

# THE PHILIPPINE PROBLEM

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## *To the Editors of The Outlook:*

In *The Outlook* for August 12 is a kindly review of my volume on "Imperial Democracy," at the close of which is this paragraph referring to the Philippines:

Dr. Jordan invites the friends of annexation to "develop some plan of government, any plan whatever, and its folly and ineffectiveness will speedily appear." The answer is—Cuba; and we invite Dr. Jordan to tell our readers in our columns wherein is the folly or the ineffectiveness of what General Wood is doing in Santiago and General Wilson in Matanzas to establish a just, honorable, and efficient government.

Their work is in substance to remove iniquity, oppression, and filth; to secure native co-operation in wise management; and in general to show "by an object-lesson what American civilization means," before redeeming our express pledges by finally submitting "to such of the people as have property . . . the question of whether they wish to be a part of America and under its sovereignty or not."

All this we may accept as a fair statement of our Cuban policy, though we may stumble a little at *The Outlook's* limitation of the voice of the people to "those who have property." Surely it is Cuba as an independent, self-governing commonwealth which has the right to be consulted, not its individual property-holders. Moreover, the people of the United States have rights to be considered in the admission of alien people to participation in our government. But the implication of *The Outlook* that we are actually following the same policy in Luzon as in Cuba is startling in its audacity or its innocence.

The censorship in Manila is very close, to be sure, and the New York press is practically insulated from any real knowledge of what is going on there; still,

allowing for all that, surely no one maintains that what we have done in Cuba is what we have tried to do at Manila. A friend who has seen both, having been with Roosevelt and Lawton, uses these words: "Wood's government is not in the same world with Otis's."

No one seriously criticises the management of affairs in Cuba, although warning voices have been raised as to its obvious dangers. The methods employed there cannot be made permanent, as affairs must sooner or later fall into the people's hands, and a long continuance of martial law weakens and exasperates a people. Moreover, military rule may become irresponsible and therefore corrupt. It may hide behind a censorship because it has something to conceal; and, finally, the maintenance of an army beyond our borders is a costly sort of altruism which no people will continuously approve without a selfish motive; and such a motive must in time destroy its helpfulness. We regret that our purpose in Cuba has not been more exactly defined, for a concealed purpose is usually an evil one. Still, as yet we have done nothing of importance there which we should wish to see undone.

According to the personal testimony of returned officers, the same wise policy was pursued at Manila by Dewey. The native people were treated with kindness and consideration, and their help was sought in the removal of abuses. Every promise to them was kept, and their needs constituted the visible reason for our presence in their territory. All this changed in the two weeks in which General Merritt was at the head of affairs. The native people were ignored and snubbed, their laws and customs treated with contempt, their leader beset with slanderous charges,

their property wasted without redress, and the so-called "rebellion" made inevitable.

It was then that Dewey called for a "statesman" to bring about rational relations. He received a Commission without power to act, of whose futile operations the public knows nothing.

Meanwhile we have claimed sovereignty over these islands by virtue of the purchase of Spain's forfeited title. We have refused to answer the questions of their people, or to recognize them as a factor in their own destiny. Officers whose word in this matter cannot be questioned have declared in public and in private that the methods followed in Cuba would have averted war, whatever the final decision as to "annexation" might be. That this is true no one acquainted with the facts can doubt. The "imperialistic" talk at home, and, above all, the refusal of the Administration to give any assurance or explanation of our policy or purposes, raised this to open war. As with all other race wars, this struggle has been accompanied by a carnival of lust, pillage, and murder. "In Manila we are not the same Americans that we are at home." The responsibility for the conditions at Manila may be divided between our haughtiness and our cowardice, with side references to our cant and our greed. It is mere childishness to ascribe it to anybody's "treason," or to the ambition of Aguinaldo, who, by the way, is in many regards our American Dreyfus. After he is disposed of, we shall be in a position to cast stones at France. Not a word to his discredit has come from any trustworthy source.

The sole way to an honorable peace must lie in efforts to place justice before victory. Our National policy, whatever it is, must be clearly stated, and to this end the sooner Congress is called upon to define it, the better for the country as well as for the Administration. For this the "expansionists" should be as eager as any one else. No Administration that dare not open its books can stand before the American people. These islands can never be held by mere force of arms, and our title from Spain is not worth the paper it soils.

The San Francisco "Chronicle," the leading Administration journal of California, prints the following editorial, typi-

cal of the popular feeling on this coast at least:

#### OUR DUTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

The regret that Congress did not act last winter in the matter of giving self-government to the Philippines, thus ending the strain between the Americans and natives and preventing the war, will be deepened by the latest news from the Tagal legislature. That body, as it is now reported, has made a formal reply to the offer of autonomy, refusing it, yet admitting that it might have been accepted but for the high-handed methods of the Americans and their race prejudice, which created fear as to the future. If the report is true, it recalls the public mind to the news of pillage, loot, and "nigger-driving" which filtered out all last winter in soldiers' letters and which prompted the fear that the troops had so deeply embittered the Filipinos that nothing could be done with them. All that sort of thing, usually inseparable from wars between races, might have been averted if Congress had been prompt to act. It was consciousness of this which led Admiral Dewey to cable Washington soon after General Merritt arrived at Manila to the effect that the services of a statesman were preferable there to those of a soldier.

