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## Emigre Anti-Imperialists and America's Philippines, 1898-1899

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## Émigré Anti-Imperialists and America's Philippines, 1898-1899

By August of 1898, the United States had already won the Spanish-American War. President McKinley had successfully asked Congress for a declaration of war only the previous April, and U.S. victories in Cuba and the Philippines forced the Spanish to sign an armistice on August 12<sup>th</sup> ceding ownership of Cuba, Puerto Rico, one of the Caroline Islands (eventually determined to be Guam), and some level of control over the Philippines. The remaining Spanish forces were on the way out, the American forces shifted into occupation mode, and celebrations welcomed soldiers returning home in cities across the United States.<sup>1</sup>

But those on the ground knew that the occupation of the former Spanish territories, especially the Philippines, would inspire resistance. It remained unclear whether the Americans would absorb the Philippines whole, just keep Manila or a coaling station like Subic Bay on the western side of Luzon, or leave the islands all together. The cabinet said that the American troops, already occupying Manila, should hold their positions, and otherwise wait for the negotiators to work it out. This uncertainty about American goals ramped up the tensions between the U.S. military and the Army of Liberation of the Philippine Republic, led by Emilio

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 32-61.

Aguinaldo, who was also President of the Philippine Republic which had been declared in January. The Filipinos had already revolted against the Spanish and fought them before the Americans had arrived. But now, viewed suspiciously by the Americans and prevented from entering Manila, they had dug in and formed lines around the city. Both forces waited to see how the negotiations panned out. Meanwhile, the question of what to do with the Philippines became the main unsettled issue in negotiations with the Spanish and debate among Americans. Powerful figures like McKinley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan all argued for annexing the islands outright, and a majority of the media and the population supported them.<sup>2</sup>

Opponents of annexation, and the prior war with Spain, had to organize to be heard. Held in Boston in June 1898, the first mass meeting of anti-imperialists led to the formation of the Anti-Imperialist League in November, assembled to stand for independence for all of the former Spanish colonies taken in the war. The war with Spain had already come and gone, with opposition to it achieving little to slow it down. But the members of the new League, headed by Republican former Massachusetts

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<sup>2</sup> Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire*, 61-64, also Christopher Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," *The Journal of Southern History* 24, no. 3 (August 1958): 319-323.

Senator George S. Boutwell, hoped to effect a real protest against the United States holding far-flung colonies of its own.<sup>3</sup>

The Anti-Imperialist League drew support from a vast array of Americans. With diverse branches in several major American cities, its members included writers, businessmen, philosophers, lawyers, social activists, peace activists, Henry George-style single taxers, and everything in between.<sup>4</sup> It was not short on luminaries: Mark Twain, former President Grover Cleveland, Ambrose Bierce, William James, Jane Addams and William Graham Sumner were just some of its members. But it was short on cohesiveness. Other than generally opposing Philippine annexation, its members' reasons and beliefs differed on subjects from economics to racism to political preferences to pacifism. Everything from anti-imperialism to women's suffrage to the Georgist single tax was promoted by one member or another of the League, often at League meetings and events, and the clarity of its message suffered as a result.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the League's diversity, clear groups can be found within it. One such group consists of Edwin Lawrence Godkin, Carl Schurz, Andrew Carnegie, and Samuel Gompers. All four of them were key members of the League and of the larger anti-imperialist movement, and

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<sup>3</sup> Jim Zwick, "The Anti-Imperialist League and the Origins of Filipino-American Solidarity," *Amerasia Journal* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1998), 65-68, 72-74.

<sup>4</sup> Erin L. Murphy, "Women's Anti-Imperialism, 'The White Man's Burden,' and the Philippine-American War: Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest," *Gender & Society* 23, no. 2 (April 2009): 251.

<sup>5</sup> Zwick, "The Anti-Imperialist League and the Origins of Filipino-American Solidarity," 72-81, also Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," 325-331, also Murphy, "Women's Anti-Imperialism, 'The White Man's Burden,' and the Philippine-American War: Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest," 251-257.

all four were born in Europe, emigrated to America relatively early in their lives, and became prominent men in American society by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These émigré anti-imperialists form a long-ignored bloc within American anti-imperialism, generally consistent in their backgrounds and in an anti-imperialism rooted in their valuing individual liberty over all else.

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Edwin Lawrence Godkin loved a good argument, but he might have preferred it if the fight over Philippine annexation came when he was a bit younger. According to his biographer, William M. Armstrong, “[B]y 1895 Godkin had lost much of his energy and zest for combat,” writing fewer editorials, taking longer European vacations, and leaving much of the work of filling *The Nation*’s pages to his young protégé Rollo Ogden.<sup>6</sup> By 1897, Godkin was writing less than a fifth of the *Evening Post*’s editorials, and, according to Horace White, taking credit for the editorial writing of Joseph B. Bishop and leaving his duties to Horace White and Wendell Garrison, yet still drawing a full salary.<sup>7</sup>

Godkin, once seemingly a man of boundless energy, had slowed. He felt defeated by the times, and by the kind of men in charge of both the United States and England. In an October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1897 letter to Louise

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<sup>6</sup> Edwin Lawrence Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. William M. Armstrong (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1974), 472.

<sup>7</sup> Godkin, *Gilded Age Letters*, ed. Armstrong, 486-487.

Dawson, he wrote, “I am far less excited and interested than I used to be. I am more and more inclined to the opinion of the old Englishman who said to me ‘he was in favor of letting every nation go to the devil in its own way.’”<sup>8</sup> He further confided his disappointment in a letter to her on November 10th, after reformer and college president Seth Low was defeated in a bid for Mayor of New York City: “I am tired of having to be continually hopeful; what I long for now is a little comfortable private gloom in despair. It seems in America as if man was made for government, not government for man.”<sup>9</sup>

Godkin had always viewed the *Nation*, and later the *Post*, as an extension of himself. Born in Moyne (near Dublin) in 1831, the son of a Presbyterian minister and journalist, young Godkin struggled with illness as a child, did well but not tremendously well at Queen’s College, Belfast, and after graduation briefly studied the law before working as a war correspondent and taking an American law degree.<sup>10</sup> Once sufficiently established, he founded the *Nation* in 1865, with a prospectus promising it would be a “really critical spirit” that would offer something better than the ordinarily strident political writing of the time.<sup>11</sup> Godkin promised this kind of writing because he planned to do the bulk of it himself. The extent of it is uncertain, but contemporaries and scholars generally agree that Godkin wrote much of its content (at the time there were no bylines on its

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<sup>8</sup> Godkin, *Gilded Age Letters*, ed. Armstrong, 496.

<sup>9</sup> Godkin, *Gilded Age Letters*, ed. Armstrong, 498.

<sup>10</sup> William M. Armstrong, *E.L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), 16.

<sup>11</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy 1865-1900*, 18.

articles), and Godkin made sure the rest of the articles matched what he would write, through his editing and by choosing writers and assistants who supported his favorite causes: radical Republicans and abolitionists, proponents of “hard money” and the English classical economy, and an unwavering commitment to erudition in journalistic writing.<sup>12</sup> Godkin tried to get intelligent reporters “of strong moral sense” to make the highest quality journal he could, saying that “as long as the press is what it is, a kind of moral and intellectual dunghill.”<sup>13</sup> As it grew, the journal would also match Godkin’s ongoing intellectual growth, in everything from economics to social science.<sup>14</sup> Godkin sold the *Nation* to the New York *Evening Post* in 1881 in exchange for an associate editorship, co-running the journal with Horace White and with Carl Schurz, who had left Washington and the Cabinet behind after Garfield’s election in 1880. But Godkin found collaboration with the two men too much to bear, and bought them both out in 1883, making him sole editor-in-chief, and allowing him to make the *Evening Post* essentially a daily edition of the weekly *Nation*.<sup>15</sup>

Godkin was passionate about both journals because they were entirely his, and even as he retired, he sought to have the title and

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<sup>12</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy 1865-1900*, 15-23.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Charles Eliot Norton, written fall of 1866. Cited in Edward Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and His (Special and Influential) View of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Journalism,” *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (Winter 1992): 1041.

<sup>14</sup> Edward Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and the Science of Society,” *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (Spring 1989): 57-64.

<sup>15</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy 1865-1900*, 25-30, also Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and His (Special and Influential) View of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Journalism”, 1039-1040, also Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 253-258.

recognition he deserved for it. When Henry Villard rebuked him for drawing a full salary during a five-month vacation abroad, Godkin responded with a heated defense of his centrality in the paper's existence: "It is not my writing in the *Post* on which I plume myself the most, and which made me say the stockholders are indebted to me, but my editorial management. Every feature in the *Post* which distinguishes it from its contemporaries is due to me. Its high character, its independence, its veracity, its influence in this community as a moral force, are due to me."<sup>16</sup> But he had to admit that he was spent. One advantage of his long European vacations was that, as he wrote to Louise Dawson, "I keep calm about American politics by not reading the papers."<sup>17</sup> And he tried to get enough fresh air to help his rheumatism whenever he could, further distancing him from daily journalistic operations. In October of 1899, the Board granted him three more months' full salary, with the understanding that he would no longer be editor-in-chief at the start of the new year.<sup>18</sup> Godkin accepted. For him, giving up the control and the work at the paper was like giving up the most important part of himself.

Godkin was opposed to the Spanish-American War primarily because he felt it betrayed the grand American traditions that attracted him to the United States in the first place. In the summer of 1899, with the Philippine-American War already begun and annexation a confirmed fact,

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<sup>16</sup> Letter to Henry Villard, Feb. 13, 1897. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 486.

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Louise Dawson, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1897. Godkin had been in Italy for six weeks when he wrote it. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 487.

<sup>18</sup> Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 522.



he wrote that “American ideals were the intellectual food of my youth, and to see America converted into a senseless, Old World conqueror, embitters my age.”<sup>19</sup> Godkin saw Gilded Age America as a corruption of everything he loved about the older, more pastoral America. For him, the American past that attracted him to immigrate was a time of reason and morality, but by the turn of the century, America as he saw it was ruled by the “moral anarchy” of modern business, and by men who “rarely open a book” and “know no more, read no more, and have no more to say than the bricklayer and the plumber.”<sup>20</sup> Godkin’s desire to combat what he saw as a fatal lack of erudition and moral character in America was reflected in the consciously maintained and upheld high style and quality of his paper.

Godkin did not see the war with Spain as the United States’ running to the aid of the beleaguered Cubans or liberating the oppressed Filipinos, but as jingoist popular sentiment harnessed by the Republicans for a cynical, imperialistic land grab. As early as the Venezuelan border dispute in 1895, when there was a chance of a war with England, he wrote his British friend James Bryce that “I have seen this Jingo policy coming, among the Republicans for a year and a half and have been pounding away at it in the *Evening Post*...they are building a large navy, and I am very certain will have a war with [England] when they get it ready.”<sup>21</sup> Of

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<sup>19</sup> Letter to E. B. Smith, summer of 1899. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 521.

<sup>20</sup> Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900* (New York City: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), 60.

<sup>21</sup> Letter to James Bryce, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1896. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 477-478.

course, Godkin was an Anglophile and against any war with his former home, but he was still correct to expect a warlike, naval action by the United States in the near future. When he realized that American aggression would go against Spain and not Britain, he still saw nothing but calculation in it. He wrote again to Bryce in March 1898: “We are busy preparing for war, and McKinley has got fifty millions to spend as he pleases. He will, if he can keep the Cuban matter dragging along till November, be renominated and reelected. ... The scheme is working admirably thus far. We keep edging towards war fast enough to keep the jingoes quiet, and yet not fast enough to frighten or alarm the good people, and we owe it all to the good and great McKinley. *Justum et tenacem propositi virum.*”<sup>22</sup> War was declared less than a month later.

Godkin also framed his argument against American imperialism in terms of the danger of imitating the British Empire. As an expatriate and frequent visitor of that Empire, he could not help comparing his old and new homes, but the comparison was made plainer by the outbreak of the Second Boer War in October 1899. He firmly believed that Joseph Chamberlain and others in the British government were unnecessarily seeking a war in South Africa and following McKinley’s model to get the United Kingdom’s people behind it.<sup>23</sup> When that war broke out, it doubly saddened Godkin. He sent his sympathies to Bryce’s wife: “You now

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<sup>22</sup> Letter to James Bryce, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1898. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 502-503.

<sup>23</sup> Letter to Charles Eliot Norton, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 520.

know what we have been through, seeing a perfectly avoidable war forced on by a band of unscrupulous politicians, the permission of whom to exist and flourish on the part of the Almighty always puzzles me; and behind them a roaring mob.”<sup>24</sup> Godkin blamed a combination of political deception and popular gullibility as the means by which America was put on the jingoist path. Seeing his former country and his chosen country both seek wars of choice was just too much for Godkin’s liberal heart to bear. And he also did not expect that the American government, maintaining the pretense of seeking independence, would make the efforts necessary for governing its new quasi-colonies properly: “The one thing which will prevent expansion being a disgrace, is a permanent colonial civil service, but who is doing a thing or saying a word about it? ... We ‘took the responsibility’ of the Indians one hundred years ago, but what has happened?”<sup>25</sup>

Godkin believed that, whether the empire was British or American, it would not be able elevate the natives of a foreign place by bloodily conquering it, and regardless, it was under no obligation to do so. A lead editorial in the *Nation*, still Godkin’s media voice in October of 1898, claimed ignorance as to why “the Filipinos have not the right to try to govern themselves as well as any other people. If they fail we consider it no concern of ours, any more than to accelerate their progress towards

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<sup>24</sup> Letter to Mrs. James Bryce, Nov. 14, 1899. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 525.

<sup>25</sup> Letter to Emily Tuckerman, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1899. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 561-517.

civilization and self-government."<sup>26</sup> Godkin also did not support violence in general, and certainly did not find the fighting going on in the Philippines and the Caribbean to be palatable. He wrote to his son that "I do not care a 'two penny damn' for the happiness of the Spanish Americans, and do not feel in the least responsible for it. ... The subjugation of the Spaniards was a sad business. They were slaughtered without resistance. 'Gunning' them was like shooting a monk."<sup>27</sup> If the White Man was so civilized, Godkin maintained, he would not act the way he was acting in the Philippines.

