DEFINING MOMENTS
THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

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Omnigraphics

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

BIOGRAPHIES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Chapter Six

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IN THE NEW CENTURY

We come as ministering angels, not despots.

—Senator Knute Nelson, 1899

When the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, the Spanish-American War came to a close. The whole affair had been humiliating for Spain, which in the space of eight months had lost colonies in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the U.S. military. With the signing of the peace agreement, though, the Spaniards could at least begin the process of recovering from the many economic, political, and societal injuries it had suffered in the conflict. Most Americans, meanwhile, saw the Treaty of Paris as cause for celebration. The document symbolized their nation's arrival as a global power, and when it was submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification, most observers expected it to sail through for approval.

Congress Debates the Future of the Philippines

Storm clouds of uncertainty quickly cast a shadow over the Senate's deliberations, however. On December 21 President McKinley issued a "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation" regarding America's role in the Philippines. McKinley's statement insisted that the United States intended to treat the Filipino people kindly and with respect. But it also approved the use of military force to preserve U.S. rule over the islands.

The proclamation showed that the McKinley administration already regarded the Philippines as U.S. territory. In essence, the Americans had decided that

the Philippines' value as an economic and military asset was so great that the United States should add it to its territorial possessions. This stance was angrily denounced by Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the Filipino rebels who had fought to push Spain out of the islands and obtain self-rule. Aguinaldo claimed that his insurgents were prepared to take up arms against the Americans, just as they had done against the Spanish, if they denied Filipinos their independence. "Upon their heads be all the blood which may be shed," he warned.[1]

When the Senate commenced debate on the treaty in January 1899, the anger voiced by Aguinaldo and many other Filipinos was seized on by Americans who opposed the United States' absorption of the Philippines. American Federation of Labor (AFL) President Samuel Gompers predicted that "if we annex the Philippines, we shall have to conquer the Filipinos by force of arms, and thereby deny to them what we claim to ourselves—the right to self-government."[2] Other anti-imperialists objected to annexation on moral grounds, charging that using superior military and economic power to control foreign peoples was an evil practice. The issue, insisted Republican Senator George Frisbie Hoar, was "whether Congress may conquer and may govern, without their consent and against their will, a foreign nation [with] a separate, distinct, and numerous people."[3]

Other opponents charged that the Constitution did not grant the government powers of annexation, thus making the Treaty of Paris an illegal document. Racism also accounted for some of the anti-ratification push; a number of senators disliked the idea of adding millions of dark-skinned "primitives" from the Philippines and Cuba to the American empire. Finally, some Democrats in the Senate knew that rejection of the treaty would be a humiliating political blow to McKinley, a Republican they hoped to turn out of the White House in the 1900 elections.

Supporters of the treaty expressed great frustration about this opposition. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge declared that if the Senate rejected the treaty, America would be "branded as a people incapable of taking rank as one of the greatest world powers!"[4] Republican Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana spoke for many supporters when he framed American rule over the Philippines as a divine mission from God (See "A U.S. Senator Claims 'The Philippines Are Ours Forever,'" p. 198). He proclaimed that "we will move forward to our work … with gratitude for a task worthy of our strength and thanksgiving to Almighty God that He has marked us as His chosen people, henceforth to lead in the regeneration of the world." Beveridge also empha-

sized the economic benefits of possessing the Philippines, which sat on the doorstep of the vast markets of China and other Asian nations. "Most future wars will be conflicts for commerce," he said. "The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world. And, with the Philippines, that power is and will forever be the American Republic."[5]

Finally, Beveridge and Lodge and their allies insisted that American-style colonial rule over foreign peoples would be different from the European colonialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They felt that the "essential American character," as historian Evan Thomas wrote, was "better—somehow more decent—than that of other nations.… America would be different, more moral, less likely to be seduced by the temptations of conquest and booty … it would uplift rather than beat down."[6]

Senator Albert Beveridge ranked among the leading imperialists in Washington.

An Outburst of Bloodshed Saves the Treaty

As the ratification debate continued, it began to look as if opponents—who only needed to keep thirty-five senators from voting *for* the treaty—might succeed (the U.S. Constitution requires the Senate to approve, by a two-thirds margin, any treaty made by the executive branch for it to take effect; since there were ninety senators in 1899, passage would require fifty-six votes). On February 4, 1899, though—only two days before the scheduled vote—a bloody firefight erupted in tension-filled Manila between American soldiers and Aguinaldo's forces.

When Spain had been deposed as ruler of the Philippines, Aguinaldo had in January 1899 engineered the creation of a new government—the Philippine Republic—with himself at its head. But American authorities in Washington and the Philippine capital of Manila refused to recognize the new

government. Moreover, Aguinaldo and other Filipino rebels who had fought against the Spanish for years were being treated with contempt by most U.S. administrators and soldiers. Commodore George Dewey, the commander of American naval forces in the Asian theatre, was an exception to this rule; he respected Aguinaldo and the loyalty he inspired among his men. But the U.S. military governor of the Philippines, Wesley Merritt, treated the Filipino leader as a nuisance who did not deserve any say in the governance of the archipelago. Merritt's troops, meanwhile, took to referring to their Filipino counterparts as "niggers," a hate-filled expression that American soldiers imported from their homeland.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge declared that if the Senate rejected the Treaty of Paris, America would be "branded as a people incapable of taking rank as one of the greatest world powers!"

The spark for the February 4 clash between U.S. troops and Aguinaldo's rebels remains hazy. Whatever the cause, though, the sudden spasm of violence resulted in 238 U.S. casualties, including 44 dead American soldiers. When McKinley was informed of this development via telegraph, he predicted that the loss of American lives at the hands of Filipino rebels would make it much more difficult for senators to vote against the Treaty of Paris. "How foolish these [rebels] are," he said in amazement. "This means the ratification of the treaty; the [American] people will insist on its ratification."[7]

McKinley's forecast came true two days later. Eager to show the world (and American voters) that the United States would not be bullied by Aguinaldo and his insurgents, the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris with fifty-seven votes, one more than was necessary for passage. Twenty-seven senators voted against the treaty, and another six did not post a vote one way or the other. According to historians, at least three senators who had intended to vote against the treaty switched their positions after the flare-up of violence in Manila.

