
Should the United States Have Annexed the Philippines?

EV



Overview: In 1898 the United States successfully fought a short war with Spain. One of the results of the war was that several Spanish colonies fell into American hands. Two of these were Cuba and the Philippine Islands. The United States made it quite clear that it would not keep Cuba. But what of the Philippines? Americans at the time were uncertain what to do. In this Mini-Q you are asked the question: Should the United States have annexed the Philippines?

The Documents:

Document A: Anti-Imperialist League

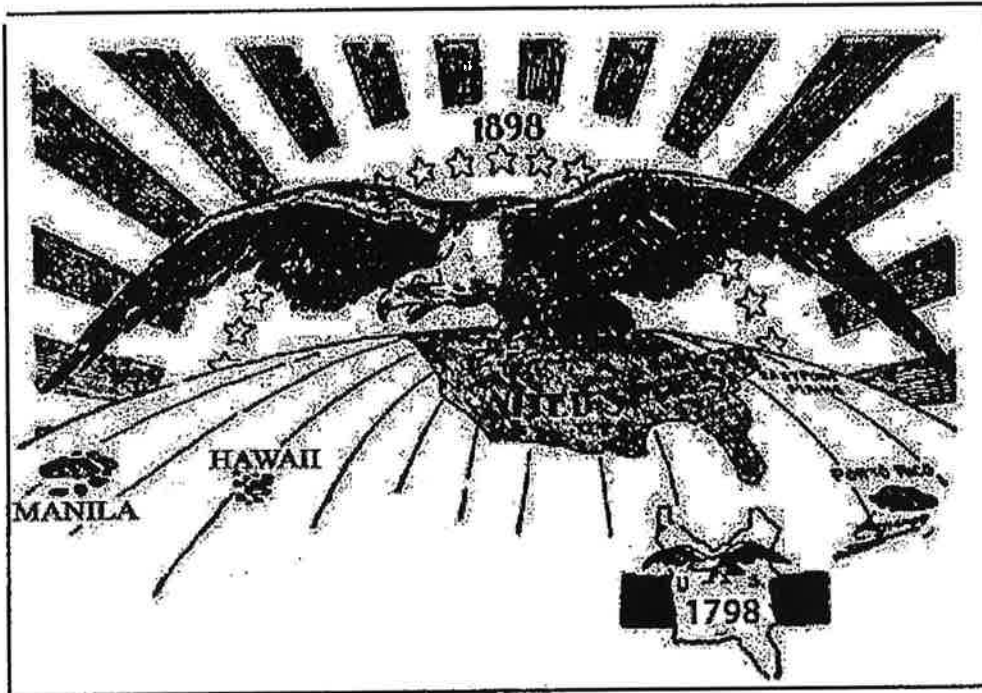
Document B: Albert J. Beveridge: "The March of the Flag"

Document C: President William McKinley

Document D: William Jennings Bryan

Hook Exercise: Philippine Annexation

Directions: Look carefully at the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.



Ten thousand miles from tip to tip. – Philadelphia Press, 1898

Note: Notice the image of the smaller United States 100 years earlier in 1798.

Questions

1. What is the date of the cartoon?
2. Manila is a city. It is the capital of what Asian country?
3. What does the eagle appear to be staring at?
4. What does the bald eagle represent?
5. How could you use the cartoon to support American imperialism?
6. How could you use the cartoon to criticize American imperialism?

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Should the United States Have Annexed the Philippines?

In the spring and summer of 1898 the United States went to war with Spain. In the hills of Cuba and on the waters of the Philippines, the Americans were victorious. The announced reason for the war was the bad treatment of the Cuban people by their Spanish masters. There was, of course, more to the story, but the quick victory left most Americans proud and excited. The United States had suddenly become a major world power.

But what should America do with these newly acquired islands? In the next few years Cuba was granted a kind of semi-independence. The Philippine Islands were another matter. Located across the Pacific Ocean, some 7,000 miles from Washington DC, many Americans, including President McKinley, had trouble finding the Philippines on a map. After the destruction of the Spanish fleet by Admiral George Dewey in Manila Bay, 11,000 American sailors and soldiers marched into Manila. It was not clear whether they had come to **liberate** or **occupy** the Filipino people.

Filipino **insurgents** had been fighting for independence against the Spanish for several years. These Filipinos believed that the Americans were coming to liberate. Their general, Emilio Aguinaldo, expected to march into Manila hand-in-hand with the US troops. When the Americans would not allow this, Aguinaldo felt betrayed.

In October 1898 a conference was held in Paris to write a peace treaty. Because America had won the war with Spain, America held most of the cards. The US had three choices regarding the Philippines – hand the islands back to Spain, give the Philippines its independence, or **annex**

the Philippines under some kind of American government. The United States decided that it would annex.