Godkin had a vision of how America should act in the world, and it did not include the kind of fighting and subjugating happening in the Philippines. Godkin's ideal America would be run by level-headed elites, respectful of individual liberty and agency, and not subject to the whims of the easily swayed and excitable people. He believed an ideal of equality generated, not a system with an "equality of burdens," but instead a "disregard for special fitness" and for greatness, causing American society to rot from within.<sup>28</sup> He believed that rooting the country in policies like sound money, a reformed civil service, and a strong press would aid this, all stabilizing the economy, the bureaucracy of government, and the political discourse. But other than avowing that the country could not

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<sup>26</sup> *The Nation*, LXVIII (October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1898). Cited in Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," 330.

<sup>27</sup> Letter to Lawrence Godkin, Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 508.

<sup>28</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 62.

become “a republic of kindly patricians charged with the board, lodging, washing, and amusement of a vast and discontented proletariat,” Godkin was truly cynical about the possibility of turning America into anything truly ideal, especially after the nation’s gleeful march into a standing policy of imperialism.<sup>29</sup> As he wrote his friend Charles Eliot Norton in 1895, Godkin expected that America would undergo “a long period of decline like that which followed the fall of the Roman Empire, and then a recrudescence under some other form of society.”<sup>30</sup> Godkin knew that the country could not go back in time, and so his bleak hope was for some sort of rebirth.

Godkin was accused by some, with merit, of being an elitist. He had little interest in writing to reach the masses, unlike “newspaper barons” of the time like William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. Those publishers were aware of the difference and did not think much of what they saw as Godkin’s snobbiness. Pulitzer famously said that, by reforming the *New York World* and putting it in mass circulation, he would talk “to a nation, not a select committee.”<sup>31</sup> It was a conscious contrast with Godkin, who sought to reach the brightest minds in the country and influence opinion from the top down.

Godkin’s elitism meant that, though he chiefly blamed McKinley and his cohorts in power for the war and for the annexation of the

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<sup>29</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 66.

<sup>30</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and His (Special and Influential) View of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Journalism,” 1039.

Philippines, he had no love for the average American's support of jingoistic foreign invasions either. He saw the latest generation of Americans as particularly dim, and that, having "grown up under the newspapers, and the 'Americanism' of the schoolbooks...[they] look on instructed or thoughtful people, people who are influenced by human experience, as 'bad Americans,' or pessimists." Godkin thought the rest of the press was a big part of the problem, that "the newspapers stand between this generation and the light and make it very hard to get at them, and the danger is that we shall have some frightful catastrophe before we settle down to the plain and rational living arranged for the republic by the Founders."<sup>32</sup> However, he was not totally cynical about the middle and lower classes. Though he predicted that the Treaty of Paris would be ratified, on the second try if not the first, Godkin expected that the public would soon see through McKinley and the Republicans and that they would be defeated in the 1900 elections.<sup>33</sup> This did not come to pass, but it shows that Godkin did not hold the general American public entirely in contempt.

Godkin, and the rest of the American press, had spent little time or ink on the Philippines before the Spanish-American War. According to Richard Hofstadter, American magazines only had thirty-five articles

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<sup>32</sup> Letter to William James, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1895. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 476-477.

<sup>33</sup> Letter to Emily Tuckerman, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1899. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 508. Also Letter to James Bryce, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1898. Cited in Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy 1865-1900*, 521.

about the islands in the entire period from 1818 to May 1898.<sup>34</sup> Dewey's victory changed that and pushed the Philippine issue to the fore in the general public's mind. But those who favored imperialist policies often had work to do in trying to make the public back them. Theodore Roosevelt, in January of 1898, wrote, in disappointment about failed attempts to annex Hawaii, that he was "a good deal disheartened at the queer lack of imperial instinct that our people show."<sup>35</sup>

Godkin had seen the Jingoist movement gaining attention since the Venezuelan boundary crisis of 1895, and thought they were capable of a war like the Spanish-American one long before it happened. Though Godkin could not have predicted that the Philippines would be a theater of American imperialist action, he did rail against the jingoist movement in the pages of the *Evening Post* and the *Nation*, and he saw men like Theodore Roosevelt as the root of the movement, emphasizing militarism and aggression as a vigorous policy for a new America.<sup>36</sup> Shortly after the Venezuelan dispute, Godkin wrote to his friend James Bryce in England, that "you cannot overrate the ignorance of the rest of the world of these Western men, and indeed of all the politicians, their conceit, and immorality. ... The Professors and Clergy, and all the thinking educated class stood firm as far as I see. But there is not a statesman left in public

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<sup>34</sup> Richard Hofstadter, "Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, by Richard Hofstadter (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 169.

<sup>35</sup> W. A. Russ, Jr., *The Hawaiian Republic* (Selinsgrove, PA, 1961), 219. Cited in Hofstadter, "Cuba the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," 170.

<sup>36</sup> Letter to James Bryce, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1896. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 477-478.

life, and you may consider yourselves dealing with a semi-barbarous Power.”<sup>37</sup>

Godkin’s pen was always outspoken, and often vitriolic. His editorials were, as historian Allan Nevins called them, a “weekly judgment day,” emphasizing criticism over the other facets of editorial writing.<sup>38</sup> He drew the anger of many a target: Theodore Roosevelt said that Godkin suffered from “a species of moral myopia, complicated with intellectual strabismus,” and Boston banker Henry L. Higginson said Godkin’s words were “so twisted and stained by great conceit, arrogance, evil temper, that they lost their fairness, their perspicacity, their virtue and therefore their value.”<sup>39</sup> Godkin’s critical nature and his ability to skillfully take down the object of his criticism were the foundations of his writing, but gave it a consistently negative tone.<sup>40</sup>

In this negativity, and in his old age, Godkin fit with much of the anti-imperialist movement. The imperialists drew support with an argument relying on two large themes, encompassed in the words Duty and Destiny. The former was America’s solemn obligation to take on the burden of governing the Filipinos, and the latter invoked a sense that America’s swift military victories pointed to a divine plan that the United States would expand, and that those conquered would have to accept its

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<sup>37</sup> Letter to James Bryce, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1896. From Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 480.

<sup>38</sup> Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism* (Boni and Liveright, New York, 1922), 543. Cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 55.

<sup>39</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 56. Also Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and His (Special and Influential) View of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Journalism,” 1044-1045.



inevitability. These arguments had a positivity to them which the anti-imperialists could never quite overcome. Anti-imperialists often spoke of American traditions of the consent of the governed, and inconsistently argued against the racial components of imperialist philosophy. But their arguments were intellectual ones, without the thrill of conquest and expansion or the vision of Providence smiling down on Dewey's fleet. And their political goals were limited ones: the practical Anti-Imperialist League hopes of preventing the two-thirds necessary to ratify the 1898 Treaty of Paris were on an exponentially lesser order than imperialist dreams of a conquering America leading the world.<sup>41</sup> The disparity in tone between the imperialist and anti-imperialist arguments meant that young Americans broadly supported imperialism, while luminaries toward the end of their careers and lives were the stern, disapproving face of anti-imperialism. Fred H. Harrington reports that the average age of prominent Republican Anti-Imperialist League members was 71.1 years, and that its forty-one Vice Presidents were an average of 58.3 years old. Meanwhile, the "average age of fourteen leaders of expansionism of 1898 was 51.2," and the American consul in London, William M. Osborne, wrote to McKinley that "there is a tremendous party growing up for expansion of territory, especially by the younger and more active elements in the

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<sup>41</sup> Hofstadter, "Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," 172-176, also Zwick, "The Anti-Imperialist League and the Origins of Filipino-American Oppositional Solidarity," 65-66, also Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," 319-320.

country.”<sup>42</sup> However much respect or agreement Godkin may have had, he certainly reinforced the image of the anti-imperialist as an older and more cynical American public figure. His paper had been intended, from the beginning, as a journal with “a specialty of being the paper to which sober-minded people would look ... instead of hollering and belling and shouting platitudes like the *Herald* and *Times*.”<sup>43</sup> This philosophy only became more pronounced as he aged, and fit in with his fellow notable anti-imperialists.

A pronounced cynicism was part of Godkin’s worldview by the turn of the century and was only reinforced by American activities in the Philippines. Godkin had opposed American adventuring in Nicaragua, hopes to unseat Maximilian I of Mexico, and what he called Grant’s “policy of absorbing semi-civilized Catholic states” by attempting to annex Santo Domingo. Godkin railed against further American aggressiveness toward Nicaragua, Samoa, Chile, and other Latin American regions, begging that the country not take “a pugilist’s view” of foreign policy. Ever the Anglophile, he was “thunderstruck” by those who called for war with Great Britain over the Venezuelan border dispute in 1895.<sup>44</sup> So when the Spanish-American War broke out, and especially once McKinley’s government was considering keeping far-flung island

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<sup>42</sup> Fred H. Harrington, “The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXII (September 1935), 211-30. Cited in Hofstadter, “Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny,” 173.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Wendell P. Garrison in 1883, from Rollo Ogden, *The Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), V.2, 127. Cited in Caudill, “E. L. Godkin and His (Special and Influential) View of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Journalism, 1042.

<sup>44</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 70-77.

possessions from a war that initially began to ostensibly help oppressed Cubans, Godkin was not among those who were surprised. Godkin believed that this sort of American policy was a long time in coming, and despite the best efforts of his well-regarded pen, the policy was being implemented. He had written, before the beginning of the Philippine insurrection further convinced him, that “I can not help thinking this triumph over Spain seals the fate of the American republic.”<sup>45</sup> Too old to fight it, Godkin gave up.

It broke Godkin’s heart to see America lose its way, because, like the other émigré anti-imperialists, he had originally come to the United States and made it his new home because of its wonderful ideals. He considered the bloody violence and tortures of American forces in the Philippine insurrection to be a “shameless abandonment of the noble faith under which we have lived for a century,” substituting the American belief in the inviolable consent of the governed for brutal repression of faraway peoples. In his private letters of late 1898 and early 1899, Godkin wrote that “American ideals were the intellectual food of my youth, and to see America converted into a senseless, Old World conqueror, embitters my age.” He often hearkened back to coming over from Europe, decades before, fired with excitement about the massive, neutral, republican nation he was emigrating to. But he said that those ideals “are now all shattered and I have apparently to look elsewhere to keep even moderate hope about

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<sup>45</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 79.

the human race alive.”<sup>46</sup> Godkin felt betrayed by his beloved, adopted nation’s failure to live up to its creeds, and to some extent disappointed in himself for failing to do more to prevent the slide.

Godkin also had a ready ear to reinforce his disappointment. In his late, anti-imperialist years, Godkin was a close correspondent of Charles Eliot Norton, a Harvard professor of similar age and disposition. It was to Norton, as early as 1895, that Godkin made his dark prediction of a Roman Empire-style American collapse. Norton acknowledged and repeated Godkin’s prediction, and claimed that America would only be redeemed by a “calamity...nothing short of seven lean years, or the plagues of Egypt will make this nation serious, honest, full-grown, and civilized.”<sup>47</sup> Both men only grew more pessimistic as events in the Philippines unfolded and they supported each other in the belief that the American experiment was at its end.

Godkin was a racist in a specifically elitist way. For instance, Godkin looked down on many immigrant groups, saying that ignorant immigrant voters were “eating away the political structure, like a white ant, with a group of natives standing over him and encouraging him.” By 1891, Godkin was pushing for English language literacy tests for all immigrants to America. He acknowledged that this would limit migration to primarily the British Isles, but wondered “why not, if the restriction be really undertaken in the interest of American civilization? We are under

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<sup>46</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 79-80.

<sup>47</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 69.

no obligation to see that all races and nations enjoy an equal chance of getting here.” He was prejudiced against race to the extent that he considered certain races more prone to poverty and a lack of education.<sup>48</sup>

Of course, Godkin himself had immigrated to America years before, but he came with a great deal of education and financial security. Godkin saw no contradiction in his own support for more restrictive immigration policy because he was exactly the kind of immigrant that he would encourage to settle in the United States, and saw nothing of himself in poorer, non-English speaking migrants.

A November 1898 editorial page of *The Nation* neatly summed Godkin’s problem with Philippine annexation: “We simply point out that its acquisition would mean the incorporation into our system of an immense group of islands on the other side of the globe, occupied by eight millions of people of various races, that are for the most part either savage or but half-civilized; which the most ardent advocate of the policy admits can never become States of the Union.”<sup>49</sup> Taking the Philippines, said Godkin, was plain and unvarnished imperialism, and that went against his elitism, his idealism, and every other view he held.

By late 1899, Godkin was fully retired from the *Evening Post*, sixty-eight years old, and in poor health. In the middle of 1901, his health forced him to stop writing completely. Claiming that he could not let

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<sup>48</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 65.

<sup>49</sup> *The Nation*, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1898. Cited in Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 181.

himself die in the America of the time, he went back to England, dying there instead, on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1902.<sup>50</sup>

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Carl Schurz was born on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1829, in Liblar (near Cologne), the son of a schoolmaster, and a subject of the Kingdom of Prussia. He excelled in school, took piano lessons, went on to the gymnasium at Cologne and then matriculated at the university at Bonn, and quickly established himself among the pro-republican and pro-unification movements of late-1840s Germany.<sup>51</sup>

At age eighteen, Schurz had resolved that he would “at least be a citizen of free America” if he could not “be the citizen of a free Germany.”<sup>52</sup> He proved his commitment to this idea when he left Germany. At university Schurz was secretary of a pro-republican group called the Democratic Society; he joined a revolutionary military unit in the Revolutions of 1849, and ended up charged with treason and fleeing his native Prussia in disguise once democratic revolt failed. Escaping initially to Switzerland, Schurz returned to Berlin to break his mentor, Gottfried Kinkel, out of prison, then went to London for a brief time before heading across the Atlantic in September of 1852.<sup>53</sup> As an

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<sup>50</sup> Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, ed. Armstrong, 531.

<sup>51</sup> Hans L. Trefousse, *Carl Schurz* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>52</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 18-44.

American, Schurz became the political voice of the German-American community, a Civil War general, a Senator, Hayes' Secretary of the Interior, and one of the key supporters of Lincoln and later of the Mugwump faction and of conscientious political independence.

