into account; and as for its army, what are its 56,000 regulars? Its volunteers are being disbanded. Both its Navy and its Army are good for one thing only for easy capture or destruction by either one of the stronger powers. It is the protection of Britain, and that alone, upon which we have to rely in the Far East slender thread indeed. Upon the shifting sands of alliances we are to have our only foundation. . . . in order to make herself an imperial power she must do as imperial powers do -- she must create a navy equal to the navy of any other power. She must have hundreds of thousands of regular troops to co-operate with the navy.

... What shall we do with the Philippines? These are not ours, unless the Senate approves the Treaty; but, assuming that it will, that question arises. The question can best be answered by asking another: What have we promised to do with Cuba? The cases are as nearly parallel as similar cases usually are. We drove Spain out of both Cuba and the Philippines. Our ships lie in the harbors of both. Our flag waves over both.

...Now why is the policy adopted for the Island of Cuba not the right policy for the Philippine Islands? General Schofield states that 30,000 troops will be required there, as we may have to lick them. What work this for Americans! General Miles thinks 25,000 will do. If we promised them what we have promised Cuba, half the number would suffice, as with Cuba probably less and we should be spared the uncongenial task of shooting down people who were guiltless of offence against us.

... Thus only can the Republic stand true to its pledges, that the sword was drawn only in the cause of humanity and not for territorial aggrandizement, and true to the fundamental principles upon which she rests: that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed; that the flag, wherever it floats, shall proclaim the equality of the citizen, one mans privilege every mans right that all men are created equal, not that under its sway part only shall be citizens with rights and part only subjects without rights freemen and serfs, not all freemen. Such is the issue between Americanism and Imperialism.

National Temptation. Extracts from editorial of Mr. Herbert Welch, in City and State. Save the Republic: Anti-Imperialist Leaflet: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpe:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(rbpe2390200h\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpe:@field(DOCID+@lit(rbpe2390200h)))

...As to the Philippines, let us beware the tempting snare. We cannot retain the Philippines as a permanent possession without violating our fundamental principle. Whatever hold we have on those islands is by "right of conquest." But Americans do not recognize such a right. Of itself, it is not more than the right by which the highwayman lifts the traveler's purse or the burglar the householder's plate. We are there in the process of freeing Cuba. We have no business to take incidentally any commercial benefit in payment for that act. Any commercial question must be considered and settled separately. We cannot give the Philippines back to the political and ecclesiastical tyranny from which we have accidentally rescued them. We must make some arrangement with Spain and with the other European nations that will give a better government to the islanders without laying us open to the charge of seeking our own interests. To stay in the Philippines by right of conquest is not only to become a national highwayman, but it is to adopt a policy that will cast us into the whirlpool of European jealousies and entanglements for an indefinite future. It will necessitate a great naval and military establishment and destroy the best American ideals. The principles for which we have stood will be largely destroyed by adopting any such policy, and the force and attention of the nation would be largely diverted from work on those internal problems and purposes which belong to a peaceful democracy. America is told to take her place among the nations. What is her place? It is not to imitate the methods and conditions of contending European powers, but to show their citizens the possibilities and achievements of self-government, so that the toilers of the old world ultimately will force their rulers to conform to the standards which the United States has set up in the new.

Albert Beveridge, The March of the Flag, 1899:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1898beveridge.html>

Albert Beveridge, an associate of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, was a historian, noted orator, and U.S. Senator from Indiana (1899-1911). He was an outspoken advocate of American imperialism and later a leading progressive. This speech was delivered during his 1898 election campaign near the end of the Spanish-American War as Americans debated whether to acquire new territories, including the Philippines, as a consequence of their victory over Spain.

Hawaii is ours; Porto Rico is to be ours; at the prayer of her people Cuba finally will be ours; in the islands of the East, even to the gates of Asia, coaling stations are to be ours at the very least; the flag of a liberal government is to float over the Philippines, and may it be the banner that Taylor unfurled in Texas and Fremont carried to the coast. . . .

Will you remember that we do but what our fathers did—we but pitch the tents of liberty farther westward, farther southward—we only continue the march of the flag? And, now, obeying the same voice that Jefferson heard and obeyed, that Jackson heard and obeyed, that Monroe heard and obeyed, that Seward heard and obeyed, that Grant heard and obeyed, that Harrison heard and obeyed, our President today plants the flag over the islands of the seas, outposts of commerce, citadels of national security, and the march of the flag goes on!