Over in Spain, meanwhile, the Spanish parliament in Madrid failed to find enough votes to ratify the Treaty of Paris. However, Spain's national constitution included a provision that gave the Queen-Regent, Maria Christina, the power to override parliament and approve the treaty herself. She took advantage of this authority to sign the treaty on March 19, 1899.

After the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris, Aguinaldo and his 50,000-man army vowed to hound the American "imperialists" out of the

The Platt Amendment

The so-called Platt Amendment, which was agreed to by the governments of the United States and Cuba on May 22, 1903, gave Americans significant authority over the political affairs of the island nation. Many of the provisions in the amendment angered and disappointed the Cuban people. The one that was most vexing to them, however, was Article III, which gave the United States the power to intervene in Cuba whenever it pleased. This controversial provision, which became the basis for U.S. intervention in Cuba on four different occasions (in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920) is reprinted below:

> "III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba."

Philippines. They charged that the Americans were no better than the Spanish who had ruled the Philippines with an iron fist for so many decades (See "Emilio Aguinaldo Protests the American Occupation of the Philippines," p. 196). As 1899 wore on, however, it became clear that the Filipino rebels were no match for the Americans in conventional warfare. The U.S. Army in Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines and home to the capital, had more troops, deadlier weaponry, and better supplies than Aguinaldo's forces. In addition, Dewey's mighty fleet of warships patrolled the region's waters. By the end of 1899, Filipino rebels had switched to a strategy of "guerrilla fighting"—quick-strike ambushes, sniper attacks, and acts of sabotage that would not allow the Americans to bring their superior military resources to bear.

Puerto Rico and Cuba Chafe under the American Flag

With ratification finally accomplished, the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, and the Philippines joined Hawaii as new territories of America (Hawaii had become a U.S. territory one year earlier). But the

native responses to U.S. rule varied dramatically. The 10,000 or so native residents of Guam, known as Chamorro, generally accepted life as part of the American empire. The island became an important base for the U.S. Navy, and a succession of American governors engineered improvements in education, public health, and agriculture.

American rule over Puerto Rico got off to a difficult start when the already impoverished island was battered by two hurricanes. But the United States used its military resources as a relief corps to help the natives recover, and before long the Americans were instituting important educational and public health services and economic reforms that improved the quality of life for many residents. In 1900 the U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act, which established a civil government on the island to replace U.S. military rule. The legislation, however, empowered the president of the United States to appoint the governor and one of the island's two legislative chambers (representatives in the legislature's other body were elected by Puerto Ricans). In 1901 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down several decisions establishing that Puerto Ricans were not American citizens, and thus not protected by the U.S. Constitution. These rulings were a great disappointment to Puerto Ricans who had hoped for more control over their own affairs. They felt like a forgotten people with no realistic path forward to secure either independence or statehood. "We are Mr. Nobody from Nowhere,"[8] mourned one Puerto Rican legislator.

Tensions in Cuba ran even higher. Back in April 1898 Congress had passed—and McKinley had signed—the Teller Amendment. This act promised that the United States had no intentions of colonizing or otherwise exerting long-term control over Cuba. Instead, it promised to help the Cubans establish a new government for themselves, then leave them to their own affairs. But once the United States pushed Spain out of Cuba, the island's military and economic value got American officials thinking about a strategy for maintaining control over the island.

From the very outset, American lawmakers, military leaders, and business interests were determined to keep Cuban rebels from taking positions of influence in the new government. The McKinley administration told American military administrators that they should instead rely on Cuban officials who had worked under the Spanish. "Given the need to avoid governmental chaos, the decision was understandable," according to historian Warren Zimmerman, "but it made the Cubans wonder why the Americans had come at all."[9]

Veteran "Rough Rider" Leonard Wood served as the military governor of Cuba from 1899 to 1902.

Cuban anxiety about American "nation-building" plans further intensified in early 1899, when U.S. military commanders in Cuba forced the rebels to disband their army. The Americans wanted to make certain that formation of a new government and the construction of infrastructure improvements, including schools and hospitals, could proceed without the threat of an armed revolt. This demand prompted disbelief and anger from many Cubans. But possible bloodshed was avoided when General Máximo Gómez, the immensely popular commander of the rebels, agreed to disband his army in exchange for $3 million. This money was distributed to his soldiers, many of whom were in desperate need of funds to provide food, shelter, and clothing for their families. "We must recognize that the only power today in Cuba is the power of those who have intervened," explained Gómez in a meeting with some of his most trusted lieutenants. "For the present, thoughts of a Cuban independent government can be no more than a dream."[10]

Over the next few years social and economic conditions in Cuba stabilized under the military governorship of General Leonard Wood, Theodore Roosevelt's old friend and fellow veteran of the 1898 assault on Santiago. A weak Cuban government crafted by Wood and policymakers in Washington also began to take shape. The United States, however, continued to keep most political power in the hands of its military or with Cuban business interests who could be trusted to cooperate closely with the Americans.

In March 1901 the American shadow over Cuba further darkened with Congressional passage of the Platt Amendment. This legislation, to which Cuba reluctantly consented in 1903, essentially gave the United States the right to veto any treaty or other agreement made by the Cuban authorities if they did not like it. The legislation also mandated that the government of Cuba lease large tracts of land to the U.S. military, including land for a naval base at Guantanamo Bay. In short, the Platt Amendment gave the United

States the legal right to intervene in Cuban affairs whenever it pleased. The law outraged many Cubans, for as Wood himself admitted in a private letter to Roosevelt, "there is, of course, little or no independence left in Cuba after the Platt Amendment."[11] The Cubans, however, were powerless to do anything about it.