Throughout his political life in America, Schurz was caustically independent, attaching himself to no party or place if it conflicted with his deeply held beliefs. He began in Wisconsin, went to New York and Missouri and Europe, and traveled widely, lecturing and writing. An early member of the Republican Party, Schurz was a longtime and zealous Lincoln supporter who later served a term as a Senator for Missouri and became Secretary of the Interior under Hayes.<sup>54</sup> However, by 1884, Schurz was firmly a Mugwump. After failing to reform the Republicans, which he thought they needed, Schurz was campaigning against James G. Blaine and saying that the Party, once "the standard-bearer of National honor," was no longer the grand, principled party "I have been serving."<sup>55</sup> Schurz was an idealist to the end, and when the Republicans failed his standards, and the Democrats presented little better to him, he opted to go it alone rather than compromise. Summing himself up, in reference to Senator Oliver Morton, Schurz said that "[Morton] has never left his party. I have never betrayed my principles. That is the difference between him and me."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 176-185.

<sup>55</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 21.

<sup>56</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*, 19.

By the time the Philippine issue came up, Schurz still had the energy and will for the fight and stood firm on his position that imperialism was a mistake. As early as 1871, Schurz was opposing Grant's attempts to take Santo Domingo, leading the efforts in the Senate that successfully rejected the annexation treaty, and receiving Grant's public blame for the annexation effort's defeat.<sup>57</sup> Schurz continued to stand against island-grabbing expansion, opposing Hawaiian annexation when it was proposed in 1897, and arguing against fighting the Spanish-American War.<sup>58</sup> Writing to McKinley once the war had begun and Hawaiian annexation was rumored to be back on the table, he warned against annexing the islands for fear of hurting America's reputation in the world. "It will be in vain to say that for the purposes of the war we must have a naval station in Hawaii, for the world knows that we own Pearl Harbor, which we can use as a naval station without annexing Hawaii. The annexation of Hawaii under such circumstances would therefore merely be an acquisition of territory by means of this war. From that time on it would be useless to protest that this is not a war of selfish ambition and conquest."<sup>59</sup> Schurz believed that American moral authority would be ruined by the immoral conquest of far-off islands for its own gain. This same argument was essential to Schurz's argument against Philippine

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<sup>57</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 187.

<sup>58</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 281.

<sup>59</sup> Letter to William McKinley, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Carl Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, ed. Frederic Bancroft (New York City: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 5: 466.



annexation, and was essentially his stand against annexing Santo Domingo, repeated and adjusted.<sup>60</sup>

Though Schurz was strong in his convictions, he was outside of the power structure in government. He gave speeches often, wrote editorials for publications like *Harper's Weekly*, and put himself in personal correspondence with whomever he thought he could persuade. But Schurz was too much of a Mugwump for McKinley's Republicans, too committed to sound money policies to align himself with any but Cleveland's faction of the Democrats, and Schurz had the trust of neither party's leadership. He was essentially an outspoken, prestigious, private citizen by the late 1890s, not interested in running for office again, no longer influential enough to organize the German-American community into a personal constituency. And though he had made himself into a journalist after leaving Hayes' cabinet, he had given up editorship of St. Louis' *Westliche Post* in order to run the *New York Evening Post* with Godkin and Horace White in 1881, and then left that journal after a few years because of disagreements with his partners. Schurz remained in New York, without constituency or regular leadership duties, writing some historical works, and doing some campaigning for figures he supported and getting to know various luminaries of Manhattan and the area. However, without the chance to set government policy or have a major effect on the public's

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<sup>60</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 187. Also Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 22-23.

opinion, all Schurz could do against the growth of American imperialism was rally specific people against it.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, Schurz's argument, though limited in its impact, was a clear one. On principle, a principle he did not change as the years and islands did, Schurz saw the excitement about conquering faraway islands as a dangerous twisting of patriotism. Writing as Congress considered resolutions for war, Schurz laid out his idea of patriotism:

“It should be constantly remembered that to ‘serve one’s country faithfully’ means not only to profess love for it, or to have a sentimental attachment to it, but to consider with conscientious care what is best for its welfare and its honor, and then to do one’s duty to it according to that understanding... The man who in times of popular excitement boldly and unflinchingly resists hot-tempered clamor for an unnecessary war, and thus exposes himself to the opprobrious imputation of a lack of patriotism or of courage, to the end of saving his country from a great calamity, is, as to ‘loving and faithfully serving his country,’ as least as good a patriot as the hero of the most daring feat of arms, and a far better one than those who, with an ostentatious pretense of superior patriotism, cry for war before it is needed,

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<sup>61</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 252-281.

especially if then they let others do the fighting.”<sup>62</sup>

Schurz further argued that American principles required that, if the islands were made into American territory, they would necessarily have to become states, which would have a terribly detrimental effect on American government and society due to the islands’ racial makeup.<sup>63</sup> Schurz warned that “if they become states on an equal footing with the other states,” governing themselves and influencing the federal government, a prospect Schurz found “so alarming that you instinctively pause before taking the step.”<sup>64</sup> Schurz warned that the electoral votes of the islands, however few they were, would have a major impact on the often-closely-contested national election races and Congressional votes that affect the whole country. And he argued that those who wished to annex an island because its people could not govern themselves were backing a foolish philosophy where, “in other words, if the Cubans are hopelessly incapable of orderly self-government, we must permit them to help govern our own country.” Schurz predicted that pursuing such a policy would lead eventually to “the moral ruin of the Anglo-Saxon republic.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “About Patriotism”, in *Harper’s Weekly*, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 459-461.

<sup>63</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 22-23.

<sup>64</sup> From Schurz’s speech “The Issue of Imperialism”. Cited in Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” 327.

<sup>65</sup> “Our Future Foreign Policy”, a speech at Saratoga, NY to the National Conference of the Civic Federation, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 484-489.

Schurz was practical enough, however, to see that what American principles required would be violated by McKinley's government in how they held onto the Philippines. Schurz said that, if kept, the admission of the Philippines and other islands as states, or as he put it "the transformation of 'the United States of America' into 'the United States of America and Asia,'" would never happen. He accurately predicted that the annexed Philippines would become colonies, without real representation in Washington. "This means government without the consent of the governed. It means taxation without representation. It means the very things against which the Declaration of Independence remonstrated, and against which the Fathers rose in revolution."<sup>66</sup> Contrary to the imperialist belief that annexing the Philippines would allow Americans to lift up the Filipinos, Schurz argued that taking the islands would make Americans a lesser people. "It will only be the old tale of a free people seduced by false ambitions and running headlong after riches and luxuries and military glory, and then down the fatal slope into vice, corruption, decay and disgrace. The tale will be more ignominious and mournful this time, because the opportunities had been more magnificent, the fall more rapid and the failure more shameful and discouraging than ever before in history."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "Thoughts on American Imperialism", in *Century Magazine*, September 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 505.

<sup>67</sup> "Thoughts on American Imperialism", from Schurz, *Speeches*, 510.

Schurz warned anyone he could that a policy of imperialism would ruin the republican government of the United States. In his letters, he predicted “that this Republic...can endure so long as it remains true to the principles upon which it was founded, but that it will morally decay if it abandons them. I believe that this democracy, the government of, by and for the people, is not fitted for a colonial policy, which means conquest by force...and arbitrary rule over subject populations.” Schurz also saw America as the nation with the greatest chance of accomplishing successful democratic government and spreading it around the world, but “if [the United States] attempts such a [colonial] policy on a large scale, its inevitable degeneracy will hurt the progress of civilization more than it can possibly further that progress by planting its flag upon foreign soil on which its fundamental principles of government cannot live.”<sup>68</sup> He saw the issue as larger than just an American one; it was a battle for democracy itself, because Schurz believed that a democracy could not “play the king over subject populations without creating in itself ways of thinking and habits of action most dangerous to its own vitality.”<sup>69</sup>

Schurz’s practical solution to the problem of the Philippines was international arbitration. In June of 1898, he wrote to McKinley that “if we turn this war, which was heralded to the world as a war of humanity, in any sense into a war of conquest, we shall forever forfeit the confidence of mankind.” Schurz recommended making Cuba and PR independent, and

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<sup>68</sup> Letter to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 514.

<sup>69</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 28.

suggested that America “dispose of the Philippines...to some Power that is not likely to excite especial jealousy, such as Holland or Belgium” to maintain America in “the position of the *great neutral Power of the world*” (italics his). Schurz said this would be good for democracy, keep the military budget down, avoid “burdensome political responsibilities,” and be commercially profitable. Thus, he said his suggested policy was “not a merely idealistic one. It suits this Republic best morally as well as materially.”<sup>70</sup>

Since the Venezuelan boundary dispute, Schurz had pushed for arbitration as a general solution to issues between America and its neighbors. Speaking before the New York Chamber of Commerce in January of 1896, Schurz explained that “to show that arbitration is preferable to war, should be among civilized people as superfluous as to show that to refer disputes between individuals or associations to courts of justice is better than to refer them to single combat or to street fights—in one word, that the ways of civilization are preferable to those of barbarism. ... In this century not less than eighty controversies between civilized Powers have been composed by arbitration. And more than that. Every international dispute settled by arbitration has *stayed* settled, while during the same period some of the results of great wars have *not* stayed settled, and others are unceasingly drawn in question, being subject to the

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<sup>70</sup> Letter to William McKinley, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 472.

shifting preponderance of power.”<sup>71</sup> Shortly after the speech, Schurz worked with Andrew Carnegie to try to arrange an arbitration treaty with the British for the issue.<sup>72</sup> Schurz also traveled to the nation’s capital a few months later, lending his support to the cause of arbitration. “I am confident our strongest, most effective, most trustworthy and infinitely the cheapest coast defense will consist in ‘Fort Justice,’ ‘Fort Good Sense,’ ‘Fort Self-Respect,’ ‘Fort Good-will’ and if international differences really do arise, ‘Fort Arbitration.’ ... This Republic can have no other armament as effective as the weapons of peace.”<sup>73</sup>

At the outbreak of the Philippine insurrection, however, Schurz stopped calling for arbitration. He said that America’s “war of barefaced, cynical conquest” in the islands needed to end, and that the solution would be full, immediate Philippine independence under American military protection. This suggestion received little attention, and its opponents countered that the United States had might as well take complete authority over the islands if it were taking the trouble to protect them from another power snapping them up. As Henry Cabot Lodge put it, “[I]f we are to have the responsibility, we will have the power that goes with it.”<sup>74</sup>

Schurz had to unhappily turned his back on men like Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt, whom he had previously liked greatly, as they

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<sup>71</sup> “The Venezuelan Question”, a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1896. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 250-252.

<sup>72</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 276.

<sup>73</sup> Address to the Arbitration Conference, Washington DC, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1896. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 275.

<sup>74</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 31-32.

aligned themselves with McKinley and with Mahanian expansionism. Alfred Thayer Mahan, in his highly influential work *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* (1890), had argued that a great power required a great naval fleet to protect and preserve itself, and pushed for the United States to build up its navy immediately. Mahan also framed the progress of history as a struggle between civilization and savagery and argued that civilized nations like America needed strong armed forces to defeat the savages.<sup>75</sup> This imperialism was also bound up in a push to keep American men masculine: Henry Cabot Lodge would say war could maintain “an unconquerable energy, a very great initiative,” and “an absolute empire over self” among men, and Mahan himself feared that womens’ suffrage would harm the “constant practice of the past ages by which to men are assigned the outdoor rough action of life” while women stayed in the home.<sup>76</sup> For his part, Schurz had little to do with sexism. He supported his wife Margarethe in her pioneering work establishing American kindergartens and had close relationships with thinkers and figures of both genders throughout his life.<sup>77</sup>

Teddy Roosevelt, a firm believer in Mahan’s theories, argued to Schurz that the righteousness of the American cause against the Spanish

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<sup>75</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 278-283, also Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York City: Hill and Wang, 1996), 79-87.

<sup>76</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 36-37.

<sup>77</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 40-46 and 292-294.



took precedence over peace.<sup>78</sup> In Roosevelt's case, Schurz admired his intelligence and willingness to fight, but had to face the truth, "that Mr. Roosevelt has always with perfect frankness confessed himself to be what is currently called a jingo. ...almost all the zealous advocates of a great war-fleet belong to the jingo class, many of whom are not nearly as honest and unselfish as Mr. Roosevelt is, and would hesitate little to drive their country into a war with some foreign Power without necessity." Schurz cleverly argued that Roosevelt, by supporting the Mahanian argument of a great fleet as a deterrent to warfare, as well as the jingoistic belief that peace made the American people weaker, was hoping for an expensive fleet that would make the country weakly pacifistic.<sup>79</sup> Schurz would also unsuccessfully oppose Roosevelt's run for Governor of New York in 1898, an electoral triumph that would lead to Roosevelt's nomination as Vice President in 1900, and eventual Presidency.<sup>80</sup>

Schurz disputed the imperialist, Mahanian claim that commerce would follow the American flag. He argued that America "should not annex, but secure the opening to our activities of the territories concerned," and pointed out that trade with new places could be done without conquering them. Can new markets, Schurz wondered, "be opened only by annexing to the United States the countries in which they are

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<sup>78</sup> Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right*, 115.

<sup>79</sup> "Armed Or Unarmed Peace", in *Harper's Weekly*, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1897. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 399-402.

<sup>80</sup> Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 521.

situated?”<sup>81</sup> In another address, Schurz cited a statistical decline in American maritime trade, saying that the value of foreign trade carried out in American ships was 82% in 1846 and 65% by 1861; it fell to 28% after the Civil War and was at 12% by 1896. Schurz claimed that American trade was fine in the early days when the United States had no naval power, but had fallen because America had plenty of wooden sailing ships but failed to build iron steamships, and that “to raise that commerce to its old superiority again, we want *not more warships, but more merchant vessels*” (italics are Schurz’s). He said that American capital needed to be applied to building such ships, and that “to make such a policy fruitful, we need above all things peace.” And as to the common imperialist claim that warfare would invigorate American businessmen and businesses, Schurz wondered, “would not that be as wise and moral as a proposition to burn down our cities for the purpose of giving the masons and carpenters something to do? ... But the thought of plotting in cold blood to break the peace of the country and to send thousands of our youths to slaughter and to desolate thousands of American homes for an object of internal policy...is so abominable, so ghastly, so appalling, that I dismiss it as impossible of belief.”<sup>82</sup>

Schurz held certain pseudoscientific conclusions about climate that led him to be racist. Schurz’s biographer, Hans L. Trefousse, claims that

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<sup>81</sup> “Our Future Foreign Policy”, a speech at Saratoga, NY to the National Conference of the Civic Federation, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 490-491.