Distance and oceans are no arguments. The fact that all the territory our fathers bought and seized is contiguous, is no argument. In 1819 Florida was farther from New York than Porto Rico is from Chicago today; Texas, farther from Washington in 1845 than Hawaii is from Boston in 1898; California, more inaccessible in 1847 than the Philippines are now. Gibraltar is farther from London than Havana is from Washington; Melbourne is farther from Liverpool than Manila is from San Francisco. . . .

The commercial supremacy of the Republic means that this Nation is to be the sovereign factor in the peace of the world. For the conflicts of the future are to be conflicts of trade—struggles for markets—commercial wars for existence. And the golden rule of peace is impregnability of position and invincibility of preparedness. So, we see England, the greatest strategist of history, plant her flag and her cannon on Gibraltar, at Quebec, in the Bermudas, at Vancouver, everywhere.

So Hawaii furnishes us a naval base in the heart of the Pacific; the Ladrões another, a voyage further on; Manila another, at the gates of Asia - Asia, to the trade of whose hundreds of millions American merchants, manufacturers, farmers, have as good right as those of Germany or France or Russia or England; Asia, whose commerce with the United Kingdom alone amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars every year; Asia, to whom Germany looks to take her surplus products; Asia, whose doors must not be shut against American trade. Within five decades the bulk of Oriental commerce will be ours.

The Economic Basis of Imperialism, Charles A. Conant: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncps:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ABQ7578-0167-33\)\)::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncps:@field(DOCID+@lit(ABQ7578-0167-33))::)

Charles A. Conant, an expert on banking and finance, was a Washington, D.C. correspondent for the New York Journal of Commerce. He wrote influential essays on East Asia which argued that imperialism was a natural, necessary, and ultimately positive outgrowth of capitalism.

...The United States to-day seem about to enter upon a path marked out for them as the children of the Anglo-Saxon race, not yet traversed because there has been so much to do at home. Almost as if by magic, the importance of naval power as the advance agent of commercial supremacy has flashed upon the mind of the country...demanding new outlets for American capital and new opportunities for American enterprise.

...For the means of finding new productive employments for capital, therefore, it is necessary that the great industrial countries should turn to countries which have not felt the pulse of modern progress. Such countries have yet to be equipped with the mechanism of production and of luxury, which has been created in the progressive countries by the savings of recent generations. They have not only to obtain buildings and machinery the necessary elements in producing machine-made goods but they have to build their roads, drain their marshes, dam their rivers, build aqueducts for their water supplies and sewers for their towns and cities. Asia and Africa are the most promising of these countries. Japan has already made her entry...into the modern industrial world. The increased capacity of her people for production, giving them increased command over the products of other peoples, is producing its natural effect in the rise of wages and increased importations. China, Siberia and the islands which have languished so long under Spanish inertia, are likely to follow, perhaps with more halting steps, in the footsteps of Japan. The opening of railways and canals will afford employment for the masses of capital piling up in Europe and the United States, which will be profitable if the merchandise is found to feed the new means of transportation.

Existing commodities now imported from the interior of these countries at great cost will be swept on paths of steel to the sea-coast, with the result of reducing their cost, increasing their consumption, and benefiting at once both producer and purchaser. The United States cannot afford to adhere to a policy of isolation while other nations are reaching out for the command of these new markets. The United States are still large users of foreign capital, but American investors are not willing to see the return upon their investments reduced to the European level. Interest rates have greatly declined here within the last five years. New markets and new opportunities for investment must be found if surplus capital is to be profitably employed. In pointing out the necessity that the United States shall enter upon a broad national policy, it need not be determined in just what manner that policy shall be worked out. Whether the United States shall actually acquire territorial possessions, shall set up captain generalships and garrisons, whether they shall adopt the middle ground of protecting sovereignties nominally independent, or whether they shall content themselves with naval stations and diplomatic representations as the basis for asserting their rights to the free commerce of the East, is a matter of detail. The discussion of the details may be of high importance to our political morality and our historical traditions, but it bears upon the economic side of the question only so far as a given political policy is necessary to safeguard and extend commercial interests. The writer is not an advocate of imperialism from sentiment, but does not fear the name if it means only that the United States shall assert their right to free markets in all the old countries which are being opened to the surplus resources of the capitalistic countries and thereby given the benefits of modern civilization.

Commercial Expansion vs. Colonial Expansion. An Open Letter by Andrew Carnegie, Nov. 20, 1898. Save the Republic: Anti-Imperialist Leaflet: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpe:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(rbpe2390200h\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpe:@field(DOCID+@lit(rbpe2390200h)))

Andrew Carnegie was one of the most important American industrialists of the late 19th and early 20th century, the founder of U.S. Steel, and a major philanthropist. Late in life he advocated various causes associated with international peace and cooperation. He was a prominent opponent of American annexation of the Philippines.