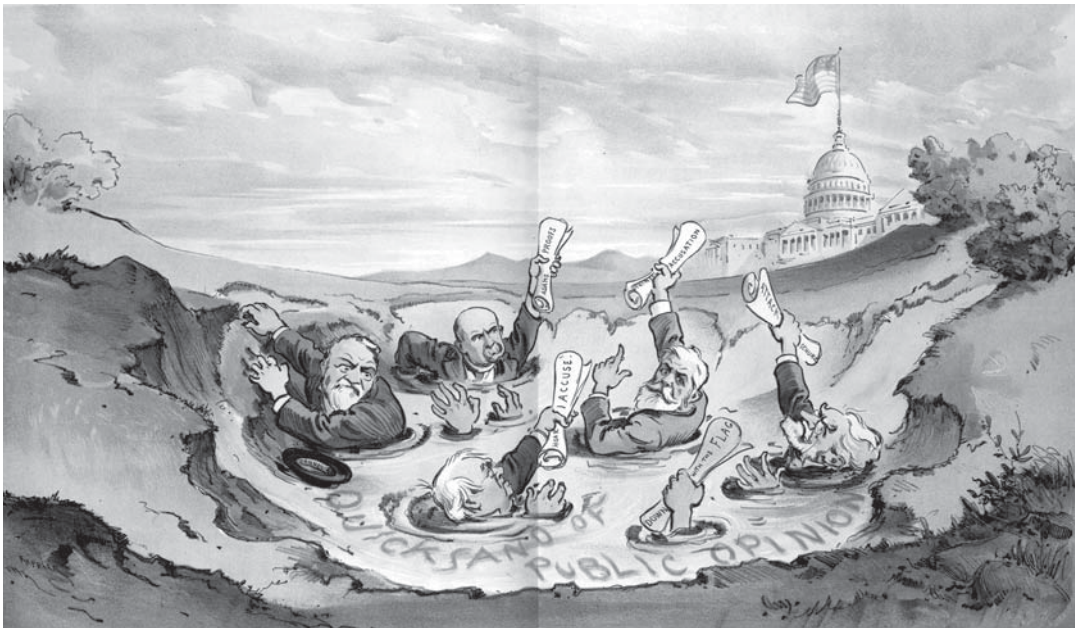
The Anti-Imperialist League

Tensions in Cuba and Puerto Rico contributed to a resurgence of anti-imperialist sentiment in the United States. An even bigger factor, though, was the rising death toll in the Philippines. After the Treaty of Paris had been ratified in February 1899, many Americans who had opposed U.S. annexation of the Philippines had acknowledged defeat and quieted down. But the deteriorating conditions on Luzon and several other Philippine islands prodded many anti-imperialists to speak up once again.

The most influential anti-imperialists were associated with the Boston-based Anti-Imperialist League. Founded in November 1899, the League attracted prominent members and supporters from the worlds of politics (including former Republican President Benjamin Harrison, former Democratic President Grover Cleveland, Democratic presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan); literature and journalism (Carl Schurz, Mark Twain, William James, Finley Peter Dunne); and business (labor leader Samuel Gompers and industrialist Andrew Carnegie).

Most of these men and women (the League also included a few prominent female social reformers like Jane Addams) had opposed annexation of the Philippines from the beginning. Now, with newspaper headlines screaming about the bloody Philippines on a daily basis, they once again urged lawmakers in Washington to reconsider their annexation of the islands. "We earnestly condemn the policy of the present National Administration in the Philippines," stated the League in its official platform. "It seeks to extinguish the spirit of 1776 in those islands. We deplore the sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, whose bravery deserves admiration even in an unjust war. We denounce the slaughter of the Filipinos as a needless horror. We protest against this extension of American sovereignty by Spanish methods."[12]

Many critics of U.S. policy in the Philippines used strong language to express themselves. But as 1899 came to a close and the so-called Philippine-American War (known to Filipinos as the Philippine War of Independence)



Prominent anti-imperialists struggled to generate public support for their position, as shown in this 1902 cartoon depicting anti-imperialists George F. Hoar, Carl Schurz, Edward Atkinson, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and Andrew Carnegie drowning in the "Quicksand of Public Opinion."

spilled into the new century, no anti-imperialist attacked American actions in the Pacific with the venom of Mark Twain. Writing in the *North American Review,* the famous author of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and other literary classics asserted: "We forced a war, and we have been hunting America's guest and ally through the woods and swamps ever since.... We have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world"[13] (See "Mark Twain Condemns American Actions in the Philippines," p. 202).

A Vicious and Ugly War

In 1900 and 1901 the war in the Philippines between American troops and Filipino rebels became progressively more brutal. Both sides adopted ruthless methods to extinguish the enemy, including the torture of prisoners and the mutilation of the bodies of slain soldiers. Stories of kidnapping and murder of civilians or unarmed soldiers were also commonplace. As the war dragged on, frustrated American forces also began pushing Filipino civilians out of the rural countryside and into heavily guarded camps. Before long,