<sup>82</sup> Address to the Arbitration Conference, Washington DC, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1896. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 267-268.

Schurz was “never a racist in modern terms,” but thought “the tropics tended to be debilitating.”<sup>83</sup> Schurz certainly did blame what he considered weaknesses in the character and intelligence of “Malays, Tagals, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, Negritos, and various more or less barbarous tribes” upon their being “situated in the tropics, where people of the northern races, such as Anglo-Saxons, or generally speaking, people of Germanic blood, have never migrated in mass to stay.”<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, Schurz had worked hard to support Reconstruction, constantly arguing with then-President Johnson about the worth of the cause of black suffrage, and making a marathon 1865 tour of the postwar South and an exhaustive report to Congress that successfully countered Grant’s claims that Reconstruction was complete and that black voting rights and personal safety no longer needed the government’s protection.<sup>85</sup>

However, in his arguments against annexing the Philippines, especially as the cause looked more and more dire, Schurz was not above relying on racial themes to make his argument. He explained to one audience that “their population consists in Cuba and Porto Rico [sic] of Spanish creoles and of people of negro blood, with some native Spaniards and a slight sprinkling of North Americans, English, Germans and French; in the Philippines of a large mass of more or less barbarous Asiatics, descendants of Spaniards, mixtures of Asiatic and Spanish blood, a

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<sup>83</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 187.

<sup>84</sup> From Schurz’s speech “The Issue of Imperialism”. Cited in Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” 328.

<sup>85</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 150-161.

number of natives of Spain and a very few persons of northern races,” and claimed there was not a single instance of a nation of such people properly running a democracy. What would happen to American government, Schurz wondered, with “the incorporation in our body-politic of millions of persons belonging partly to races far less good-natured, tractable and orderly than the negro is?”<sup>86</sup> If Schurz felt any strangeness about speaking negatively of black Americans he had once championed suffrage for, he did not demonstrate it in the speech. The next month, September of 1898, Schurz wrote of the United States being overwhelmed by “immense territories inhabited by white people of Spanish descent, by Indians, negroes, mixed Spanish and Indians, mixed Spanish and negroes, Hawaiians, Hawaiian mixed blood, Spanish Filipinos, Malays, Tagals, various kinds of savages and half-savages, not to mention the Chinese and Japanese—at least twenty-five millions in all,” a burden to the America of the near future that might be foolish enough to take them in.<sup>87</sup> These arguments all came in the fall of 1898, a critical time for the anti-imperialist cause. It was not in Schurz’s character to change his convictions without cause, but the importance of the issue might have pushed him to use less than enlightened arguments about racial fitness to make his point.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> “Our Future Foreign Policy”, a speech at Saratoga, NY to the National Conference of the Civic Federation, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 487-489.

<sup>87</sup> “Thoughts on American Imperialism”, in *Century Magazine*, September 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 503.

<sup>88</sup> For more on this see Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” 319-331.

Schurz's was neither a pacifist nor unwilling to expand the country. He had fought with valor in Germany as a young man and in the American Civil War as a Major General in the Union Army, believing in both instances that those causes were worth fighting for. Schurz's Civil War record, particularly his division's defeat at Chancellorsville, was derided by political opponents for the rest of his career, something that Schurz grappled with as the imperialists tried to claim that the strength and masculinity of both sides of the War Between the States was a tradition that their island-grabbing carried on.<sup>89</sup> He stated, as early as the Venezuelan border dispute and much more often, that "I am for peace—not, indeed, peace at any price, but peace with honor."<sup>90</sup> And even in the build-up to war with Spain, Schurz affirmed that, if war is declared, "patriotism then demands that we should all unite with the same faithful devotion in doing the best we can to make the shortest possible work of the struggle, and to secure a speedy issue honorable and advantageous to our country."<sup>91</sup> But Schurz saw the methods used by Americans in the Philippines, and the addition of large tropical regions by conquest, as immoral and un-American. Nothing was more repugnant to Schurz than a war of choice, and he believed that Americans were "in our continental position, substantially unassailable. ... No foreign Power or possible

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<sup>89</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 131-144. Also Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood*, 20-31.

<sup>90</sup> "The Venezuelan Question", a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1896. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 251.

<sup>91</sup> "About Patriotism", in *Harper's Weekly*, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 461-462.

combination in the old world can, therefore, considering...the precarious relations of every one of them with other Powers and its various exposed interests, have the slightest inclination to get into a war with the United States, and none of the will, unless we force it to do so.”<sup>92</sup> Only by jingoism and threats, pushing other countries “into [war] by making it to them a matter of plain self-respect,” would foreign nations attack the United States. If America chose to have peace, Schurz believed, it could happily have it.<sup>93</sup>

Though Schurz opposed taking the Philippines and other island regions, he did favor annexing part or all of Canada, because he considered its Anglo-Saxon peoples and cold climate a good match for American society.<sup>94</sup> In private letters to Goldwin Smith, a British-Canadian journalist who argued for “Continental Union” between the United States and Canada, Schurz expressed his sympathy for the idea and feared that America’s possessing far-flung islands full of “colored” races would make Canadians less interested in uniting with the United States.<sup>95</sup> Still, though he accepted certain wars and expansions, annexing the Philippines did not meet his standards in either way, and Schurz readily joined the American Anti-Imperialist League.

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<sup>92</sup> “The Venezuelan Question”, a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1896. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 250-259.

<sup>93</sup> “Armed Or Unarmed Peace”, in *Harper’s Weekly*, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1897. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 401-402.

<sup>94</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 194.

<sup>95</sup> Letter to Goldwin Smith, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 529-530.

Schurz joined the Anti-Imperialist League because he felt the Philippine issue was a crucial one. He saw the question of what to do with American war gains, especially the Philippines, as a crossroads for “determining whether [the American people] 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...never be retraced.”<sup>96</sup> It was Schurz’s belief that the Republicans of McKinley and Mahan had to be stopped; otherwise, America would become an imperial power like those in Western Europe. In a private letter, he claimed that “the only thing that can save the Republic from being rushed over the precipice is the defeat in the coming election of all, or nearly all, of the Republican candidates, either for State offices or for Congress, who have conspicuously come out in favor of that expansion policy. Such a defeat may bring the Administration as well as Congress to a sober consideration of the question, if anything can.”<sup>97</sup> He thought holding up the Treaty of Paris in the Senate would provoke a real examination of the issues of imperialism, but if enough Republicans were in office, he expected that the Treaty would pass with little opposition.

Schurz hoped that the American people, speaking via the ballot, could elect enough anti-imperialist representatives to prevent the Treaty’s

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<sup>96</sup> “Thoughts on American Imperialism”, in *Century Magazine*, September 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 496-497.

<sup>97</sup> Letter to George Frisbie Hoar, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 529.

passage. In June of 1898, he wrote to McKinley of his travels through the West and experiences in New York, all pointing toward popular dislike of the war with Spain, and Schurz predicted that if McKinley did not prevent a war, then it would be difficult for the President to “guide and save the Republican party” in the coming elections.<sup>98</sup> Whether this was what Schurz truly observed or an argument to influence McKinley, Schurz did believe that if the issue could be put to a plebiscite, it would be handily defeated, and he encouraged Senator George Frisbie Hoar of Massachusetts to lead an effort to arrange one.<sup>99</sup> Schurz hoped and believed that America’s people would ignore the appeal of Manifest Destiny, “a counsel which, in seeking to unload upon Providence the responsibility for schemes of reckless ambition involving a palpable breach of faith, falls little short of downright blasphemy.”<sup>100</sup>

Schurz had an idealistic belief in the democratic principles of American government. To him, this was more than just sentiment. Speaking in February of 1900, after the Philippine issue was already well on its way to its bloody conclusion, Schurz warned that violent, imperialistic behavior by the United States would weaken and destroy its better values. “Take away these conservative and ennobling influences,” he warned, “and the only motive forces left in such a democracy will be

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<sup>98</sup> Letter to William McKinley, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 474-475.

<sup>99</sup> Letter to George Frisbie Hoar, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 530-531.

<sup>100</sup> “Thoughts on American Imperialism”, in *Century Magazine*, September 1898. From Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, 5: 512.



greed and passion. I can hardly imagine any kind of government more repellent than a democracy that has ceased to believe in anything.”<sup>101</sup> And with the ratification of the Treaty of Paris on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1899, and the ensuing bloodshed and cruelty of the Philippine insurrection, Schurz felt that his fear of repellent American democracy had come to pass.

In the end, the Anti-Imperialist League lost and was later disbanded, and Schurz was defeated and depressed. Speaking near the end of his life in 1902, Schurz lamented the events involving the Philippines. He asked others to empathize: “...imagine the feelings of a man who all his life has struggled for human liberty and popular government...who believed he had found what he sought in this Republic...and who at last, at the close of his life, sees that beloved Republic in the clutches of sinister powers which seduce and betray it into an abandonment of its most sacred principles and traditions and push it into policies and practices even worse than those which once had had to flee from?”<sup>102</sup>

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Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermline (near Edinburgh) in 1835, the son of a weaver and, like Godkin, a British subject. He grew up in a family that emphasized Chartist politics and the sacred rights of the

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<sup>101</sup> Carl Schurz speech on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1900. Quoted in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 29.

<sup>102</sup> Schurz in 1902. Quoted in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 34.

common laborer while eschewing the close religious affiliations that defined much of Scottish society at the time.<sup>103</sup> Young Andrew spent only the first twelve years of his life in Scotland, but those years were the crucible of his personal development. By the winter of 1847, Dunfermline's damask industry was mostly mechanized, and Andrew's father Will could no longer find work as a weaver.<sup>104</sup> He got a little money for selling his looms, and Andrew's mother Margaret got a loan of twenty pounds to cover the rest of the price for the transatlantic trip.<sup>105</sup>

Once in America and settled in Allegheny City (later annexed by Pittsburgh), young Andrew went straight to work, first as a bobbin boy and later as a part-time bookkeeper. He received a few years of education before, in Dunfermline, at a school for children of the working poor. It was an education on the Lancastrian system, rooted in the tenets of mass production, and so the learning was by rote. Carnegie was a capable memorizer and picked up some knowledge of Scripture.<sup>106</sup> Later in life, Carnegie would encourage scientific and technical training, but decry classical education as "almost fatal" to success in business. Though he sought education constantly later in his life, once the Carnegies arrived in America, young Andrew's formal education was, in the short term, at an end.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> David Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 1-23.

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Frazier Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (1970; repr., Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 65-66.

<sup>105</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 23.

<sup>106</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 15-16, 26-35.

<sup>107</sup> Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, 835.

But Carnegie's youth was never without higher ideas. William was active in the radical, pro-labor Chartist movement, presiding over the pro-Chartism Nethertown Society from 1844 to 1846.<sup>108</sup> This political activism trickled down to Andrew, but also kept William busy. Lucky for Andrew, his uncle George Lauder, a grocer, spent his spare time teaching his son George Jr. and his nephew Andrew the history of Britain, with a storyteller's sense of its drama. Carnegie later wrote of how Lauder Sr. "taught us British history by imagining each of the monarchs in a certain place upon the walls of the room performing the act for which he was well known. Thus for me King John sits to this day above the mantelpiece signing the Magna Charta [sic], and Queen Victoria is in the back of the door with her children upon her knees."<sup>109</sup> Carnegie's family also preached economic good sense, a distaste for overbearing class hierarchy, and a love of America, which, when tied up with this historical and political education from his father and uncle, did much to put Andrew on his eventual intellectual and philosophical path. Carnegie later wrote that "the denunciations of monarchical and aristocratic government, of privilege in all its forms, the grandeur of the republican system, the superiority of America, a land peopled by our own race, a home for freemen in which every citizen's privilege was every man's right—these were the exciting themes upon which I was nurtured."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, 52.

<sup>109</sup> Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, 41-42.

<sup>110</sup> A. S. Eisenstadt, *Carnegie's Model Republic: Triumphant Democracy and the British-American Relationship* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 4.

Carnegie took to American life immediately. Still just in his late teens, he wrote in one of his many letters to “Dod” (his nickname for George Lauder Jr.) that America had “all your [Britain’s] good traits, which are many, with few or none of your bad ones which I must say are neither few nor far between. . . . We have the charter [for] which you have been fighting for years as the Panacea for all Britain’s woes, the bulwark of the liberties of the people.”<sup>111</sup> Young and irrepressible, Carnegie began the long, challenging haul of building his steel company shortly after the Civil War, during which he helped direct railroad and telegraph operations in Pittsburgh for the Union’s War Department.<sup>112</sup> But he would always believe that America, and its system, was the root of his own success. Carnegie often wrote essays and speeches, but only one book, *Triumphant Democracy*, a celebration of America and a prescription for Britain to imitate it. He considered himself yet another man inspired to greatness by the American principle of equality under the law for every citizen. Americans, he wrote, were “invested under the Republic with the mantle of sovereignty. The drowsy Briton becomes a force here.”<sup>113</sup> And Carnegie’s chosen dedication for *Triumphant Democracy* was not to his father, uncle, or any other figure in his life, but to his chosen land: “To The BELOVED REPUBLIC under whose equal laws I am made the equal of any man, although denied political equality by my native land, I

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<sup>111</sup> Letter to George Lauder, Jr., from 1853. Cited in Eisenstadt, *Carnegie’s Model Republic*, 5.

<sup>112</sup> Eisenstadt, *Carnegie’s Model Republic*, 5.

<sup>113</sup> Eisenstadt, *Carnegie’s Model Republic*, 19.

DEDICATE THIS BOOK with an intensity of gratitude and admiration which the native-born citizen can neither feel nor understand.”<sup>114</sup> Carnegie had not only built what became U.S. Steel but also lived as an example of what he thought the modern industrialist should be, and he considered himself indebted to America for the opportunities that allowed it.