Assuming that we want the Philippines to become a part of the United States, it is all-important that the natives should be conciliated—not driven hither and yon by bayonets and given a hundred new graveyards to mourn over. We are aware that when war is on it must be fought out; but why let war go on if there is any way to establish peace with honor? We may win victories, but every victory leaves its legacy of hatred; we may conquer populations, but the latter do not thereby become good citizens. The one thing to seek is a basis of mutual understanding, and that, we believe, is still within the power of Congress to reach.

Why not try, before another bullet is fired, a plain offer of territorial autonomy and the withdrawal, after it has been effected, of every soldier not needed to man the Federal forts? Why not give the Tagals a constitution to peruse rather than vague promises to ponder over? That would go a long way further toward peace than anything of military preparation, from dynamite guns to the employment among our troops of Indian savages. Touching the latter point, it seems as if the Government, in its negotiations with the Chippewas and Nez Percés, had forgotten the indictment brought against George III. in the Declaration of Independence, namely:

He has excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

It is well to ponder the grievance here presented, and to consider, in its light and in the light of other phrases in the same immortal document, whether, unless the Philippine policy is radically changed, we can ever hope to content the islanders with the authority of

this Government.—[San Francisco "Chronicle," September 16, 1899.]

The Outlook will find on page 66 of "Imperial Democracy" these words, written last February, and not idle words, for they were based on statements made in private by honored officers of Dewey's fleet:

A little courtesy, a little tact, on the part of those in power would have spared us from it all. These men have not led a forlorn fight against Spain for all these years to be tamely snubbed and shoved aside as rebels at the end. If the President had assured Aguinaldo that his people would not be absorbed against their will, there would have been peace at Manila. If he had assured the people of the United States that no vassal lands would be annexed against their will, there would be peace at Washington. The President has no right to assume in speech or act that the United States proposes to prove false to her pledges or false to her own history.

Let us, then, try to do in Manila what we have actually done in Cuba, and it may even yet be not too late for an honorable issue. So far as conquest is concerned, we have not gained one step since we began. Nor does the present direction of our "strenuous life" give any prospect of final victory within the lifetime of the present Administration. The statement that only a single faction of the Filipinos is engaged in the war is simple folly. Their wrongs and losses beget the feeling of nationality. The fact that "we are in it and cannot back out" is the only argument I now hear in favor of our conquest of Luzon. As to this, Mr. Thomas B. Reed is reported as saying: "I have always observed that with individuals the fear of humiliation is exactly in proportion as they deserve it; it is the same with a nation."

It is true that our volunteer soldiers almost to a man are against annexation. The best element among them, which is the majority, are opposed to a war of "nigger-killing." It is no wonder that it is reported that "the officials at Manila do not hesitate to declare that a great load is lifted from their shoulders by the departure of the volunteers." Another great load was lifted by the departure of Dewey; and when that officer sees fit to speak, we shall witness a revulsion of feeling which The Outlook cannot escape and which no political party will dare to resist.

The Outlook notes that my volume con-

tains certain inconsistencies of opinion. In reprinting these papers I preferred not to alter words once spoken. It will be observed that nearly a year of stirring times intervenes between the first and the last of the addresses. In this year many perspectives have been shifted, and most of us have learned something. As for myself, I undervalued the Filipinos, judging them from what I knew of the Cubans. As a single example, I believed the falsehood that Aguinaldo and his men were preparing to sack Manila. Perhaps, too, I overrated the ability of our own people to see their acts in the light of history.

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#### *To the Editors of The Outlook:*

I read with great interest your editorial "Let Him Crown the Work," which advises the sending of Dewey to Manila to take general charge of our affairs in the Philippines. I doubt the truth of your statement that there is a decadence of the anti-imperialist feeling. I find many who were strongly in favor of our war for Cuban independence as strongly opposed to our war for Filipino subjugation. The feeling "if 'twere done, when 'tis done, would it were done quickly," cannot be counted to all who hold it for imperialist righteousness. It means, in many cases, if we have got to fight it out on this line, the sharper the attack the better, if haply so we may the sooner enter on that path of generous helpfulness which President Schurman anticipates in his programme, which assumes the *status quo* as irreversible.

I think you are bound to take cognizance of the fact that our present attitude towards the Monroe Doctrine does not impress everybody as it impresses you. Quite the contrary. You will, I think agree with me that those who are most contemptuous of the Monroe Doctrine now are the same people who were all on fire with it in the Venezuelan muddle. Has there been any serious change of opinion? or has the imperialist thrown over the Monroe Doctrine simply because it does not suit his purposes? And, whatever the merits of that doctrine, does it not show a lamentable lack of intellectual seriousness that so many who hailed it as the corner-stone of the Republic a few years ago now spit upon it and despise it