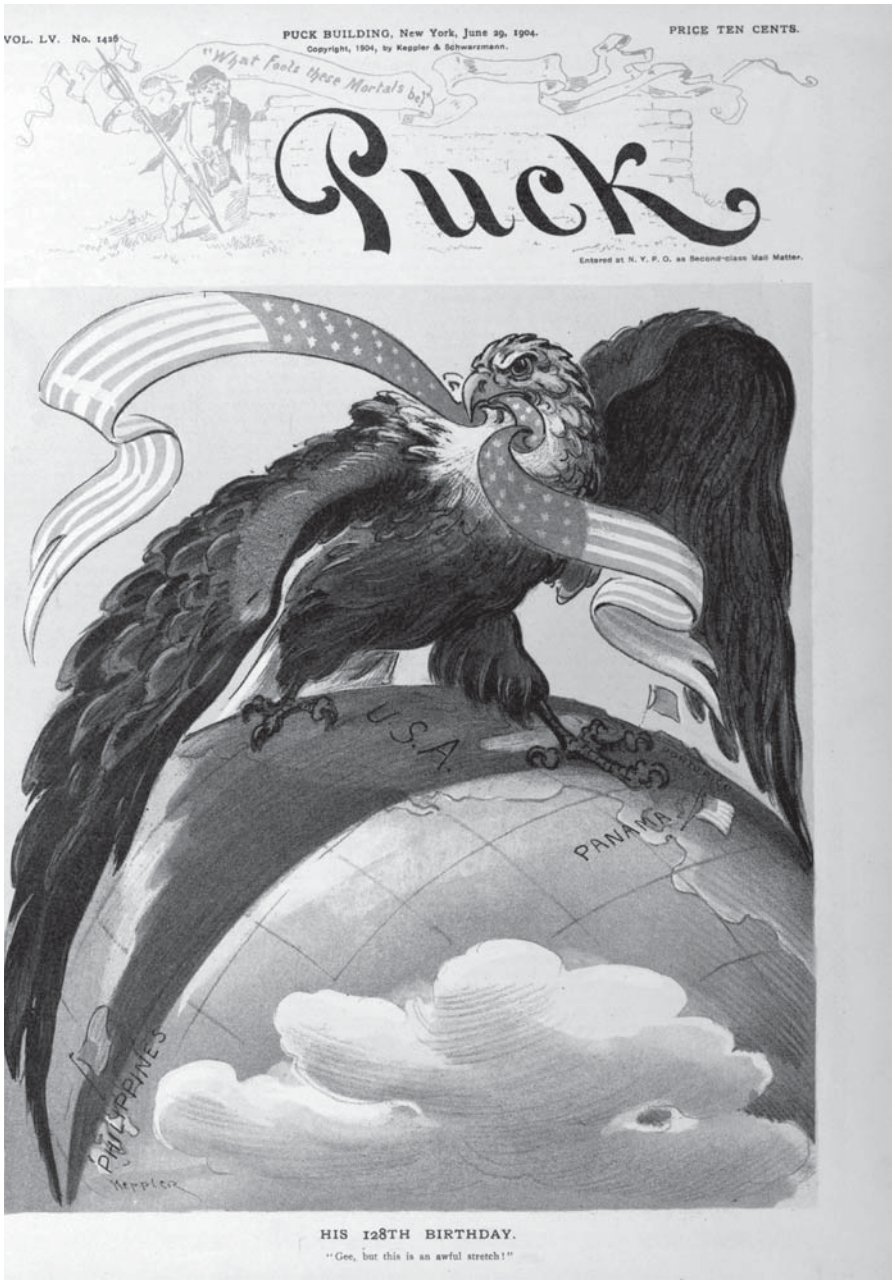
food shortages and communicable diseases were claiming the lives of numerous men, women, and children in the camps.

The concentration camp policy was designed to make it easier for American troops to identify rebels, who would no longer be able to depend on villagers for food, shelter, or other aid. When anti-imperialists back in America heard about the wretched conditions in the camps, however, they said that the policy was frighteningly similar to the much-criticized *reconcentrado* policies that Spain had imposed in Cuba in the late 1890s. "The worst thing about war is that it has practically to be fought on the basis of the most uncivilized and soon gets to be a mere matter of hatred," sighed Republican Thomas Reed in a private letter written in 1902. Reed, who had been a strong anti-imperialist throughout his years as speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (1889-1891, 1895-1899), added that "[the Filipinos] were only a short time ago our wards to whom we owed sacred duties, duties we could not abandon in the face of a censorious world without soiling our Christian faith. Now they are 'niggers' who must be punished for defending themselves. This is the history of the world with perhaps a stronger dash of hypocrisy than usual to soothe our feelings."[14]

By 1901 much of the violence in the Philippines was being generated by soldiers who were thirsty for revenge. Each time one side would lose men in an ambush, hear of an incident of torture, or find the mutilated body of a comrade, it would strike back with even greater viciousness. The other camp would then respond in kind, and the cycle of horror and death would deepen.

One of the most famous examples of this pattern of retribution took place on Samar Island. After Filipino rebels ambushed and killed 59 American soldiers and mutilated some of the bodies, U.S. General Jacob Smith instituted a campaign of terror against the island's entire Filipino populace. He assured the men under his command that they did not need to distinguish between rebels and innocent civilians. As one subordinate later testified, Smith stated that "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better it will please me."[15] Smith also told his troops that any Filipino over the age of nine should be shot.

Reports of military atrocities and squalid camp conditions gradually filtered back to the United States, where they were widely publicized in anti-imperialist newspapers and periodicals. But the ugliness of the war was also documented in other newspapers and magazines, and the negative publicity became a growing source of concern to Theodore Roosevelt, America's new president.



A 1904 cover illustration from *Puck* magazine shows the American eagle astride the globe, with its wings extending from "Porto Rico" and "Panama" on the right to the "Philippines" on the left.

As president, Theodore Roosevelt moved aggressively to expand U.S. power and influence around the world.

Roosevelt's journey from Cuba's San Juan Heights to the White House had unfolded with meteoric speed. After returning home from Cuba in mid-1898, Roosevelt had promptly won the governorship of New York later that same year. Two years later, he had been selected to serve as McKinley's vice presidential running mate, and in the November 1900 election American voters approved another four-year term for McKinley. On September 6, 1901, however, McKinley was shot by an assassin in Buffalo, New York. When McKinley died of his wounds eight days later, Roosevelt was sworn in as the nation's twenty-sixth president.

As president, Roosevelt argued that reports of atrocities and acts of torture committed by American troops in the Philippines were overblown. He insisted that American torture techniques like the "water cure," a practice in which water is poured in the faces of bound prisoners so they feel as if they are drowning, were not that bad (this practice, originally developed by the Spanish, is known today as waterboarding). Roosevelt also stated that, for the most part, American soldiers in the Philippines had conducted themselves honorably. He acknowledged isolated "instances of wrongdoing," but insisted that the U.S. military usually acted with "kind-heartedness and humanity."[16]

Roosevelt's reassurances did not defuse the controversy, however. By January 1902 the U.S. Senate felt obligated to hold hearings on the U.S. Army's conduct of the war. These hearings embarrassed the Roosevelt administration but did not force any major changes in Philippine policy. In addition, the U.S. army investigated several officers and soldiers accused of atrocities. Smith, for example, was court-martialed and convicted in May 1902 for his actions on Samar Island. But many other U.S. troops who committed acts of murder or torture were acquitted of charges by military judges who ruled that they

were just following orders. In addition, several high-ranking officers who carried out or approved brutal acts in the Philippines actually received promotions. Three notorious figures—General Samuel B. M. Young, General J. Franklin Bell, and General Adna Chaffee—even served as U.S. Army chief of staff during various periods of the Roosevelt administration.[17]

The Taft Commission

Amid all this bloodshed and upheaval, the United States labored to establish an effective system of civil government in the Philippines. The effort was spearheaded by the Second Philippine Commission, which had been created by McKinley in March 1900. The commission was widely known as the Taft Commission in recognition of its chairman, William Howard Taft, a respected U.S. judge.