For Carnegie, this beloved nation was not an imperial one, and he consistently opposed such a policy. He had successfully lobbied President Grant not to annex Santo Domingo in the 1870s.<sup>115</sup> Most wars of imperialism, by America or by other nations, rankled his practical sense of pacifism. And Carnegie’s response to the Venezuelan boundary crisis of 1895 was in keeping with his established stance on American imperialism, but also reflected his fear of American imitation of Britain’s imperialistic foolishness, an aspect of Britain that Carnegie had no love for. As Carnegie wrote to the Duke of Devonshire, he felt that “the giant son is his mother’s child, down to the roots, and like her will boss things within what he feels to be his sphere of operations, which has rather indefinite, but which is rapidly extending. The present rupture will lead to a very large and powerful navy, and to coast defences, unless adjusted, and the bitterness with which England is now assailed, and the illwill which this trouble must leave behind it is really pitiable.”<sup>116</sup> Carnegie was a critic of

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<sup>114</sup> The dedication of *Triumphant Democracy*. Cited in Eisenstadt, *Carnegie’s Model Republic*, 178. Also cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 167.

<sup>115</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 551.

<sup>116</sup> Letter to the Duke of Devonshire, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1895. V. 35, AC Papers, LOC.

the British colonization of India. He thought Britain destroyed India's "native institutions" and had forced "her views upon an unwilling people wholly unprepared to receive them," all to have the added trouble of running a place it just as easily could have traded with.<sup>117</sup> Writing to Godkin, his fellow Briton, Carnegie wrote that there was "scarcely a statesman of Britain who does not say privately 'Would that we were safely out of India!' What does India do for England? Ask the desolate homes that I have known in Britain."<sup>118</sup>

Carnegie also opposed the interference of Britain, or any other power, in the Western Hemisphere, writing to James G. Blaine in 1882 that the United States should have "no *joint* arrangements, no entangling alliances with monarchical, warlike Europe. America will take this Continent in hand alone."<sup>119</sup> On the matter of Latin America, Carnegie did not think the United States should colonize it. In the same letter to the Duke of Devonshire he cautions him to heed Disraeli's opinion on colonies as "a millstone around England's neck."<sup>120</sup> Instead, Carnegie thought America should nonviolently maintain the Western Hemisphere as its "sphere of operations" and that Europe would have to respect that U.S. influence.<sup>121</sup> And Carnegie saw American action in the Western

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<sup>117</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 169.

<sup>118</sup> Letter to Edwin Lawrence Godkin, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>119</sup> Letter to James G. Blaine, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1882. From David S. Muzzey, *James G. Blaine: A Political Idol of Other Days* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1934), 237. Cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 170.

<sup>120</sup> Letter to the Duke of Devonshire, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1895. V. 35, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>121</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 171.

Hemisphere only as justifiable and appropriate, so long as the United States stayed out of the Old World's affairs.

By the time that Philippine annexation was an issue, Carnegie was a luminary in two nations, one of America's foremost businessmen, but often crossing the Atlantic to be back in Scotland. Carnegie was traveling Europe with his family as the Spanish-American War broke out and did not break his plan to arrive at his new home in Scotland, at Skibo Castle, in May 1898.<sup>122</sup> He followed the events of the war closely from Skibo, and corresponded whenever he felt it necessary, but did not think the issues of what to do with captured Spanish possessions would be urgent for another few months. As he wrote to Dr. Adolf Gurlt on June 1<sup>st</sup>, "If I felt that I could be of the slightest use just now in closing the deplorable war between poor mistaken Spain and the United States, I assure you my voice would not be silent nor my pen be idle. ... When the proper time comes, when I can urge liberal treatment of Spain and the surrender of the Phillipines [sic], believe me you shall again find me, as you say you did before, pleading for the right in the *North American Review* and elsewhere."<sup>123</sup> Carnegie also celebrated McKinley's initial promise to leave Cuba free and unmolested, circulating a pamphlet predicting that "the brightest page of the Republic's history as seen a thousand years hence will be that which recalls the President's stand for the independence

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<sup>122</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 539. Also Volume 52, The Andrew Carnegie Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Collection hereafter noted as "[Volume Number], AC Papers, LOC."

<sup>123</sup> Letter to Dr. Adolf Gurlt, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 52, AC Papers, LOC.

of Cuba.”<sup>124</sup> Carnegie would argue, and argue strongly, against America’s actions in Cuba and elsewhere, but later on.

In practical terms, Carnegie saw no real commercial benefit to McKinley’s policy. He wrote to the *New York World* in November, claiming, as Schurz did, that commerce would not follow the flag, citing figures for previous American exports to the Philippines, when only Spain enjoyed a tariff advantage, which were so negligible as to be lumped in with the exports “from all other nations” in the report. He said that America’s distance from the Philippines meant exporting there was unprofitable for America without an unfair tariff barrier to other nations, but that such an unfair barrier would bring down the combined wrath of other nations, forcing McKinley to adopt an “open door” policy for the territory. Carnegie believed that “the men in Washington today...have eaten upon the insane root of territorial expansion in distant continents; they are dreaming dreams, chasing phantoms, and in one stroke of the pen the President of the United States has innocently given over the trade of the Philippines to foreign nations. I do not believe that he ever thought of distance. ... [McKinley] had the ‘open door’ before except in competition with Spain. ... Thus the claims of the imperialists that foreign acquisitions extend our commerce with the Philippines is groundless. ... Strange day’s work this for an American President, who against the commerce

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<sup>124</sup> Pamphlet, July 1898. V. 53, AC Papers, LOC.



destroyers of his country should ‘have barred the door, not borne the knife himself.’”<sup>125</sup>

Carnegie, never one to be bashful, informed McKinley and his Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, of further economic reasons to avoid annexing the Philippines. He suggested to Wilson that Australian farmers, rather than American ones, would profit from feeding an American army in the islands, and that American farmers would be unhappy when they realized it.<sup>126</sup> Wilson could not debate the merits of the argument, but replied that “I am very familiar with the sentiment of the farmers in the west, and it is simply this: They are a Christian people, and they pity the people of the Philippine islands; and they do not think these islands should be given back to Spain.” He also warned Carnegie that the major Anti-Imperialist figures would not be enough to convince the people of it.<sup>127</sup>

In his same *New York World* editorial of November 27<sup>th</sup>, Carnegie also figured an approximate cost of \$100,000,000 per year for America to maintain the army and navy necessary to keep the Philippines. He lamented McKinley’s foolishness in burdening the country so badly financially: “Ah, Mr. President, little did you know what leaving the teaching of the fathers meant when you rashly abandoned it and entered upon your new and thorny path. What would you not give to get back

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<sup>125</sup> Letter to the *New York World*, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from Carnegie to James Wilson, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>127</sup> Letter to Carnegie from James Wilson, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 58, AC Papers, LOC.

again to the true American ideals?”<sup>128</sup> Carnegie wrote to the *New York Sun*, a paper he often chastised for its support of McKinley and imperialism, that one reason he opposed Philippine annexation was that “we have 81 warships and need the protection of Great Britain with her 528, against France with her 403, Russia 286, and Germany with her 216.”<sup>129</sup> How, asked Carnegie, could America afford to spend so much money and manpower defending its unprofitable investment against the deprivations of more heavily armed and aggressive powers? He also feared for the troops themselves, citing the high probability of either insurgents or malaria killing American soldiers, and remarked, “so much for this coveted possession for which President McKinley invites us to pay twenty millions of dollars and perhaps spend a thousand millions shooting down the natives in order to impose upon them our foreign yoke against their desire.”<sup>130</sup>

Carnegie opposed imperialism for idealistic reasons too. Unlike some anti-imperialists, he was not truly a pacifist, though he opposed wars in general, with the notable exception of the American Civil War, when he wrote to Dod that slavery was “the greatest evil in the world” and hoped for the crushing defeat of the Confederacy.<sup>131</sup> Carnegie’s otherwise consistent pacifism was, like his anti-imperialism, based on a mix of

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<sup>128</sup> Letter to Carnegie from James Wilson, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 58, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>129</sup> Letter to the *New York Sun*, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1898. V. 58, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>130</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “Vampire Imperialism”, editorial in the *New York World*, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1899. V. 61, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>131</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 68-69. Also Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 166-169.

idealism and practicality. He hoped that America could be a proponent of world peace, supported many American and British peace organizations, and gave ten million dollars to the Endowment for International Peace in 1910. But Carnegie, ever the businessman, also saw extensive military spending as terribly wasteful. He wrote that he hoped the United States would “prove worthy of all [its] blessings and show to the world that after ages of wars and conquests there comes at last to the troubled earth the glorious reign of peace. But no new steel cruisers, no standing army. These are the devil’s tools in monarchies; the Republic’s weapons are the ploughshare and the pruning hook.” Carnegie’s higher hopes and simpler business sense both led him to believe that America was lucky to have “the poorest navy and smallest army” in the world, because with such token forces it could more ably promote the cause of world peace.<sup>132</sup>

And Carnegie saw worse costs to the country from an imperialistic policy. As he wrote in a later letter to the *World*, “[J]ust as pecuniary cost cannot be estimated, neither can the more serious loss to the nation which must come from substituting Militarism for Industrialism. The former tends to weaken those influences which make for better things, a higher civilization. It lowers the standard of national life as it lowers the ideals of a nation. This is to be the greatest cost of all.”<sup>133</sup> Writing in February, with the cause against the treaty almost lost, Carnegie lamented how “the influence of a superior race upon an inferior race in the tropics is injurious,

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<sup>132</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 168.

<sup>133</sup> Letter to the *New York World*, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 58, AC Papers, LOC.

demoralizing. There is no basis for the claim that American troops in the Philippines can be of service as missionaries; on the contrary troops as a rule require missionaries themselves.”<sup>134</sup>

Carnegie also deeply believed, as Schurz did, that if the American public really had their say, they would broadly oppose the imperialism of McKinley. Before the Philippine mess was even a possibility, Carnegie wrote in *Triumphant Democracy* that “the American people are satisfied that the worst native government in the world is better for its people than the best government which any foreign power can supply. ... They are further satisfied that, in the end, more speed is made in developing and improving backward races by proving to them through example the advantages of Democratic institutions than is possible through violent interference. The man in America who should preach that the nation should interfere with distant races for their civilization, and for their good, would be voted either a fool or a hypocrite.”<sup>135</sup> He stood by this opinion in the specific case of the Philippines, writing in a New Year’s Eve 1898 editorial that “if we could only get a plebiscite of the people, Imperialism would be overwhelmingly overthrown. The votes are with us. Either through, or over the Republican party, the ship of state will be turned round from the ‘deep waters’ into which you suggest she is heading and

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<sup>134</sup> Letter to the *Semi-Weekly Journal* (Atlanta), February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1899. V. 61, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>135</sup> Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy or Fifty Years’ March of The Republic* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1933), 328-329. Cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 169.

sailed safely back to safety in the harbor of Americanism.”<sup>136</sup> In another editorial, Carnegie celebrated the fact that “the votes are against imperialism. Labor has spoken from farm, workshop and mine.”<sup>137</sup> Till the end, Carnegie believed in the will of the people of the United States to prevent the tide of imperialism. In December 1898, Carnegie urged Schurz to “not lose faith in the Republic or in Triumphant Democracy. It is sound to the core.”<sup>138</sup>

Even after the Treaty was ratified, Carnegie did not immediately lose hope. Expecting McKinley to backpedal, Carnegie wrote to Dod that he was “wrong about Phillipines [sic] – President now considering how to get out – no colonies for the Republic – Keep this for reference & know there’s a prophet in the family.”<sup>139</sup> He rebuffed the depressed Schurz, writing that “many of the Senators who voted for the Treaty are with us, and the President has been told this. I am certain as ever that Imperialism is defeated.” But McKinley would soon claim that the Philippines, like Cuba and Puerto Rico, were entrusted to the United States by war, over Carnegie’s protestations that they “have been ‘intrusted [sic] to us’ solely by the unexpected demand for them made by the President himself.”<sup>140</sup>

The whole process of taking the Philippines embittered Carnegie. Invited to attend a reception for the American Philippine Commission in

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<sup>136</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “The Rake’s Progress”, editorial in the *New York Times*, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 59, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>137</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “Disappointing England”, editorial in the *New York World*, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1899. V. 61, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>138</sup> Letter from Carnegie to Carl Schurz, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 59, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>139</sup> Letter to George Lauder, Jr., February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1899. V. 62, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>140</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “The President’s Box”, editorial in the *New York World*, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1899. V. 62, AC Papers, LOC.

December of 1898, he replied sarcastically: “Unfortunately I shall be in Pittsburgh the evening of your reception to the signers of the *War Treaty* with Spain, not the Peace. It is a matter of congratulation however that you seem to have about finished your work of civilizing the Fillipinos [sic]. It is thought that about 8000 of them have been completely civilized and sent to Heaven. I hope you like it.”<sup>141</sup> But in the months after ratification of the Treaty, as the Philippine-American War began and raged, Carnegie stopped his vigorous campaign in correspondence and in the newspapers. Perhaps it was related to his retirement from actively running his beloved company, in May of 1899.<sup>142</sup> Either way, Carnegie stopped his fight for the Philippines, as many of the other Anti-Imperialist League members did by mid-to-late 1899.

Carnegie did not gel with all the other anti-imperialists on most issues, in particular economic ones. He and William Jennings Bryan, for instance, conflicted on the free silver issue so strongly that it dashed any hopes of their uniting. Carnegie began a correspondence with Bryan by December of 1898, considering the possibility of Carnegie’s lending his support to the pro-silver, populist Democrat in the coming presidential election. But Bryan avoided any official endorsement from Carnegie; he had not yet officially decided whether to run against McKinley again and wrote to Carnegie that he would be “making this fight in my own way & hope to see the question disposed of before 1900 so that the fight for silver

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<sup>141</sup> Letter to Whitelaw Reid, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>142</sup> Various letters of congratulations for Carnegie’s retirement. V. 65, AC Papers, LOC.

