

**PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE:
AN ARTICLE ENTITLED, "THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE"**

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Philippine Independence: An Article Entitled, "The Democratic Party and Philippine Independence" by Moorfield Storey

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MOORFIELD STOREY

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THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE.

What will the Democratic Party do for the Philippine Islands?

This is one of the questions which presses for immediate consideration, and which should be dealt with now while the party is in power and before new issues arise to divert public attention and divide its councils.

THE PARTY'S PROMISES.

The promises of the party have been clear and explicit. When the treaty with Spain was ratified by which the United States acquired the islands, the votes of the Democratic Senators, without which the treaty would have been rejected, were given upon the theory that the treaty would end the rights of Spain in the islands, and that we should give them their independence.

The first Democratic national convention after the treaty met on July 4, 1900, and its declarations were positive. These were its words:

We declare again that all governments instituted among men derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; that any government not based upon the consent of the governed is a tyranny, and that to impose upon any people a government of force is to substitute the methods of Imperialism for those of a republic.

We assert that no nation can long endure half republic and half empire, and we warn the American people that Imperialism abroad will lead quickly and inevitably to despotism at home.

We condemn and denounce the Philippine policy of the present administration.

The Filipinos can not be citizens without endangering our civilization; they can not be subjects without imperiling our form of government; and as we are not willing to surrender our civilization nor to convert the Republic into an empire we favor an immediate declaration of the Nation's purpose to give the Filipinos, first, a stable form of government; second, independence, and, third, protection from outside interference, such as has been given for nearly a century to the Republics of Central and South America.

The next national convention, which met on July 6, 1904, used these words:

We opposed as fervently as did George Washington himself an indefinite, irresponsible, discretionary, and vague absolutism and a policy of colonial exploitation, no matter where or by whom invoked or exercised. We believe, with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, that no government has a right to make one set of laws for those "at home" and another and a different set of laws, absolute in their character, for those "in the colonies." All men under the American flag are entitled to the protection of the institutions whose emblem the flag is. If they are inherently unfit for those institutions, then they are inherently unfit to be members of the American body politic. Wherever

there may exist a people incapable of being governed under American laws in consonance with the American Constitution the territory of that people ought not to be part of the American domain.

We insist that we ought to do for the Filipinos what we have done already for the Cubans, and it is our duty to make that promise now, and upon suitable guaranties of protection to citizens of our own and other countries there at the time of our withdrawal, set the Filipino people upon their feet, free and independent to work out their own destiny.

In 1908 the national convention repeated its declaration in the following form:

We condemn the experiment in imperialism as an inexcusable blunder, which has involved us in enormous expenses, brought us weakness instead of strength, and laid our Nation open to the charge of abandoning a fundamental doctrine of self-government. We favor an immediate declaration of the Nation's purpose to recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands as soon as a stable government can be established, such independence to be guaranteed by us as we guarantee the independence of Cuba, until the neutralization of the islands can be secured by treaty with other powers. In recognizing the independence of the Philippines our Government should retain such land as may be necessary for coaling stations and naval bases.

Finally, in 1912, the platform on which President Wilson was nominated and elected contained this language:

We reaffirm the position thrice announced by the Democracy in national convention assembled against a policy of imperialism and colonial exploitation in the Philippines or elsewhere. We condemn the experiment in imperialism as an inexcusable blunder, which has involved us in enormous expenses, brought us weakness instead of strength, and laid our Nation open to the charge of abandonment of the fundamental doctrine of self-government. We favor an immediate declaration of the Nation's purpose to recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands as soon as a stable government can be established, such independence to be guaranteed by us until the neutralization of the islands can be secured by treaty with other powers.

In recognizing the independence of the Philippines our Government should retain such land as may be necessary for coaling stations and naval bases.

Long antecedent to these declarations is the immortal declaration drawn by Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Democratic Party—the declaration of which Americans have always been proud, and which has been read annually to the people on the 4th of every July as the best statement of the fundamental principles upon which our political structure rests, those “self-evident truths” that “all men are created equal” and that “governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.” In its successive platforms the Democratic Party has planted itself firmly upon these great principles, and it could not have done otherwise without being false to its traditions.

Upon these statements of policy and these promises the Democratic Party has sought the support of the voters, and it has now received that support and is in full control of the Government. If words means anything, it has promised to give the Filipinos their independence, and no man can trust it if this promise is broken. Why should any Democrat suggest that the policy which his party has so uniformly and so repeatedly pledged itself to adopt be now abandoned and the Republican policy which it has “condemned and denounced,” which it has characterized as “an indefinite, irresponsible, discretionary, and vague absolutism,” which it has called “an inexcusable blunder,” be now adopted or by delay continued in operation?

THE DEMAND FOR INVESTIGATION.

Just as the friends of protection, defeated at the polls, fill the newspapers with lamentations and prophecies of disaster, repeating with tireless iteration the familiar arguments in favor of their unjust privileges and urging that an investigation by a tariff commission, never deemed necessary when the tariff was to be raised, should now be had before it is lowered, so all the opponents of Philippine independence with like prophecies of calamity ask that the President and his Cabinet institute an inquiry into the condition of the islands before taking any step to carry into effect the policy to which the party stands pledged.