Taft's task was made much easier by the fact that he wielded a great deal of authority in Manila. Not only did he head the Philippine Commission through 1903, he also served as governor-general of the Philippines from 1901 to 1904. These dual responsibilities enabled him to craft policies and impose new regulations without interference. From late 1900 through August 1902, Taft and his fellow commission members introduced nearly 500 new laws governing everything from property ownership and taxation to law-and-order issues. The commission also reformed and updated the corrupt judicial system, purchased land from the Vatican and distributed it to Filipino farmers, opened English-language public schools, implemented badly needed public health measures, and established a Filipino police force. In addition, Taft supervised the drafting of rules of governance for the Philippines. This document did not promise independence for Filipinos, but it did guarantee many civil rights that the Spanish had withheld from the natives. Many of these nation-building reforms were welcomed by the civilian population, and they drained away some of the popular support for Aguinaldo's rebels. (The success of these efforts also boosted Taft's political career; in 1904 Roosevelt appointed him to serve as Secretary of War, and four years later Taft won the Republican presidential nomination and defeated William Jennings Bryan to succeed Roosevelt in the White House.)

An even greater blow to the Philippine insurgency came on March 23, 1901, when Aguinaldo was captured by U.S. troops led by Colonel Frederick Funston. The American authorities treated the rebel leader more like an hon-

ored guest than a prisoner of war, however, and this flattery apparently had its desired effect. On April 1 Aguinaldo issued a statement swearing allegiance to the United States and renouncing any interest in establishing or supporting a revolutionary government in the Philippine Islands. For the rest of his life, however, Aguinaldo always wore a black bow tie in public appearances as a symbol of grief for lost Philippine independence.

By early 1902 the rebel forces were clearly in retreat on Luzon and the other islands where the fighting was centered. On July 4, 1902, Roosevelt declared that the war was over, and that the United States had once again emerged victorious. This proclamation was a little premature, for fighting continued to flare up from time to time for the rest of the decade. More than 4,500 American soldiers lost their lives during the war from bullets or disease, while an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Filipino rebels were killed. Tens of thousands more Filipinos also died of disease in the *reconcentrado* camps.

As time passed, however, the U.S.-sponsored civilian government gained confidence and legitimacy, and the rebel threat faded. In 1907 the United States established a national legislature in the Philippines that was the first of its kind in Asia, and in 1916 America formally pledged to give the Filipinos their freedom "as soon as a stable government can be established."

Roosevelt Puts His Stamp on the World

With the suppression of the Filipino rebellion, America's arrival as a global power was confirmed. This status was a source of tremendous pride to imperialists like Roosevelt, who ever since the mid-1890s had been preaching to his fellow Americans about the need to expand the military capabilities and territorial reach of the United States. By the close of 1902, Roosevelt could survey a map of the world and see new U.S. possessions spread on either side of America's vast continental mass.

In the Caribbean waters of the southern Atlantic, the Spanish-American War had gained the United States outright ownership of Puerto Rico and virtual possession of Cuba. In the Pacific Ocean, meanwhile, the United States had cobbled together a necklace of islands that stretched westward from California to the Asian mainland. The crown jewels in this necklace were Hawaii and the Philippines, but other islands included Guam, the uninhabited islands of Midway Atoll (acquired in 1867) and Wake Island (1899), and the eastern half of the Samoan Islands (1899). Together, these territories gave

Cargo ships passing through the Panama Canal around 1920.

American businesses great new trade opportunities. In addition, they provided the fast-growing U.S. Navy with refueling stations and bases all around the world—a fact that Roosevelt did his best to publicize in December 1907, when he sent a "Great White Fleet" of sixteen state-of-the-art American battleships on a worldwide tour.

Roosevelt was not satisfied with this state of affairs, however. The expansion of America's navy and the growth of its territorial holdings also led to a renewal of U.S. interest in building a canal across Central America that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. If such a canal existed, American warships, trade vessels, and passenger liners would no longer have to make the long and arduous journey around the southern tip of South America to travel

from one ocean into the next. They could simply pass through the canal and shave weeks off their travel time.

In 1902 Roosevelt and the U.S. Congress agreed that the best place for the canal was Panama, a province within the nation of Colombia. Roosevelt ordered Secretary of State John Hay to negotiate the purchase of a canal "zone" across Panama, where the isthmus connecting North and South America was less than 50 miles wide at some points. When the Colombian government balked at Hay's terms, however, the Roosevelt administration encouraged and aided a revolt by Panama against Colombian rule. With America's military might behind them, the Panamanian rebels quickly secured their independence.

In November 1903 the United States officially recognized the new nation of Panama. Panamanian leaders responded by agreeing to virtually the same canal treaty that Colombia had rejected. The treaty was then approved by the U.S. Senate on February 23, 1904, by a decisive 66-14 vote. Canal construction began in 1904 under the direction of Colonel William C. Gorgas and Colonel George W. Goethals. Using more than 43,000 laborers, they slowly carved a 40-mile-long canal out of the jungle. In 1914 they finally completed their work, unveiling a waterway that linked the Atlantic port city of Colón with Balboa on the Pacific side of the isthmus. The canal was opened to commercial traffic in 1920.