& against trust & bank notes may be continued.”<sup>143</sup> Eventually Carnegie, who had called Bryan a “light-headed-blathering demagogue” while supporting McKinley in 1896, decided not to support Bryan, especially after Bryan supported ratifying the Treaty of Paris in the hopes that the anti-imperialists could win out afterwards.<sup>144</sup> Writing to John Hay, Carnegie worried that “[Bryan’s] right anent Americanism – but unless he drops silver – and goes in for that alone small army and navy, low taxes – he has no chance.” Carnegie did think that the Democrats would drop silver and defeat the Republicans, but this did not come to pass.<sup>145</sup> There was also Godkin, with whom Carnegie did not greatly disagree on free trade, but who, to Carnegie, still seemed to be too distracted by protectionism to effectively stand against imperialism. Writing to Godkin, Carnegie suggested that “you and I agree that there is only one grave danger before the Republic at present. If so should we not concentrate upon that and use all means to defeat it....I pray you get the importance of Protection out of your mind and relegate it to the people it deserves.”<sup>146</sup> For Carnegie, the best kind of anti-imperialist was a man like Schurz: staunch, vocal, an independent Mugwump Republican, and a long-time backer of sound money...in other words, a man like Carnegie himself. Carnegie lunched and spoke with Schurz often around this time, and wrote

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<sup>143</sup> Telegraph from William Jennings Bryan to Andrew Carnegie, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 59, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>144</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 181.

<sup>145</sup> Letter to John Hay, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 59, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>146</sup> Letter from Carnegie to Edwin Lawrence Godkin, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

to him that “if we could have a hundred bold men in public life like yourself, it would be better for the Republic.”<sup>147</sup> Schurz felt similarly about Carnegie, writing to the steel magnate that his work made him “the leader of the Anti-Imperialist Movement,” and said Carnegie should “take active charge at once” of the whole organization.<sup>148</sup>

Carnegie’s vision for America, if not imperialism, was a Pan-Anglian one. Though he disliked much of Britain’s own often violent colonial imperialism, Carnegie spoke with enthusiasm of what he called “race imperialism” as early as 1853, writing that he hoped “the Banner of St. George and the Stars and Stripes” would fight “side by side” to spread democratic ideals. He even had a specially designed flag, with each nation’s flag on one of its sides, made to fly over his home at Skibo.<sup>149</sup> Carnegie believed that America had a superior system, but that an Anglo-Saxon nation like Britain would be a perfect partner for the Anglo-Saxon United States in the world. He wrote to William Gladstone that Britain had to Americanize to keep up, otherwise Britain would become like a forgotten state of the Union, Greece to America’s Rome, “the headquarters of its culture, its institutions, the place from which great ideas would flow,” and “the garden and pleasure ground of the race.”<sup>150</sup> This all fit Carnegie’s belief in the American system and in its personal liberties as

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<sup>147</sup> Letter from Carnegie to Carl Schurz, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 55, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>148</sup> Letter from Carl Schurz to Andrew Carnegie, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>149</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 171-172.

<sup>150</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 171-172.



the greatest possible social order.<sup>151</sup> And he was in touch, as Schurz was, with Pan-Anglianists like Goldwin Smith, who hoped that anti-imperialism could win out, and that men like Carnegie would “yet save the American Commonwealth, the core version of which by a mere impulse of vanity into a bad imitation of the militarist and land-grabbing powers of the old world would be one of the great disasters of history.”<sup>152</sup> And if greater alliance with Britain could not immediately happen, Carnegie at least hoped that both nations could cultivate their own areas. For instance, he publicly argued in August of 1898 that America should trade its newly, almost accidentally acquired Philippines to Britain, in exchange for Britain’s Caribbean possessions, thus helping both countries.<sup>153</sup> Carnegie could not singlehandedly deliver America from the problem of what to do with the Philippines, and stories of Carnegie’s offering to pay the federal government twenty million dollars for their independence are apocryphal (though Carnegie never went out of his way to deny them).<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, he hoped that greater partnership with Britain, in this and other areas, might help to improve both nations and let Anglo-Saxon democracy lead the world.

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<sup>151</sup> Eisenstadt, *Carnegie’s Model Republic*, 80.

<sup>152</sup> Letter to Carnegie from Goldwin Smith, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1899. V. 61, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>153</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “Trade Britain The Philippines”, editorial in the *New York Evening Journal*, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1898. V. 54, AC Papers, LOC. Also Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 176.

<sup>154</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 559. Nasaw said that, because Carnegie did not sell his steel company to the United States Steel Company until 1901, he did not have the financial wherewithal to make such an offer to the government at the time. Also, no firsthand evidence of actual offer by Carnegie found in AC Papers, LOC.

Carnegie was like many other anti-imperialists in the vehemence of his opposition to acquiring the Philippines, but was not so anti-imperial in other areas. He admitted that Hawaii was the only place from which the continental United States could be attacked from the west, saw Puerto Rico as strategically useful for the American navy, and thought Cuban sugar interests would make unignorable demands for annexation of the island.<sup>155</sup> And Carnegie took offense at claims in the *New York Sun* that he was a total anti-imperialist, affirming that he favored continental expansion to places where he felt Americans could live, which just did not include the islands.<sup>156</sup> However, like many anti-imperialists, Carnegie feared that an American Philippines would mean much larger, farther-reaching responsibilities. Carnegie's idealism was merely against Philippine annexation, but his practical side was horrified by it. The forcefulness of his opposition shocked friends and colleagues deeply, such as his friend John Hay, who wrote to their mutual friend Whitelaw Reid that "Andrew Carnegie really seems to be off his head. He writes me frantic letters signing them 'Your Bitterest Opponent'... He says the Administration will fall in irretrievable ruin the moment it shoots down one insurgent Filipino."<sup>157</sup>

In the end, though, Carnegie gave up the issue, and even supported McKinley in 1900. Carnegie's contributions to the reelection campaign

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<sup>155</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 176-177.

<sup>156</sup> Letter to the *New York Sun*, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1898. V. 58, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from John Hay to Whitelaw Reid, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1898. Cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 182.

were significant and signaled to other anti-imperialists that it was all right to let the fight go.<sup>158</sup> Of all the supporters of imperialism that Carnegie detested, the one imperialist he could never bring himself to give up on was McKinley. Carnegie often wrote to the President to stop the tide of imperialism, but with little success. Carnegie believed that if McKinley chose to, he could end the imperialist craze by speaking out against it as President, and chastised him for not doing so.<sup>159</sup> When McKinley never did so, Carnegie still never wavered from his admiration for the President, saying that he “[knew] the man as one of the best intentioned and purest living men – a model of every virtue...let it never be forgotten, however, that some of the direst evils that ever fell upon nations have come from the best men in all the domestic virtues, but men irresolute of purpose.” To Carnegie, McKinley had always had honest intentions but had been led astray by Congress and by popular jingoism.<sup>160</sup> And Carnegie considered the Bryanist Democratic platform an assault on American courts and property rights, which meant that it would be better to support a “wrongful effort to force our government upon the Filipinos, in total disregard of Republican ideals, than fail to repel this covert attack upon the reign of law at home.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 610.

<sup>159</sup> Letter to the *New York World*, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>160</sup> Letter to the *New York World*, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 57, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>161</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “The Presidential Election—Our Duty,” *North American Review*, CLXXI (October 1900), 497, 500-502, 504. Cited in Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 182-183.

Supportive of McKinley, and never a total anti-imperialist, Carnegie was not ideologically prepared to continue the fight. Already in his autumn years when the Philippine question began, Carnegie fully retired from actively running his business in May 1899, and seemed to retire from the Philippine issue after a final few newspaper arguments in the months after the Senate's ratification of the treaty.<sup>162</sup> He was still unhappy about the results of the Philippine situation and roused himself again to write against the British policies in creating and fighting the Second Boer War. However, Carnegie mainly wanted to build his wealth, manage the creation of U.S. Steel in 1901, maintain his friendships in the Republican Party, and enjoy his Scottish estate.<sup>163</sup> Burning bridges was a young man's game, and the aging Carnegie had spoken his piece.

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Samuel Gompers was born in the Spitalfields section of northeast London in 1850, to a family of Dutch Jews recently emigrated from Amsterdam. Though his family lived in dire poverty, and continued to grow (eventually to eleven children), his mother maintained a home with as many of their Dutch and Jewish traditions as possible within their British surroundings. Young Samuel got four years of basic education at

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<sup>162</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 559-574. Also various letters of congratulations, V. 65, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>163</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 603-604. Also Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 183-185.

the Jewish Free School near his home, then went to work at the age of ten, at first briefly learning shoemaking, then taking up his father's trade of cigarmaking. He would spend the rest of his life either as a worker or as a defender of worker's rights.<sup>164</sup>

Samuel Gompers' lifelong pursuit of workers' rights determined his stance on everything else, including imperialism. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cigarmakers were generally considered part of an artisanal profession, so there was very little unionization within the trade. In the period after the American Civil War, however, much of their work was moved to factories, and the cigarmakers began unionizing. Gompers would be elected President of his local United Cigarmakers Union in 1875, and he helped to steer and rebuild the organization through the economic troubles of the mid- to late-1870s, which hurt or wiped out many of the organized labor groups in America.<sup>165</sup> Gompers then gained prominence as he consolidated American craft unions into the AFL, and as its President worked to protect labor while seeking pragmatic solutions with business leaders and keeping American industry running.

From the very beginning, Gompers' self-identification was with the working classes first and foremost. As Gompers told the Executive Council of the AFL in 1896, "I am always on the side of the oppressed and the weak. It is one of the great principles of trades-unionism. If I am in America I am a union man; in England, I am a trades unionist; in

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<sup>164</sup> Bernard Mandel, *Samuel Gompers* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1963), 3-4.

<sup>165</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 20-22.

Germany, I would be a Socialist, and in Russia, I would be a Nihilist.”<sup>166</sup>

Gompers opposed wars on general principle. Speaking against war with Britain during the Venezuelan boundary dispute, Gompers argued that “the working people know no country. ... They are citizens of the world, and their religion is to do what is right, what is just, what is grand and glorious and valorous and chivalrous. The battle for the cause of labor, from times of remotest antiquity, has been for peace and good-will among men.”<sup>167</sup>

Gompers fully rejected the common imperialist claim that war would give America a shot in the arm. Speaking generally of war, just a few weeks before the official outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Gompers delivered a speech arguing that in war “we are exchanging conditions and questions of peace for those of blood. The thoughts which labor is now thinking—the harmonizing thoughts of home and family and comfort—are to be changed to the animal and brutish thoughts of slaughter. War makes men brutal. War is brutal, always and forever.” He went on to say that “war cannot extinguish for all time the problem of employer and employed; war cannot make us forget forever the problem of machinery, of child labor, of closer human relations and of sanitary conditions. War can only displace them for a time with bloodier thoughts,

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<sup>166</sup> Speech at a meeting of the Executive Council of the AFL, in Cincinnati, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1896, as reported in the next day’s issue of the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*. From Samuel Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Stuart B. Kaufman, Peter J. Albert, and Grace Palladino (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), V.4, 274.

<sup>167</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 200.

which give way in turn and leave us learning over again the primer of social conditions.”<sup>168</sup>

Gompers saw calls for a naval buildup, or for Hawaiian annexation or for sending missionaries to China, as various forms of the same militarism, egged on by industrial interests, that was at the root of full-out warfare. As early as 1886, Gompers wrote in the *Union Advocate* that “the call for the unity of the working class to stamp out forever this diabolical capitalistic policy, should strike like a trumpet’s blast on the ear of every toiler in America, and stir him to energy like a battle cry.”<sup>169</sup> Gompers himself did not often write in the press, lacking the time during this period of his life to produce ample editorials consistently, but he ensured that organs like the *Union Advocate* and the main AFL paper, the *American Federationist*, supported this viewpoint.

Gompers opposed the American proposals for expansionism that came before the rise of the Philippine issue. Unlike the other three principal men of this study, Gompers was too young to have been of prominence during Grant’s unsuccessful push to annex Santo Domingo. He did, however, speak out against going to war over the Venezuelan boundary issue, and was one of the first and most vehement in opposing Hawaiian annexation. At the 1897 Convention of the AFL, in December of that year in Nashville, Gompers led the Committee on Resolutions in

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<sup>168</sup> Speech in Kansas City, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898, as reported in “Gompers In The West”, from the *Chicago Federationist*. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 4, 465.

<sup>169</sup> *The Union Advocate*, Oct. 1886. Cited in Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 200.

approving a statement against the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, calling annexation “tantamount to the admission of a slave State.”<sup>170</sup> He repeated this concern personally in a letter to Speaker of the House Thomas Reed in June of 1898, calling it a slave state that would undermine labor everywhere, and arguing against the proposal that would become the Newlands Resolution and officially annex the islands as a United States territory.<sup>171</sup> With Hawaii annexed and the Philippines under consideration as further American territory, Gompers spoke of the extremely pro-ownership regulations of labor in Hawaii and linked this to the island’s “eighty per cent Chinese and Japanese” population.<sup>172</sup> Gompers was afraid of Hawaiian annexation for the same reasons he feared Philippine annexation, and once Hawaiian annexation happened, he pointed to it as evidence of his claims about the Philippines’ future if they were made American territory.

In regard to Cuba, Gompers’s position was different, due to his support for the rebels there and his own cigarmaking connections. There had been an active Cuban junta in New York for many years, and Gompers, having discovered it through some of his cigarmaker shopmates, attended some of its meetings. Publicly, Gompers initially supported Cuban independence on the grounds of preventing its workers being

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<sup>170</sup> Minutes of the Committee on Resolutions, 1897 Convention of the AFL. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, V. 4, 405.

<sup>171</sup> Letter to Thomas Reed, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 4, 487-488.

<sup>172</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 5-6.



abused by the Spanish.<sup>173</sup> The Cuban Junta received the Cigar Makers' Union's official support beginning in 1895, though this did require that the Junta's cigarmaker members unionize. Gompers' larger AFL then passed a resolution at its 1895 meeting supporting the Cuban revolutionaries against the Spanish.<sup>174</sup> Gompers supported a Senate resolution giving the Cuban revolutionaries belligerent status, and wrote a letter congratulating the members of the Cuban Revolutionary Party on its March 1896 passage, saying he looked forward to the day when Cuba would be a free and independent nation working toward the rights of labor.<sup>175</sup> And in December of that year, with popular support for the Cuban rebels continuing to rise, Gompers encouraged the Executive Council of the AFL to adopt a resolution similar to the Senate's of March, saying that "the Cubans are fighting for their rights, and I hope that these resolutions will be adopted without a dissenting voice."<sup>176</sup>

Speaking on the advent of the Spanish-American War, Gompers was supportive of McKinley and ready to take revenge for the *Maine*. He stated that he was "for Cuba free and independent," reminding his audience how "in New York I have ever helped the Cuban Junta. My advice has been sought, and as a representative of the laboring men and

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<sup>173</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 200-213.