In each case the motive is the same. It is the old policy of delay by which Fabius conquered Hannibal. It is the attempt to postpone action on any ground in the hope that meanwhile something may occur to divert attention or to discredit and divide the party in power and so enable our opponents to recover the control of the Government. Delays are dangerous, and therefore they urge delay and are fertile in suggesting reasons for it.

But what a confession is this demand for an investigation of Philippine conditions! What is there to learn? Has not the commission made regular reports? Have not the War Department and its Insular Bureau told us all that there was to know about the islands and their people? If they have, investigation is a useless waste of time. If they have not, what facts have they concealed? What truth have they kept back? If indeed the American people are ignorant of what has been going on in the islands, that fact is the strongest possible argument for Philippine independence. It is hard enough for people to govern themselves with personal knowledge of their own affairs. It is far more difficult for one people to govern another, even if it has the fullest knowledge of all that concerns the subject people. It is absolutely impossible for one people to govern another if the governing people has not this knowledge, and if after governing the Philippine Islands for 15 years we have now to make an investigation in order to learn what has been done there and what are the present conditions, we have never had the information without which we could not direct the affairs of the islanders.

As long ago as April 21, 1904, Mr. Taft said to the Chamber of Commerce in New York:

The people of the United States have under their guidance and control in the Philippines an archipelago of 3,000 islands, the population of which is about 7,000,000 souls. Of these 7,000,000 are Christians and 600,000 are Moros or other pagan tribes.

In the same speech, referring to a petition for Philippine independence signed by Cardinal Farley, more than 50 bishops, more than 60 judges, Grover Cleveland, Charles W. Eliot, President Schurman, ex-Senator Edmunds, Andrew Carnegie, Wayne MacVeagh, Charles Francis Adams, and thousands of others among our leading men, Mr. Taft said:

Why should the good people who signed the petition intermeddle with something the effect of which they are very little able to understand?

He did not seem to realize that if the very best Americans could not understand what we were doing in the Philippine Islands it was

idle to say that the American people were guiding and controlling them, and that his two statements meant that the guidance of the Filipinos by the American people was the merest farce.

Now, nine years later we are told that Congress does not know enough about Philippine conditions to legislate, and as they need a tariff commission to teach them how to reduce the tariff, so they need, not the present Philippine Commission, but a new commission, to tell them the facts and give them advice as to what they should do for the islands. I say again, What a confession!

This at least is true: We have heard all that can be said in favor of retaining the islands. Those who have been responsible for their administration have made the best case possible: President McKinley, President Roosevelt, and President Taft, the commissioners and other American officials in the islands, the War Department and its Insular Bureau, the Republican leaders in Congress and out who have favored the retention of the islands have presented year after year all the arguments which they urge now, and these arguments have been perfectly familiar to the men who framed and the conventions which adopted the Democratic platforms that have been quoted, and notwithstanding these arguments the party year after year has denounced the policy of the Republicans and pledged itself to Philippine independence.

Now that the case is won, the Democratic Party can not afford to stultify itself by admitting that its language did not mean what it said, that its oft-repeated declarations have been made ignorantly or recklessly, and now adopt as its own the policy which it has always condemned. This is to break faith with the voters who have believed its promises and placed it in power because they believed. We have a right to say that the case has been decided after full argument and to ask for execution. Delay and hesitation now would be an admission of failure by the Democratic Party, an admission of reckless and ignorant speech, like the admission of concealment implied in the Republican suggestion of investigation, and in this would be found a fresh argument for Philippine independence, since, after 15 years, both parties would admit that the American people have never understood the situation in the islands, which all these years they have in theory been governing. I say again, What a confession!

THE SOURCES OF OPPOSITION.

We can not expect that the defeated party will cease to argue, to protest, and to prophesy all manner of evil, but we have no right on that account to falter. Those men who like President Taft are responsible in large measure for the retention of the islands, and who like him have been especially prominent in their administration, naturally will not admit that they have been wrong. They are committed too strongly to recede now, but we must remember that they are not impartial. They are pleading their own case, they are insisting that they have succeeded, and their own reputations are at stake. All their arguments must be taken with that allowance.

The opposition to the policy of the Democratic Party is largely inspired by them, as is susceptible of proof, and they are able to

rally the officials who are concerned in the present government of the islands and those who profit by it—important elements in the Catholic Church, but in the islands themselves only the foreign elements of the church, not the native priesthood; some of the Americans in the islands, but by no means all; many excellent people who believe that missionary enterprise in the islands will be set back; many who think that our Government is conferring great benefits on the Filipino people which will be lost if we withdraw, and many men who have never given the question any serious thought, but go with their party.