As predicted by Roosevelt and many others, the Panama Canal proved to be a huge military and commercial asset for the United States. But the existence of the canal also led the country to become much more entangled in the affairs of Latin American nations, most of whom had previously attracted little attention from Washington. This came as no surprise to many of the turn-of-the-century politicians who had argued for—and against—expansionism. "The inevitable effect of our building the Canal must be to require us to police the surrounding premises," cautioned Elihu Root, Roosevelt's pro-imperialist secretary of state, in 1905. "In the nature of things, trade and control, and the obligation to keep order which go with them, must come our way."[18]

Notes

[1] Quoted in Brands, H.W. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 49.

[2] Quoted in Bender, Stephen. "Recalling the Anti-Imperialist League," *Antiwar.com,* January 13, 2005. Available online at http://www.antiwar.com/orig/bender.php?articleid=4335.

[3] Quoted in Zimmerman, Warren. *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002, p. 344.
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[8] Quoted in Zimmerman, p. 370.
[9] Zimmerman, p. 371.
[10] Quoted in Foner, Philip S. *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, Vol. 2: 1898-1902.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972, p. 439.
[11] Quoted in Thomas, p. 394.
[12] "Platform Adopted by Anti-Imperialists," *Timely Topics* 4, no. 8, October 27, 1899, pp. 118-19.
[13] Twain, Mark. "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," *North American Review,* February 1901.
[14] Quoted in Thomas, p. 393.
[15] Quoted in Zimmerman, p. 408.
[16] Roosevelt, Theodore. Message Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Fifty-Seventh Congress, December 2, 1902. *Addresses and Presidential Messages of Theodore Roosevelt, 1902-1904.* New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1904, p. 363.
[17] Miller, Stuart Creighton. *"Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 253-60.
[18] Quoted in Jessup, Philip C. *Elihu Root.* 2 vols. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1938, vol. 1, p. 471.

José Martí (1853-1895)
Cuban Revolutionary Leader and Writer

José Julián Martí y Pérez was born on January 28, 1853, in Havana, Cuba. His parents, Mariano Martí and Leonor Pérez, were poor Spanish immigrants. In 1865 Martí enrolled in classes at the Havana Municipal Boys School. Over the next few years he became a strong advocate of Cuban independence from Spanish rule. He rejoiced when the revolution that became known as the Ten Years' War began in 1868. In January 1869 the fifteen-year-old even published an illegal newspaper, *La Patria Libre* (*Free Homeland*), that called for Cuban independence. Martí only published one edition of the newspaper, but it still landed him in serious trouble with Spanish colonial authorities. On October 21 Martí was arrested on charges of treason. His legal troubles worsened when a police investigation turned up a letter written by Martí that denounced a pro-Spanish classmate. On March 4, 1870, he was sentenced to six years of hard labor in a prison quarry for disloyalty to Spain.

Revolutionary in Exile

In late 1870 Martí's parents managed to convince Spanish officials to change their son's sentence. Instead of years of hard labor, he would instead be exiled from Cuba. In 1871 Martí went to Spain, where he took classes at Madrid's Central University and Zaragoza's Literary University. In 1874 he obtained a bachelor's degree in law and a doctorate in philosophy and humanities. Throughout this time, however, Martí also remained politically active. He regularly published essays attacking various aspects of Spain's rule over Cuba.

Martí spent the next few years in Mexico, but in 1878 the Spanish administrators in Cuba agreed to allow exiles to return to the island. This decision, which was part of a wider agreement that ended the Ten Years' War, prompted Martí to return to Cuba later that year. Upon settling in Havana, Martí threw himself into a wide array of activities. He worked as a teacher

and professor, composed enduring works of poetry, philosophy, and political propaganda, and had his only child (a son, José Francisco) with Carmen Zayas Bazán, whom he had married in 1877.

In 1879 Spanish administrators deported Martí once again for his political writings, which continued to demand freedom for Cuba. He was sent to Spain, but soon after his arrival he secured passage on a ship bound for the United States. Within days of his arrival in New York City in January 1880, he was installed in a leadership position on the Cuban Revolutionary Committee, a group of Cuban exiles dedicated to ending Spanish rule of their homeland. Martí spent most of the next fourteen years in New York, though he occasionally traveled to various Latin American countries.

During the course of the 1880s Martí delivered essays and reports on American life for a wide range of Latin American newspapers. He also continued to publish a wide range of fiction and poetry. But his most passionate writing focused on building support for a Cuban revolution that would remove Spain from the island once and for all. "Let us build an unquenchable love of country without which no man, good or bad, can live happily," he declared in an 1891 speech to Cuban exiles in Tampa, Florida. "There [Cuba] is, calling to us. We can hear her moan; she is being raped and mocked and turned gangrenous before our eyes. Our dearest mother is being corrupted and torn into pieces! So let us rise up at once with a final burst of heartfelt energy.… Let us rise up for the true Republic, those of us who, with our passion for right and our habit of hard work, will know how to preserve it."[1] These sentiments, which Martí repeated again and again in his essays and speeches, inspired many Cubans to join the revolutionary cause.

Martí also worked with Cuban revolutionary generals such as Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez to enlist support for the revolution from Cuban immigrants living in the United States. Under Martí's direction, a vibrant *Cuba Libre* ("free Cuba") movement took hold in New York City and parts of Florida where Cuban exiles had gathered. This movement became a key source of money for Maceo and Gómez, who needed guns and other supplies for the rebel army they were organizing back in Cuba.

A Martyr to the Cause

In April 1892 Martí founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which promoted the cause of Cuban independence and established basic rules and

statutes for an independent Cuban government. Over the next few years he met and corresponded regularly with Gómez to craft all aspects of a general uprising against Cuba's Spanish rulers. By early 1895 the preparations were complete, and on January 29 Martí gave formal approval for the uprising to begin.

Martí had intended to participate in the revolt from its very outset. His first effort to return to Cuba was thwarted, however. American authorities seized his ship, which was loaded with military supplies, shortly after it set sail from Fernandina, Florida. Undaunted by this setback, he took another boat to Santa Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, where he was reunited with Gómez on February 7. On March 25 Gómez and Martí signed the Manifesto of Montecristi. This document was a message to the Cuban people, outlining the goals of the Cuban liberation movement and the policies of the Cuban Revolutionary Party.