<sup>174</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), 286-287.

<sup>175</sup> Letter to the Cuban Revolutionary Party's headquarters, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1896. Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V.4, 132.

<sup>176</sup> Speech at a meeting of the Executive Council of the AFL, in Cincinnati, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1896, as reported in the next day's issue of the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V.4, 274.

women of the country I have assured the Cubans of our support. My devotion to the cause of Cuban liberty extends back for many years. In the long struggle that preceded the present war for years I devoted a part of my wages for the support of the Cuban cause.” And Gompers repeated the imperialist position almost exactly: “[T]he massacre of innocent men, women, and children must be stopped. Starvation of thousands must be tolerated no longer. We want due reparation for the killing of our men and the destruction of our battleship. [Applause.] Cuba is too far away from Spain to belong to Spain. It is a part of this hemisphere, and will be enrolled among the list of American republics.” Gompers did temper this enthusiasm for intervention with a word for the troubles of labor, explaining that “the Cuban question will trouble everything until it is settled, and that is one of the powerful reasons why labor wishes for the freedom of Cuba.” However, Gompers maintained that “a more powerful reason is that the granting of political freedom to a people but precedes the securing for them of economic freedom...in all this American labor is vitally interested and opposed to the existence of any rotten Spanish autocracy in Cuba.”<sup>177</sup>

Gompers was willing to support great sacrifices for the cause of Cuban freedom. Asked what effect war would have on the laboring people, Gompers warned that “it would make corpses of the men, widows of the women and orphans of the children, for it is the laboring man who

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<sup>177</sup> Speech in Kansas City, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898, as reported in “Gompers In The West”, from the *Chicago Federationist*. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 4, 469-470.

must defend his country's flag and it is the laboring man...who must die for its honor. ... And yet I would have war rather than retreat from the wise, firm and honorable position which this country has taken in regard to Cuba."<sup>178</sup> However, Gompers soon found that his specific support of Cuban liberation accidentally played into the larger push for empire.

Gompers was surprised by Cuba's role in imperialism, in part because he held some faith in President McKinley, whose initial professed support for Cuban independence, along with avoidance of war to achieve it, pleased Gompers.<sup>179</sup> Unlike many anti-imperialists, Gompers had a prior personal connection to the President, dating from McKinley's time as Governor of Ohio. McKinley had helped promote unions in the state, but also brought out the state militia at the first sign of violent strikes spreading. Once he was President, McKinley pushed for sound money and the quick resolution of labor/ownership disputes. Though split by the imperialism issue, and though McKinley was not a particularly close friend of labor, Gompers would often say that he and McKinley "had been friends 'for many years' before 1897."<sup>180</sup> But when the Spanish met every American demand and the U.S. still declared war on April 11<sup>th</sup>, Gompers unhappily changed his mind about McKinley's intentions. Though in accord with the wide popular feeling for Cuba's rebels, Gompers had always feared that support for the Cubans might be turned into a wider

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<sup>178</sup> Speech in Kansas City, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898, as reported in "Gompers In The West", from the *Chicago Federationist*. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 4, 465.

<sup>179</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 205.

<sup>180</sup> LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 329.

imperialistic movement. As Gompers wrote to a friend in 1897, “the sympathy of our movement with Cuba is genuine, earnest, and sincere, but this does not for a moment imply that we are committed to certain adventurers who are apparently suffering from Hysteria.”<sup>181</sup> When his fears came to pass, he was galled by those whom he saw as leading the efforts to use Cuba as an excuse for annexing other territories. Giving one of his major anti-imperialist speeches, at the Chicago Peace Jubilee in October of 1898, Gompers asked the crowd “if we give freedom and independence to Cuba, to which she is entitled, is there any justification for our enforced conquest and annexation of Porto Rico [sic]? ... In the case of the Philippines we have the question repeated, only in a much more aggravated form.”<sup>182</sup>

Part of Gompers’ reasoning for opposing expansion was what he called a “criminal folly” perpetrated by jingoes who wanted to distract Americans from domestic troubles with foreign adventures. He claimed that the upper classes “indicated that they hope to see changes in our boundaries, talk of alliances and wars, and perhaps war and conquests, all to keep the workers and the lovers of reforms and simple justice diverted and powerless to dig out abuses and cure existing injustice.” He said that the constant armed buildup, the use of force, and the exploitation involved in having an imperialist national policy “will tend to breed contempt for

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<sup>181</sup> Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (New York City: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 306.

<sup>182</sup> Speech at the Chicago Peace Jubilee, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 22-23.

the manual toiler, and encourage the pernicious notion that the strong may properly exploit the weak, and be used to furnish the luxuries for an oligarchy.”<sup>183</sup> And with the islands in question taken as American territory, Gompers would wonder “how long will it be...before the dominant classes in this country will look to the use of force rather than the will of the majority for support in furthering their plans? Will it not be easy to pass from contemptuous indifference to the natural rights and wishes of the dark-skinned wage-earners of the Philippines to a similar attitude toward manual toilers of our own blood and country?”<sup>184</sup>

Phrases like “dark-skinned” were common to Gompers’ arguments against imperialism, as racism permeated his views on the Philippines and other outlying islands. He greatly feared the immigration of savage peoples from newly American far-flung possessions: “If the Philippines are annexed, what is to prevent the Chinese, the Negritos and the Malays coming to our country? How can we prevent the Chinese coolies from going to the Philippines and from there swarming into the United States engulfing our people and our civilization? If these new islands are to become ours, it will be either under the form of Territories or States. Can we hope to close the flood gates of immigration from the hordes of Chinese and the semi-savage races coming from what will then be part of our own country? Certainly, if we are to retain the principles of law

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<sup>183</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 10.

<sup>184</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 203.

enunciated from the foundation of our Government, no legislation of such a character can be expected.”<sup>185</sup> Like his fearful racial classification of the Hawaiians, Gompers would describe the Filipinos as being “a semi-barbaric population almost primitive in their habits and customs, as unlike the people of the United States in thought, sentiment, education, morals, hopes, aspirations, or governmental forms as night is to day.”<sup>186</sup> The inferiority Gompers saw in the Filipinos was essential to his belief that, as inferior people, they would work for lower wages and be more complacent in doing it, thus taking jobs from regular, Anglo-Saxon Americans.

Gompers’ racism also translated to issues within the AFL. The union experienced unprecedented growth between 1898 and 1902, and was just then beginning to become a really national movement. But this meant that its expansion in the South led Gompers to accommodate certain prejudices, even agreeing at the AFL’s 1900 convention in Louisville to allow certain levels of certain unions to organize along segregated lines.<sup>187</sup> When Gompers did support the labor rights of African-Americans, it was generally to support the larger interests of the AFL, such as at its 1897 Convention, when Gompers spoke out for a resolution protecting colored workers in order to deny American business ownership a cheaper option than whites. If the AFL did not give the colored workers an opportunity to organize, Gompers warned, the capitalists would use them as a barrier to

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<sup>185</sup> Speech at the Chicago Peace Jubilee, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 28.

<sup>186</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 203.

<sup>187</sup> Introduction by the editors, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V.5, xiii-xiv.

union goals and to rights for all other workers.<sup>188</sup> But blacks were excluded from most AFL unions, and black workers, as late as 1910, made a third of the wages that white workers made. For the most part, Gompers would not touch the issue. He wrote to one affiliated union that he “[regarded] the race problem as one with which you people of the Southland will have to deal; without the interference, too, of meddlers from the outside.”<sup>189</sup>

Gompers also backed the economic argument that “trade does not always follow the flag,” shared and propounded by men like Schurz and Carnegie. Gompers said that this imperialist fallacy’s untruth was “borne out by the evidences right at our hands; the flag of England floats over Canada, that of Spain did, until recently, over Cuba, the South American Republics are practically our haven, and in each of these instances the reverse of the proposition that trade follows the flag prevails.” Gompers conceded that the expansion of trade was essential and appropriate for America’s health, but he insisted “that it is not necessary for us to violate the principles upon which our government is founded; to throw to the winds the declaration that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; that it is not necessary that we shall become a nation of conquerors, a nation founded upon physical force; that it is not necessary that we shall subjugate by the force of arms any other people in order to obtain that expansion of trade.” Gompers emphasized this kind of

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<sup>188</sup> Minutes of the Committee on Resolutions, 1897 Convention of the AFL. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, V. 4, 406.

<sup>189</sup> Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*, 328.

argument, writing that “the issues yet to come” would pit “the ‘almighty dollar,’ with all that portends, on the one side – justice, right, humanity, liberty, true Americanism on the other.”<sup>190</sup>

Gompers was far from a free trader, advocating tariffs and immigration quotas to protect the American working man, and he feared that America could not protect laborers in the continental United States by enacting barriers against Philippine trade if the Philippines themselves were American territory. He wrote that those who disagreed forgot “the fact that the American Republic occupies a unique position among the nations of the world, and that its general legislation must be of a general character, applying to all the people over whom its flag floats, and jurisdiction extends. . . . See the Constitution of the United States.”<sup>191</sup>

Gompers’ adherence to protecting labor, above all else, made him fiercely independent on any other issue. At an April speech in Kansas City, an audience member asked Gompers to explain, since he “[said] we are living under a false economic system[,] What shall we put in place of it?” Gompers replied that he wanted “a true one; one that will be evolved out of the intellectual progress of our people.” As reported, another questioner asked him if the kind of political discussion necessary to this was allowed in labor unions, and Gompers replied forcefully: “No, sir!” Mr. Gompers pushed his head out beyond the footlights and glared. ‘I’ll

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<sup>190</sup> Letter to Francis B. Thurber, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 25, SG Papers, LOC. Also cited in Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 32-34.

<sup>191</sup> Letter to Francis B. Thurber, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 25, SG Papers, LOC.



tell you what we won't allow, sir. We won't allow the labor unions to become the tail of any political kite, sir.”<sup>192</sup> To Gompers, the politics of labor and of class were supreme, and he believed that other organizations and groups did not understand this fully enough. No other issue mattered as much; as convinced as he was of the imperialism question, Gompers even admitted a willingness to bend on the imperialism question if it served the interests of labor. Speaking in New York in July of 1898, with the war in full swing but the Philippine question not yet at the fore, Gompers opined that “the Government may annex any old thing, and I shall be content, so long as the laws relating to labor are observed. The war is a glorious and righteous one as far as the United States is concerned.”<sup>193</sup>

Gompers' vision of America, determined by his view of the primacy of labor, was of the United States becoming the world's greatest and most enlightened economy: “The nation which dominates the markets of the world will surely control its destinies. To make of the United States a vast workshop is our manifest destiny, and our duty, and...basing the conditions of the workers upon the highest intelligence and the most exalted standard of life, no obstacle can be placed in our way to the attainment of the highest pinnacle of national glory and human

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<sup>192</sup> Speech in Kansas City, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898, as reported in “Gompers In The West”, from the *Chicago Federationist*. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 4, 463.

<sup>193</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 203.

progress.”<sup>194</sup> He saw imperialistic land-grabbing as a distraction to the workers, and believed that an essential part of the workers’ good qualities was their civilized racial makeup, so imperialism, to Gompers, was nothing but a detriment to his ideal America. In regards to the Philippine question in particular, Gompers wondered “[T]o attain this end is the acquirement of the Philippine Islands, with their semi-savage population, necessary? Surely not. Neither its gates nor those of any other country of the globe can long be closed against our constantly growing industrial supremacy.”<sup>195</sup> He argued that we would treat the Filipinos as we treated the Indians, but without the reasonable expectation that crowds of white people would move into the land and take their place, thereby degrading America’s racial makeup and its national character. “The climate of the Philippines forbids forever manual labor by Americans, as it does the planting there of American families, to live and flourish from one generation to another.” If a colonial-administration-type group of Americans were sent there, said Gompers, “for the first time in our history we shall have minority rule of the most extreme, permanent and brazen type, under the American flag and upheld by the forces of the republic. ... Can the fundamental principles of our Government, equality of rights, no taxation or government without representation, and the like, be mocked in

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<sup>194</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 8.

<sup>195</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 8.

the most unblushing manner, under the flag, without sapping respect for the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence?”<sup>196</sup>

Gompers claimed total sincerity and determination toward the anti-imperialist cause. He said it was key to the nation’s future, as he wrote in August of 1898, and that “we are living in a time when it requires cool judgment of sterling men to prevent a very grave injury being done to our people. A mistake now, a departure from the splendid principles which have made us so great, is enough to cause alarm to every man who loves the Republic and who seeks its perpetuity.”<sup>197</sup>

But as time went on, Gompers would lose track of the issue, returning his focus to protecting American labor. Initially he was a focused and stalwart member of the Anti-Imperialist League, joining near the end of 1898 and becoming one of its many Vice Presidents. Gompers was really the only important labor leader who showed much interest in the group, just as he had been one of the few major figures outside of the middle and upper classes of the Midwest and Northeast to support arbitration with Venezuela in 1895. Gompers argued strongly for the cause and was one of the leaders who opposed Bryan’s idea of ratifying the treaty and then working out the status of the Philippines later on.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 8-9.

<sup>197</sup> Letter to G. H. Bates, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1898. Volume 24, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Hereafter referenced as [Volume Number], SG Papers, LOC.

<sup>198</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 205. Also Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood*, 17.

After all that, however, Gompers saw that the movement had lost the battle, and he essentially accepted imperialism as an American policy. He worked his hardest to make sure that labor laws were enforced and American workers protected along the way, but after early 1899, in regards to America's new possessions, Gompers would not object to anything unrelated to labor. Traveling to Puerto Rico shortly after the Treaty was ratified, Gompers worked hard to protect a group of trade union officials in Puerto Rico from the abuses of business ownership and sought to bolster its AFL to "spread the gospel of Americanism among the people of the Island." But on a larger level, Gompers accepted that Puerto Rico would be an American possession for the near future, and called it "a great factory exploiting cheap labor for the benefit of large corporations in the United States." He also paid a visit to Cuba in February of 1900 to encourage its workers to organize, but otherwise Gompers did little for Cuba, Hawaii, Puerto Rico or the Philippines in the years after that.<sup>199</sup>

When the Philippines hung in the balance, Gompers was in the midst of turning his AFL into a national movement for labor. As much as he opposed the annexation of the Philippines, on the grounds of economics and of racism, Gompers returned to his main business soon after the fight was lost. Within a few years of the defeat of the movement against annexing the Philippines, Gompers was leading an ever-growing movement of American workers and chiding those who still hoped for a less imperialistic America. "Peace," Gompers would claim in 1905,

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<sup>199</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 205-220.