... Without distant possessions, the republic, solid, compact, safe from the zone of war disturbance, has captured the world's markets for many products, and only needs a continuance of peaceful conditions to have the industrial world at its feet.

"Suppose, however, President McKinley, in order to hold the Philippines at all has to grant the "open door," where will commercial expansion stand then? What will labor in the United States say to the recreant President? What compensation is it to have?

..."Let the President take either horn of the dilemma, and his policy of what he himself has called 'criminal aggression' fails. Let him open the door to the world and he antagonizes American labor. Let him consider the Philippines part of the United States, and therefore entitled under the constitution to free trade with, as part of, the United States, and its door closed except through the high tariff to all other nations, and he antagonizes the whole of Europe and has war upon his hands to a certainty--this time no weak Spain to deal with, but the overwhelming naval power of Europe.

"The republic will escape the threatened danger and hold fast to the policy of the fathers, which has made it the most prosperous nation the world ever saw and brought the industrial supremacy of the world within its grasp under the ægis of peace and security--The one industrial nation free from the unceasing danger of wars and rumors of wars which keep every shipyard, every armor plant, every gun factory in the world busy night and day, Saturdays and Sundays, preparing engines for the coming struggle between the nations of Europe."

Thoughts on American Imperialism, Carl Schurz: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncps:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ABP2287-0056-163\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncps:@field(DOCID+@lit(ABP2287-0056-163)))::

Carl Schurz, a German immigrant, had a lifelong relationship with the Republican Party as a liberal Republican Senator from Missouri from 1869-1875, and also serving later as Secretary of the Interior. After his public service, he remained vocal up to his death as an Editorial Writer for Harper's Weekly Magazine. After his public service, he argued vociferously for social and political reform and against American imperialism. He opposed the Spanish-American War and denounced the annexation of Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico as unconstitutional and a violation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

The results of the war with Spain imposes upon the American people the momentous duty of determining whether they will continue the traditional policy under which they have achieved their present prosperity, greatness, and power, or whether they will adopt a new course, the issue of which is, to say the least, highly problematical, and which, if once entered upon, can, according to all human foresight, never be retraced. Under such circumstances they should be specially careful not to permit themselves to be influenced in their decision by high-sounding phrases of indefinite meaning, by vague generalities, or by seductive catchwords appealing to unreasoning pride and reckless ambition. More than ever true patriotism now demands the exercise of the soberest possible discernment.

... I am far from denying that this republic, as one of the great powers of the world, has its responsibilities. But what is it responsible for? Is it to be held, or to hold itself, responsible for the correction of all wrongs done by strong nations to weak ones, or by powerful oppressors to helpless populations? Is it, in other words, responsible for the general dispensation of righteousness throughout the world?

... When we are asked whether a nation should, in this respect, do nothing for the outside world because it cannot do all, or because it is not perfect itself, the answer is that to be true to its responsibility and its duty, a nation should conscientiously seek to ascertain for itself how it can make its conduct most useful, morally as well as materially, to its own members as well as generally to mankind, and then devote its energies to the task of reaching the highest possible degree of that usefulness.

... But how if this war of humanity and disinterested benevolence be turned into a war of conquest? How if Cuba or any other of the conquered islands be kept by the United States as a permanent possession? What then? And here let me remark that, from the moral point of view, it matters nothing whether the conquest be that of Cuba, or of Porto Rico, or of the Philippines, or of all of them. The resolution adopted by Congress was meant to be understood as heralding this czar to the world, distinctly and emphatically, as a war of liberation, and not of conquest. ... What, then, will follow if the United States commit this breach of faith? What could our answer be if the world should say of the American people that they are wolves in sheep's clothing, rapacious land-grabbers posing as unselfish champions of freedom and humanity, false pretenders who have proved the truth of all that has been said by their detractors as to their hypocrisy and greed, and whose word can never again be trusted? And how will that cause of civilization fare which consists in the credit of democratic institutions, of the government of, by, and for the people, for which the American people are above all things responsible, and the maintenance of which is above all things their duty and mission? Will not those appear right who say that democratic government is not only no guaranty of peace, but that it is capable of the worst kind of war, the war of conquest, and of resorting to that kind of war, too, as a hypocrite and false pretender? Such a loss of character in itself a most deplorable moral calamity, would be followed by political consequences of a very serious nature...