On April 9 Martí and a small group of rebels set out for Cuba by boat. When they arrived two days later, Martí promptly took up a rifle and joined the insurgent army that he had played such a major role in creating. On May 19, however, Martí was fatally wounded at Dos Rios in his first fight against enemy troops.

The death of Martí greatly saddened the Cuban rebels, but it did not cause them to question their path. Instead they dedicated their fight to his memory. Martí became the Cuban revolutionary movement's greatest martyr, and he has occupied that place ever since. Today, more than a century after his death, he is regarded by the Cuban people as the country's greatest patriot. His writings about independence and national pride are also treasured by other Latin American peoples who endured periods of colonial rule.

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Notes

[1] Martí, José. "With All, for the Good of All." In *José Martí Reader: Writings on the Americas.* Edited by Deborah Schnookal and Mirta Muniz. New York: Ocean Press, 2002, p. 155.

Theodore Roosevelt Recalls the Battle for the San Juan Heights

Of all the Americans who fought in Cuba in the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt was by far the most famous. By the time he set foot on Cuban soil, America's future twenty-sixth president had already become a national political figure. As assistant secretary of the Navy in the McKinley administration, Roosevelt had been one of the nation's most vocal advocates for U.S. intervention in Cuba. When it became clear that war between the United States and Spain was approaching, Roosevelt resigned that post in order to organize a volunteer cavalry regiment, known as the Rough Riders, for the war.

Roosevelt was in the thick of much of the fighting that took place in Cuba in the summer of 1898. His exploits during the conflict became well-known to Americans back home thanks to the glowing news stories of numerous journalists who had been sent to cover the war. A few years later, Roosevelt's image as a fearless warrior and leader was further burnished by his autobiography, which devoted many pages to the invasion of Cuba (an excerpt is featured here). For the rest of his life, Roosevelt described the battle for the San Juan Heights as his "crowded hour." This statement was a reference to a claim made by the famous Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott that "one crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name."

The instant I received the order I sprang on my horse and then my "crowded hour" began. The guerrillas had been shooting at us from the edges of the jungle and from their perches in the leafy trees, and as they used smokeless powder, it was almost impossible to see them, though a few of my men had from time to time responded.… I formed my men in column of troops, each troop extended in open skirmishing order, the right resting on the wire fences which bordered the sunken lane. Captain Jenkins led the first squadron, his eyes literally dancing with joyous excitement.…

I had intended to go into action on foot as at Las Guasimas, but the heat was so oppressive that I found I should be quite unable to run up and down the line and superintend matters unless I was mounted; and, moreover, when on horseback, I could see the men better and they could see me better.…

I spoke to the captain in command of the rear platoons, saying that I had been ordered to support the regulars in the attack upon the [San Juan] hills, and that in my judgment we could not take these hills by firing at them, and that we must rush them. He answered that his orders were to keep his men lying where they were, and that he could not charge without orders. I asked where the Colonel was, and as he was not in sight, said, "Then I am the rank-

ing officer here and I give the order to charge"—for I did not want to keep the men longer in the open suffering under a fire which they could not effectively return. Naturally the Captain hesitated to obey this order when no word had been received from his own Colonel. So I said, "Then let my men through, sir," and rode on through the lines, followed by the grinning Rough Riders, whose attention had been completely taken off the Spanish bullets, partly by my dialogue with the regulars, and partly by the language I had been using to themselves as I got the lines forward, for I had been joking with some and swearing at others, as the exigencies of the case seemed to demand. When we started to go through, however, it proved too much for the regulars, and they jumped up and came along, their officers and troops mingling with mine, all being delighted at the chance.…

Out of my sight, over on the right, Captains McBlain and Taylor, of the Ninth, made up their minds independently to charge at just about this time; and at almost the same moment Colonels Carroll and Hamilton, who were off, I believe, to my left, where we could see neither them nor their men, gave the order to advance. But of all this I knew nothing at the time. The whole line, tired of waiting, and eager to close with the enemy, was straining to go forward; and it seems that different parts slipped the leash at almost the same moment. The First Cavalry came up the hill just behind, and partly mixed with my regiment and the Ninth. As already said, portions of the Third, Sixth, and Tenth followed, while the rest of the members of these three regiments kept more in touch with the infantry on our left.…

Wheeling around, I then again galloped toward the hill passing the shouting, cheering, firing men, and went up the lane, splashing through a small stream; … Being on horseback I was, of course, able to get ahead of the men on foot, excepting my orderly, Henry Bardshar, who had run ahead very fast in order to get better shots at the Spaniards.… Sergeant Campbell and a number of the Arizona men, and Dudley Dean, among others, were very close behind.… Some forty yards from the top I ran into a wire fence and jumped off [my horse] Little Texas, turning him loose. He had been scraped by a couple of bullets.…

Almost immediately afterward the hill was covered by the troops, both Rough Riders and the colored troopers of the Ninth, and some men of the First.… No sooner were we on the crest than the Spaniards from the line of hills on our front, where they were strongly intrenched, opened a very heavy fire upon us with their rifles. They also opened upon us with one or two

pieces of artillery, using time fuses which burned very accurately, the shells exploding right over our heads.