A treaty was hammered out and signed. On February 6, 1899, it went before the US Senate for ratification. Needing a two-thirds majority, the treaty passed by one vote. The decision by the US to annex the Philippines was not popular



with the insurgents in Manila. Aguinaldo and his men now turned their guns on the Americans.

Back home, some Americans were equally unhappy. **Anti-imperialists** like Andrew Carnegie, ex-President Grover Cleveland, and author Mark Twain spoke out strongly against the decision. They feared taking the Philippines was a step towards creating an American empire. Others, led by President William McKinley and war hero Teddy Roosevelt, argued strongly that the US had no choice but to annex.

Now for your task. The date is February 7, 1899, the day after the Senate vote to annex. You are a member of that Senate and want your ideas to be on record. Examine the four documents that follow as well as the cartoon in the Hook Exercise. Prepare a short speech to be delivered on the Senate floor in which you address the question: *Should the United States have annexed the Philippines?*

Background Essay Questions

1. Who won the Spanish-American War and in what year was it fought?
2. Who was Aguinaldo and what was his expectation when the Americans defeated the Spanish in Manila Bay?
3. What evidence is there in the Background Essay that a majority of Americans supported the decision to annex the Philippines?
4. Name two Americans who opposed annexation.
5. Name two Americans who supported annexation.
6. Define or explain each of these terms:
 - liberate
 - occupy
 - insurgent
 - annex
 - anti-imperialist

Timeline

- 1886** – Statue of Liberty is dedicated in New York City.
- 1896** – US participates in first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.
- 1898** – Spanish-American War
- 1898** – US marches into Manila, Philippines.
- 1901** – Filipino revolt ends.
- 1903** – US seizes land from Columbia to build Panama Canal.

Document A

Source: Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League, October 1899.

Note: A platform is a series of positions or beliefs supported by a group or political party.

We earnestly condemn the policy of the present national administration in the Philippines. 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 the extension of American sovereignty by Spanish methods....

We hold with Abraham Lincoln, that "no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government – that is despotism [rule by a tyrant]."

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Document Analysis

1. Generally speaking, what does an anti-imperialist believe?
2. This platform fears that the American governors in the Philippines want to get rid of "the spirit of 1776" in the islands. What does this mean?
3. Does the Anti-Imperialist League believe Abraham Lincoln would have supported the annexation of the Philippines? Explain.
4. How does this document help you answer the question, "Should the United States have annexed the Philippines?"

Document B

Source: Albert J. Beveridge, "The March of the Flag." Campaign speech while running for US Senate in Indiana, September 16, 1898.

The opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, The rule ... that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent.... Would not the people of the Philippines prefer the just, human, civilizing government of this Republic to the savage, bloody [Spanish] rule ... from which we have rescued them?

... [D]o we owe no duty to the world? Shall we turn these peoples back to the reeking hands from which we have taken them? Shall we abandon them, with Germany, England, Japan hungering for them?...

Wonderfully has God guided us.... We can not retreat from any soil where Providence has unfurled our banner; it is ours to save ... for liberty and civilization.

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Document Analysis

1. What does Albert Beveridge say about governing people without their approval?
2. Beveridge says America should not give back the Philippines to "the reeking hands from which we have taken them." What are "reeking hands" and whose hands were they?
3. According to Beveridge, if we let the Philippines go, who will gobble them up?
4. What is Providence, and, according to Beveridge, what does Providence have to do with America and the Philippines? (Hint: When Providence is capitalized it has a special meaning.)

Document D

Source: William Jennings Bryan, speech, "Paralyzing Influence of Imperialism," August 8, 1900.

Note: In 1900 Bryan was the Democratic Party's candidate for President and gave this speech at the Democratic National Convention. He ran against William McKinley, the Republican candidate.

What is our title to the Philippine Islands?... When we made allies of the Filipinos and armed them to fight against Spain, we disputed Spain's title.... There can be no doubt that ... we had full knowledge that they were fighting for their own independence....

Some argue that American rule in the Philippine Islands will result in the better education of the Filipinos. Be not deceived.... [We] dare not educate them lest they learn to read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and mock us for our inconsistency.

... [A] war of conquest is as unwise as it is unrighteous.... It is not necessary to own people in order to trade with them....

Imperialism finds no warrant in the Bible. The command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," has no Gatling gun attachment....

Note: The Gatling gun was an early rapid-fire machine gun.