“comes from conscious intelligence and power, and not from hysterical, effeminate supplications for an ideal state.”<sup>200</sup>

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The major émigré anti-imperialists were no more successful than the other anti-imperialists in preventing American annexation of the Philippines. The treaty of annexation was ratified by the Senate on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1899, shots were exchanged between American and Filipino troops outside of Manila that night, and full-scale violence broke out in what had become American territory. The Anti-Imperialist League hobbled on, but could not effectively argue for letting the Philippine Islands go once American blood had been spilt to fight the rebels and keep the islands. The League continued to meet under its same name and organization for another two decades, though without a rallying cause like the Philippines to focus real effort on it lost most of its members and became a small, chiefly Boston-based enclave. Just like the other major League members, with the notable exception of Moorfield Storey, the émigrés abandoned the organization when they saw that their particular fight was over.<sup>201</sup>

The émigré anti-imperialists moved on to other things by century's end. Godkin was sixty-eight, in poor health, and would pass away a few

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<sup>200</sup> SG in the *Washington Post*, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, 1905. Cited in Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 214.

<sup>201</sup> Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, 72-102. Also Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 215.

years later in 1902. Schurz was a full seventy years old, was still presiding over the National Civil Service Reform League, and would last until 1906, only a few more years than Godkin. Carnegie was sixty-four, and would enjoy a long life of eighty-three years, but regardless had begun his retirement as the Filipinos and Americans began trading small-arms fire. Gompers was something of an exception, at not yet fifty years of age. While the other three émigrés were beginning to enjoy the fruits of retirement, Gompers' AFL was just then becoming a truly national organization, and demanded his full efforts.

During the fight against Philippine annexation, the émigrés had offered many of the same arguments against imperialism that the other League members and unassociated anti-imperialists did. They made practical arguments against its efficacy and wisdom as an American foreign policy. They pointed to the Constitution's guarantees of freedom, applied to any and all American territory (a requirement which the Insular Cases would later abrogate), and to the unacceptability of using Cuban liberation as justification for Puerto Rican and Philippine conquest. They argued that far-flung American colonies would overextend America's armed forces and embroil the United States in further international conflicts. And they pointed to American abuses in the islands themselves, like the "water cure" in the Philippines, as inhuman and beneath the dignity of their United States.

The émigrés were also consistent with the general mold of the anti-imperialists as aged men. The Anti-Imperialist League, with its leadership and notables comprised mainly of august statesmen, contrasted poorly with the youthful vigor of the Roosevelts and Lodges and Beveridges supporting imperialism. In Robert Beisner's study of twelve major anti-imperialist figures, which includes Carnegie, Schurz, and Godkin, he notes that the twelve of them were a combined 835 years in age by 1900, and of the twelve only Carnegie would live to see America enter the First World War.<sup>202</sup>

The émigrés, like the others in the movement, were also idealists, ever hopeful about America and its people. All four émigrés maintained a belief that the American people did not really back the “jingo”, and were either duped into supporting imperialism or underrepresented in their opposition to it. And they were all staunchly independent in order to work for causes they believed in: Godkin with his caustic, independent-minded editorials, Schurz in his consistent Mugwump stance whether in or out of office, Gompers' refusal to make the AFL “the tail” of another group or party, and Carnegie's freedom, through tremendous wealth, to keep his own counsel on issues of the day. None of the émigrés faced an agonizing choice over abandoning their McKinleyite friendships to oppose imperialism, because the rightness of choosing to do so was, to them, self-evident.

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<sup>202</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 228.

However, the broader anti-imperialist movement was a fragmented one. The émigrés stood out from the anti-imperialists in their general agreement on most issues, rooted in their experiences as well-established immigrants to the United States from Western Europe. Émigré anti-imperialism, as represented by Godkin, Schurz, Carnegie and Gompers, was part of their broader belief in the primacy of the individual, rather than the state, in a properly organized American society. Having left mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, where democratic and popular movements were soundly crushed by the ruling elites, and built their lives in an America of Gilded Age governmental ineffectiveness and corruption, the émigrés were unwilling to support policies that gave the state greater and unchecked powers over the individual. They were made into practical libertarians by their experiences, and this libertarianism was at the root of their anti-imperialism.

Economically, the émigrés were in agreement on the major issues, though Gompers had a constituency he was bound to speak for that disagreed with the émigrés. All but Gompers strongly favored maintaining the gold standard, some of them even more than they wished to end imperialism. Schurz, as staunch a Mugwump as could be found, always cautioned that Americans could “call fifty cents a dollar and you’ll have more dollars, but not more wealth.”<sup>203</sup> Godkin editorially railed against

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<sup>203</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 277.



most forms of socialism and called Bryan an “anarchist.”<sup>204</sup> Carnegie demonstrated his convictions on sound money in 1900, when, given the choice in 1900 of backing Bryan and fighting imperialism, or backing McKinley and fighting free silver, Carnegie stuck with the President.<sup>205</sup> On tariff issues, too, the three older émigrés agreed that freer trade was the best policy. Godkin was most outspoken on it, both in the pages of the *Nation* and as a close associate of the American Free Trade League, founded in 1867.<sup>206</sup> Schurz worked to make free trade, along with most liberal Republican policies, part of the party’s platform in every election.<sup>207</sup> Carnegie was lampooned as a wealthy foreigner profiting from high tariffs in the 1880s and 1890s, but retirement allowed him to act purely on principle, and by 1908 he was testifying in favor of ending the duty on steel before the House of Representatives’ Ways and Means Committee.<sup>208</sup> Gompers is an outlier from the émigré group on gold and tariffs: he backed the likes of the pro-silver Populist Party in the early 1890s, and always worked hard to maintain high tariffs which could protect workers. But Gompers considered the Populists only a lesser evil than other parties, worked to maintain the AFL’s political independence at all times, and said that after the political campaigns, “when the blare of trumpets has died away, and the ‘spell-binders’ have received their

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<sup>204</sup> William M. Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin: A Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), 195.

<sup>205</sup> Letter to John Hay, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 59, AC Papers, LOC.

<sup>206</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin: A Biography*, 127-128.

<sup>207</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 190.

<sup>208</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 331-333 and 703-704.

rewards, the American Federation of Labor will still be found plodding along, doing noble battle in the struggle for the uplifting of the toiling masses.” And in all economic issues he fought for the individual worker against the depredations of corporations and trusts, a principle that, on a level higher than practical policy, was right in line with his fellow émigrés and their focus on the individual.<sup>209</sup>

The three elder émigrés were also in lockstep on civil service reform. Schurz instituted many reformist measures while he was Secretary of the Interior under Hayes, and was the President of the National Civil Service Reform League from 1892 until 1901, giving the issue as much or more attention as he gave anti-imperialism.<sup>210</sup> Godkin’s *Nation* opined that civil service reform would bring the country’s everyday affairs back under the control of the “intelligent and virtuous.”<sup>211</sup> And Carnegie was a proponent of meritocracy above all else, happy to see measures like the Pendleton Act made law.

All four men believed in some form of racial superiority or inferiority, and it was a part of their opposition to imperialism. Schurz’s racism was rooted in a belief that tropical climates degraded peoples, leading him to defend African-Americans as worthy of every right given white Americans, yet believe that inviting “the Malays and Tagals of the Philippines to participation in the conduct of our government is so

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<sup>209</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 150-151.

<sup>210</sup> *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, ed. Frederic Bancroft. Volume 5, 340.

<sup>211</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin: A Biography*, 122.

alarming that you instinctively pause before taking the step.”<sup>212</sup> Godkin’s elitism drove him to resent any group, whether it was immigrants, the lower classes, or “Asiatics” of the Philippines, if it seemed to fail to achieve what he viewed as sufficient culture and class.<sup>213</sup> Gompers embraced racism as an essential part of his economic argument, saying there was no way to “prevent the Chinese coolies from going to the Philippines and from there swarming into the United States engulfing our people and our civilization,” an opinion on the subject that was in line with the views of most of the AFL’s membership.<sup>214</sup> For his part Carnegie was more likely to celebrate Anglo-American culture than denigrate “colored” races, but still believed that “the pride of race” was key to America’s sense of self, “latent, indeed, in quiet times, but decisively shown in supreme moments when stirred by great issues which affect the safety of the old home and involve the race. The strongest sentiment in man, the real motive which at the crisis determines his action in international affairs is racial. Upon this tree grow the one language, one religion, one literature, and one law which bind them together, and make them brothers in time of need as against me of other races.”<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> From Schurz’s speech “The Issue of Imperialism”. Cited in Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” 327.

<sup>213</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 65.

<sup>214</sup> Speech at the Chicago Peace Jubilee, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 28. Also Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 204-205.

<sup>215</sup> Letter to Swire Smith, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898. V. 49, AC Papers, LOC.

These particular racisms of the émigrés were in line with many other anti-imperialists (with a few exceptions<sup>216</sup>). The issue, in its time, was viewed as a decision whether to take peoples who were their nature burdensome and inferior into the American body politic. The imperialists demanded that America take on the Kipling-phrased “White Man’s Burden”, the task of civilizing and Christianizing far-off peoples, while Godkin spoke for the émigrés and many other anti-imperialists when his *Nation* wondered “why the Filipinos have not the right to try to govern themselves as well as any other people. If they fail we consider it no concern of ours, any more than to accelerate their progress towards civilization and self-government.”<sup>217</sup>

Part of the émigrés’ lack of desire to Christianize the natives of the Philippines came from their own religious backgrounds. None of them strictly adhered to any religious creed more complicated than a general spirituality. Schurz’s family was not a part of the rigid Catholicism of their village of Liblar, and Carl’s interest in Christianity was never particularly strong.<sup>218</sup> Godkin was an avowed skeptic from his young adulthood on, critical of organized religion throughout his life, and blamed little of what

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<sup>216</sup> Massachusetts Senator George Frisbie Hoar, a prominent anti-imperialist who otherwise generally supported mainline Republican policy: “The Indian problem is not chiefly how to teach the Indian to be less savage in his treatment of the Saxon, but the Saxon to be less savage in his treatment of the Indian. ... The negro question will be settled when the education of the white man is complete.” Hoar spoke well of Aguinaldo and the Filipinos and called for Filipino sovereignty on many occasions, despite the accusations by his opponents of treason that followed. From Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 160.

<sup>217</sup> *The Nation*, LXVIII (October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1898), 309. Cited in Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” 330.

<sup>218</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 7-8.

happened in the world on the supernatural, once wryly commenting that New York City's problems were "owing to the bad conduct of certain men, and owing to nothing else under heaven."<sup>219</sup> Carnegie's family disliked the strict Calvinism of Scottish Presbyterianism and exposed him instead to the spiritualistic Swedenborgians, and Carnegie liked how, as he wrote to Dod in August 1853, " 'doing of a thing' because our grandfathers did it...is not an 'American Institution.'"<sup>220</sup> Gompers was raised Jewish, never closely followed the faith, and later in life worked with freethinkers like Robert Ingersoll, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and W. E. B. DuBois to establish what they called the "Society for Human Progress" in 1892. For Gompers, secularism was key to the eventual liberation of labor.<sup>221</sup> The émigrés were not swayed by the Christianity-based arguments for imperialism, and so while many imperialists spoke of a Destiny made Manifest by God's will which they were Duty-bound to carry out, and attributed the ease of Dewey's victory at Manila to Divine Providence, the émigrés maintained a rationalist view of the war and of annexation as simple conquest.

The émigrés all opposed the kind of militarism that demanded conquering far-off lands, and were all at least uneasy with warfare in general. Godkin was just as heartbroken by the Boer War as by the Spanish-American War, saw the war with Spain as an entirely cynical land grab, and railed against every single American expansion scheme of the

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<sup>219</sup> Armstrong, *E. L. Godkin: A Biography*, 12 and 94.

<sup>220</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 48-51.

<sup>221</sup> Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, 10.

previous quarter century.<sup>222</sup> Gompers viewed any militarism, especially the kind that led the country to pointlessly and bloodily expand itself, as encouraging “the pernicious notion that the strong may properly exploit the weak, and be used to furnish the luxuries for an oligarchy.”<sup>223</sup> Schurz was the only one of the émigrés who had seen combat, as a “Forty-Eighter” from the Revolutions of 1848 in Germany, and as a Union Army Major General who fought with valor at Chancellorsville in the Civil War. Those, however, were wars that Schurz believed to be necessary for the promotion of individual liberties, whereas he saw a massive Mahanist fleet and far-flung island possessions as unnecessary, militaristic extravagances, beneath the dignity of a republic, especially one so advantageously situated in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>224</sup> And Carnegie’s ideals were nonviolent ones: notwithstanding his willingness to rely on government support in violent strikebreaking, Carnegie was against the government’s violent subjugation of foreign peoples.<sup>225</sup> Prussia, and less so Britain, had entrenched, class-based military establishments throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Because they experienced such militaristic social orders firsthand, in their former countries, the émigrés were horrified by the stirrings of similarly militaristic ideas among the jingoes of America.

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<sup>222</sup> Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, 71.

<sup>223</sup> Address to the National Conference on the Foreign Policy of the United States, at Saratoga, New York, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898. From Gompers, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, ed. Kaufman, Albert, and Palladino, V. 5, 10.

<sup>224</sup> Trefousse, *Carl Schurz*, 131-144. Also Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood*, 20-31.

<sup>225</sup> Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 421-425.

The Anti-Imperialist League was made up of a wide array of oppositional groups and political philosophies. This lack of unity was key to its failure to prevent Philippine annexation. Yet the émigré anti-imperialists were of a single, cohesive worldview and politics. The roots varied, depending on the particulars of the émigré's European origins and distinguished career in American life. Overall, though, Godkin, Schurz, Carnegie and Gompers emerge from the fractured jumble of the failed anti-imperialist cause as a clear and libertarian unit of opposition to Philippine annexation.

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