Over the top of the hill was a huge iron kettle, or something of the kind, probably used for sugar refining. Several of our men took shelter behind this. We had a splendid view of the charge on the San Juan block-house to our left, where the infantry of Kent, led by Hawkins, were climbing the hill. Obviously the proper thing to do was to help them, and I got the men together and started them volley-firing against the Spaniards in the San Juan block-house and in the trenches around it.…

We kept up a brisk fire for some five or ten minutes; meanwhile we were much cut up ourselves. Gallant Colonel Hamilton, than whom there was never a braver man, was killed, and equally gallant Colonel Carroll wounded. When near the summit Captain Mills had been shot through the head, the bullet destroying the sight of one eye permanently and of the other temporarily. He would not go back or let any man assist him, sitting down where he was and waiting until one of the men brought him word that the hill was stormed. Colonel Veile planted the standard [flag] of the First Cavalry on the hill, and General Sumner rode up. He was fighting his division in great form, and was always himself in the thick of the fire.…

Suddenly, above the cracking of the carbines, rose a peculiar drumming sound, and some of the men cried, "The Spanish machine-guns!" Listening, I made out that it came from the flat ground to the left, and jumped to my feet, smiting my hand on my thigh, and shouting with exultation. "It's the Gatlings, men, our Gatlings!" Lieutenant Parker was bringing his four Gatlings into action, and shoving them nearer and nearer the front. Now and then the drumming ceased for a moment; then it would resound again, always closer to San Juan hill, which Parker, like ourselves, was hammering to assist the infantry attack. Our men cheered lustily.…

The infantry got nearer and nearer the crest of the hill. At last we could see the Spaniards running from the rifle-pits as the Americans came on in their final rush. Then I stopped my men for fear that they should injure their comrades, and called to them to charge the next line of trenches, on the hills in our front, from which we had been undergoing a good deal of punishment.… [but] they did not hear, or did not heed me; and after running about a hundred yards I found I had only five men along with me. Bullets were ripping the grass all around us, and one of the men, Clay Green, was mortally

wounded.… I went back and brought up the rest of the brigade.… The men of the various regiments which were already on the hill came with a rush, and we started across the wide valley which lay between us and the Spanish intrenchments.… Long before we got near them the Spaniards ran, save a few here and there, who either surrendered or were shot down. When we reached the trenches we found them filled with dead bodies in the light blue and white uniform of the Spanish regular army. There were very few wounded. Most of the fallen had little holes in their heads from which their brains were oozing; for they were covered from the neck down by the trenches.…

It was at this place that Major Wessels, of the Third Cavalry, was shot in the back of the head. It was a severe wound, but after having it bound up he again came to the front in command of his regiment.… Lieutenant Davis's first sergeant, Clarence Gould, killed a Spanish soldier with his revolver, just as the Spaniard was aiming at one of my Rough Riders. At about the same time, I also shot one. I was with Henry Bardshar, running up at the double, and two Spaniards leaped from the trenches and fired at us, not ten yards away. As they turned to run I closed in and fired twice, missing the first and killing the second. My revolver was from the sunken battle-ship *Maine*, and had been given me by my brother-in-law, Captain W.S. Cowles, of the Navy. At the time I did not know of Gould's exploit, and supposed my feat to be unique; and although Gould had killed his Spaniard in the trenches, not very far from me, I never learned of it until weeks later. It is astonishing what a limited field of vision and experience one has in the hurly-burly of a battle.

There was very great confusion at this time, the different regiments being completely intermingled—white regulars, colored regulars, and Rough Riders. General Sumner had kept a considerable force in reserve on Kettle Hill, under Major Jackson, of the Third Cavalry. We were still under a heavy fire and I got together a mixed lot of men and pushed on from the trenches and ranch-houses which we had just taken, driving the Spaniards through a line of palm-trees, and over the crest of a chain of hills. When we reached these crests we found ourselves overlooking Santiago.…

Source

Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Rough Riders*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902, pp. 131-46.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE, PLACES, AND TERMS

Aguinaldo, Emilio (1869-1964)
Filipino rebel leader and politician who led independence movements against both Spain and the United States.

Annexation
Attaching new territory to an existing country and exerting control over its affairs.

Anti-Imperialism
Opposition to the idea that a nation should increase its power through military conquest of other territories or by gaining control of the political and economic systems of other territories.

Armistice
A temporary cease-fire or truce between opposing armies.

Colonialism
A situation in which one nation claims ownership over another territory or region and establishes control over its political, cultural, and economic affairs.

Conquistadores
Spanish and Portuguese soldiers who brought large parts of North and South America under the control of Spain and Portugal, mostly in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Dewey, George (1837-1917)
American naval officer who commanded U.S. forces in the decisive 1898 victory over Spanish warships in Manila Bay.

CHRONOLOGY

1492

While engaged on a mission for Spain, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus "discovers" the New World when he reaches the Bahamas. During this same voyage Columbus claims Cuba for the Spanish Empire.

1493

Columbus reaches Puerto Rico and claims it for Spain.

1521

Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan voyages to the Philippine Islands and claims them as Spanish territory.

1783

The United States and Great Britain sign the Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War.

1803

The United States agrees to the Louisiana Purchase with France; this transaction doubles the territory of America.

1808

French armies under Napoleon invade Spain, spurring a flurry of independence movements by Spanish colonies in the West.

1819

American diplomats negotiate the purchase of Florida from Spain.

1821

Mexico gains its independence when it signs the Treaty of Córdoba with Spain.

1823

President James Monroe announces an aggressive foreign policy philosophy that comes to be known as the Monroe Doctrine.

1836

Texas declares its independence from Mexico.

SOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Cuban Battlefields of the Spanish-Cuban-American War. Available online at http://cubanbattlefields.unl.edu/. This interactive website provides insights into the battles that took place between Spanish forces and American troops and Cuban insurgents. Features of special interest include color photographs of many of the battle sites as they now appear, as well as maps that use the latest satellite technology.

Peréz, Louis A. *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy.* 3d ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003. Written by a distinguished scholar of Cuban history, this work examines the tangled relationship that has existed between Cuba and the United States since the mid-nineteenth century.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Rough Riders.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902. This is the original publication, but many other editions of this famous autobiography are also available. In this enthusiastic first-hand account of the main land battles in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898, Roosevelt's energy, patriotism, and staunch pro-imperialist beliefs are all on vivid display.

Thomas, Evan. *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898.* New York: Little, Brown, 2010. This fast-paced and absorbing book paints a dark picture of the nationalistic beliefs and racial attitudes of Theodore Roosevelt and his political allies in the years before, during, and after the Spanish-American War.

Zwick, Jim, ed. *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992. This collection of Twain's essays on U.S. action in the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century is given important and interesting historical and biographical context by the editor, one of America's leading Twain scholars.

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INDEX