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Document Analysis

1. What is William Jennings Bryan's general position on annexing the Philippines?
2. Why does Bryan say "we dare not educate" the Filipinos?
3. Some Americans argued that it was necessary to take colonies in order to get rich. How does Bryan answer this?
4. What does Bryan mean when he says there is "no Gatling gun attachment" to preaching the Bible?

PART 1.

HOW WILL YOU ENGAGE THE STUDENTS?

This energizer contributes to setting the “culture” of the classroom while also connecting the main concepts of lesson plan to the students prior experiences, knowledge, and interests.

STEP 1

Go around the room and ask the students: What is one word that describes hard work? Create a brainstorm on the board.

STEP 2

Ask if any students are currently employed and if so, ask how many hours a week they work and how much they are making. Are they earning minimum wage? Do they receive any benefits? How do they feel about their work conditions? Do they know their rights as workers under federal, state, and local laws? Are they or their parents members of labor unions?

[HARD WORK]

The objective will be for each student to gain an understanding of what “hard work” was like for the Filipino immigrants who worked the fields in California. After all the students have participated, you should ask: How do you think we measure the value of work? What makes work dignified, skilled, and professional?

PART 2. [CRITICAL CONCEPTS] HOW WILL YOU PRESENT THE CRITICAL CONCEPTS TO THE STUDENTS?

STEP 1

Use images that represent the following concepts:

LABOR-try to show multiple ways that people work
UNION
STRIKE
ACTIVISM

STEP 2

Have the students react to each image and write a sentence about what they see in the image. Have them share what some of responses are with the whole class.

STEP 3

Create a slidedeck of the critical concepts and either go over them prior to doing the community collaboration activity (the next section will explain the activity) or after.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS TO COVER IN A LECTURE

- Capitalism context: Under capitalism, agribusiness and industry have used cheap labor to make enormous profits by exploiting hardworking, skilled Filipinas/os and workers from other countries throughout the last century and into the 21st, by paying them poor wages and forcing them to work in horrible conditions.
- Farm work is hard work: Farm work is back-breaking and difficult, but it was work that Filipinas/os and other groups did with great skill, efficiency, pride, and dignity. It was their labor that created incredible wealth for the state of California in the 20th century and even to this day. There is nothing wrong with jobs that entail hard work, as long as the workers are laboring in the best conditions, are well paid and receive benefits, and can collectively bargain for their wages and working conditions through unions.
- Role of the unions: Unions and other forms of organized labor were integral in ensuring fair wages and working conditions.
- Fair wages and working conditions: Fair wages and working conditions are basic human rights that every worker deserves.
- Right to organize: The right of workers to collectively organize and demand fair wages and working conditions through labor unions was important to Filipina/o workers throughout the 20th century. Filipinas/os were key to the farmworker's movements of the last century

PART 3.
[COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION AND
CULTURAL PRODUCTION]
HOW WILL THE STUDENTS
LEARN THE MAIN
CONCEPTS WHILE ALSO
LEARNING TO CREATE
COMMUNITY IN THEIR
CLASSROOM AND
PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL
PRODUCTION?

STEP 1

After the cultural energizer, have everyone put away all the tables and chairs and ask everyone to stand up. Instruct them to stand in rows and tell them that they are not allowed to touch each other.

STEP 2

Begin the "Dignified, Degraded, and Determined" activity. Have the students count off 1 through 5:

Everyone who called the number "1" will be the Portuguese, Italian, German, and Japanese foremen

Everyone who called the number "2" will be in the Mexican camp

Everyone who called the number "3" will be in the Japanese camp

Everyone who called the number "4" will be in the Ilocano camp

Everyone who called the number "5" will be in the Visayan camp

STEP 3

Let the students know that there are three phases to the activity:

Dignified Labor

Degradation and Exploitation

Determined Activism

Give each group different scenarios for each phase of the activity. They will each be given handouts with their scenarios as the activity progresses.

STEP 4 **DIGNIFIED** **LABOR PHASE**

The object of this phase is to pick up as much garbage on the ground and place them in a small basket. Bring the students outside. In PEP, we have the students help the school through this exercise by picking up garbage in the football field. If this is not possible, you can put a bunch of paper on the floor in the classroom or in a courtyard and have the students pick up the paper.

Prior to having the students pick up the paper, give them the following pre-assigned roles. Only give them their role. Use group descriptions on the next page.

[DIGNIFIED, DEGRADED, & DETERMINED]

Students will be doing an exercise that has them pick up garbage (we have had the PEP students help pick up garbage on the football field) or pieces of paper that are strategically placed. They will be given roles and scenarios that are similar to those in Filipina/o farm labor history.

Materials Needed

Big area (ideally outside)

pieces of crumbled paper

garbage bags

[LABOR GROUPS]

GROUP 1

This group must determine how much garbage should be picked up and how much to pay the workers (by the piece or by the hour). They must also tell the workers what time to start, what time to stop, when to take breaks, when to go to the bathroom, when to break for lunch, and even what to eat for lunch. They must also decide how each group will be treated in general.

GROUP 2

This group does their assigned work very quickly and efficiently. This group learns from other groups how to do the work very quickly and efficiently but when they find out how they will get paid, they adjust their pace. For example, if they are paid by the hour, they slow down a bit. If they are paid by the piece, they are extremely quick. They are very good at their work and feel a sense of pride when it is finished.

GROUP 3

This group does their assigned work a little slower, because they are much older than other workers (in their 40s, 50s, and 60s). They are very good at their work and feel a sense of pride when it is finished.

GROUP 4

This group learns from other groups how to do the work very quickly and efficiently but when they find out how they will get paid, they adjust their pace. For example, if they are paid by the hour, they slow down a bit. If they are paid by the piece, they are extremely quick. They are very good at their work and feel a sense of pride when it is finished.

GROUP 5

This group learns from other groups how to do the work very quickly and efficiently but when they find out how they will get paid, they adjust their pace. For example, if they are paid by the hour, they slow down a bit. If they are paid by the piece, they are extremely quick. They are very good at their work and feel a sense of pride when it is finished.

STEP 5 DEGRADATION AND EXPLOITATION PHASE

After the students have done their roles for the first phase, pass out the second set of roles for the Degradation and Exploitation Phase. In this phase, Group 1 exploits the labor of the other groups and puts them down. Do not tell them what roles have been assigned to the other groups; just have them play the roles.

Give the following instructions to the five groups. Make sure they receive only their assigned roles for this phase:

Group 1: The foremen decide that each group gets their own segregated housing, and each will get different pay. The Japanese get the old house. The Mexicans get the shack with beds. The Visayans get the broken down shack and no beds, and the Ilocanos get the barn with the roof falling off.

Group 2: The Mexicans get paid 15 cents an hour, and live in a shack with beds.

Group 3: The Japanese get paid 20 cents an hour, and have the nicest house.

Group 4: The Visayan group gets paid 12 cents an hour, and they have the better shack than the Ilocanos.

Group 5: The Ilocano group has no beds. The roof on their barn is leaking and it is so old it could burn down any time. They are paid 10 cents an hour.

Have the students act out their assigned roles for two minutes.

STEP 6 DETERMINED ACTIVISM PHASE

After the previous phase where the workers are being degraded, exploited, and pitted against each other, this final phase is when the workers are instructed to organize a strike. They must come together as a union and build a movement against the foremen in group one.

Give the following instructions to the five groups. Make sure they receive only their assigned roles for this phase:

Group 1: The foremen find out that the crew bosses of the Visayans, Ilocano, and Mexican groups have been receiving pamphlets from labor union organizers. They tell the farm owners. The farm owners and the foremen threaten to fire the workers if they try to form a union. They also refuse to recognize the union, make a contract with the union, grant a wage increase, or improve working and living conditions.

Group 2: The Mexican group does not speak much English, but they want to form a union. They must try to communicate with the other groups to create a list of shared demands. The Mexican group wants to be able to have their wives and families live in the camp. They believe that they can only achieve their goals if they unite with the other workers.

Group 3: The Japanese group refuses to join the union because they already make the best wages. But there are two workers in the camp who think that the Japanese camp should unite with the others. Now, they must convince their fellow workers that it is in their best interest to unite with the Mexicans and Filipinas/os.

Group 4: The Visayan group wants to form a union, but only an all-Visayan union. They do not associate socially with the Ilocanos and they have a hard time communicating with them. Most Visayans and Ilocanos do not speak each other's dialects and they do not have a common language, since some have difficulty speaking English or Tagalog. The Visayans decide that an all-Filipina/o union would best serve the needs of workers, since the majority of workers are Filipina/o and the Filipina/o population is growing, while the Japanese population is dwindling, and the Mexican population is not as large. They must decide on tactics and strategy. Violent? Nonviolent? Also, should they involve Filipinas/os in other camps?

Group 5: The Ilocano group must convince the Visayans to join them. They are demanding a wage increase, shorter hours, and better housing. They are not sure if they want to unite with Japanese and Mexican workers, so they debate on whether an all-Filipino or multiracial union is best. They decide that a union with every group would be best. However, it is difficult to get everyone to agree on shared goals. They must decide on tactics and strategy. Violent? Nonviolent? Also, should they involve Filipinas/os in other camps?

Have the students act out their assigned roles for two minutes.