When we find in the columns of certain newspapers day after day articles opposing Philippine independence and repeating in various forms the arguments which have been answered so often—the statements about illiteracy, diversity of language, savage tribes, which have so often been proved untrue; when we find a society formed to advocate not the ultimate freedom of the islands, but their “retention,” officered by former and present members of the insular government, and apparently supplied with abundant funds—we can not help seeing that a combination exists to obstruct and defeat the policy of the Democratic Party. When in addition we find the National City Bank of New York, the very citadel of the “interests” which have so long sought to influence the Government of the United States for their private gain, issuing a long circular against Philippine independence, in which it presents the familiar arguments, financial and humanitarian, and urges the administration to make it clear that “there is no serious difference of opinion in the United States” as to the continuance of the existing relationship, we can entertain no doubt as to the source whence comes the money that supports this combination. The National City Bank is not a philanthropic institution, nor was it organized for the discussion of abstract political questions, nor yet to promote any theories of government. It is severely practical, and exists solely to make money for those who own it. Its appearance in this field betrays the body of practical men who hope to make money for themselves by persuading this Government to retain the islands at the expense of the great body of taxpayers, against the will of the Filipino people, and in disregard of every principle that we have prized.

But in what a position would the National City Bank place the Democratic Party if after 15 years of indignantly denouncing its opponents and asserting its own high purpose it were now to admit that “there is no serious difference of opinion in the United States” as to the Republican policy in the Philippine Islands.

The following paragraph from the New York Journal of Commerce, alluding to the banquet which the new Philippine society proposes to have in New York on June 12, exposes the naked truth and the real source of opposition:

The banquet will be under the auspices of the Philippine Society, of which both Mr. Taft and Mr. Wright are officers. The society has lately been organized with an avowed nonpartisan purpose for the object of promoting Philippine welfare. The most influential of those now in control of it are men who have been connected with the Philippine Government in one way or another.

The discussion of the relation between the United States and the Philippines is considered specially important now, because of the fact that the so-called “Fallows Syndicate,” which is understood to be backed by Standard Oil capital, is preparing to begin the development of the islands. Announcements lately

made place the sum available for the operations of the concern at about \$10,000,000. The plan appears to be that of building sugar "centrals" in order to increase the production of sugar, and in various ways to apply American capital to insular industries. There has been a statement that this concern would take over the work of exploiting Standard Oil products in the Philippines, but this remains to be verified.

American business men are taking the position that they can not invest largely in the Philippines unless they are assured that the Government will continue upon practically the same basis as at present, and will assure them undisturbed possession of such investments as they may make. It could not be learned yesterday whether the syndicate will refuse to go into business and to place its funds in the islands unless such assurance is given, but the assumption in well-informed quarters is that it will so refuse. It is believed that the present administration can not give that assurance in set terms consistently with its platform pledges, and this seems to be recognized, but there is a prevalent opinion that it might be forced to assume an attitude which would make practically certain its abstention from any Executive interference tending to change the basis of government in the islands during the coming four years.

It is not surprising that Bishop Fallows, who visited the islands with his son, the head of the Fallows Syndicate, and others, to consider the chances for investment, and whose travels with the party and a representative of the Philippine Commission are chronicled in the New York Times, returns home ready to testify that the Filipinos are unfit for independence. It is an inauspicious combination of religion and dollars.

An opposition made up of so many elements, backed by the capitalists who have investments in the islands, having full access to the newspaper press, can and naturally will talk a great deal, and make many assumptions and allegations of fact which accord with its views but which are none the less unfounded. It is well to consider the character of these witnesses before we deal with their positions.

THE OPPOSITION FROM OFFICIALS.

Let us take first the officials and their dependents, all of whom have been in a greater or less degree responsible for or connected with our government of the islands. If it has been good, they are entitled to the credit. If it has been in any respect bad, they are liable to be blamed. When the question is considered whether our administration has been good or bad, they are on trial. With some it is purely a question of reputation. With others it is also a question of money, since their salaries are at stake. They are not different from other men, and are influenced by the same motives that affect our officials at home. We have been governing ourselves for nearly a century and a quarter, and during that time parties and candidates have come and gone, and at election after election they have been tried by the people. During that whole period has there ever been a candidate who has not praised his own past and who has not condemned the acts and the policy of his opponent? Has there been a party once trusted with power that did not "point with pride" to its record? If the people believed this self-praise, no man would ever be defeated for reelection, no party would ever be driven from power. Lorimer, Becker, Quay, Cox, and others like them would rank with Washington and Lincoln, and no suspicion of corruption would attach to any official in the United States.

That the Democratic Party is now in power with its great majority is proof that the people do not believe these self-serving statements at

home. Why should they assume that they are not equally fallacious when made in the Philippine Islands? Add to this natural and human reason for resisting a change of policy the material considerations, salaries, power, and the other benefits which the retention of the islands secures to those who share in or hold office under the present Philippine Commission, or who profit by the advertisements and other business which it can distribute, and it is not surprising that there is a body of Americans, including the editors of American papers in the islands who can not be persuaded that the Filipinos should ever be given their independence.

The capitalists who have bought sugar lands, or made other investments in the islands, would naturally always prefer a government by their own fellow countrymen to any other. The foreign investors, English and others, do not share their fear that the Filipinos will treat the foreign capitalist unjustly, but, whatever the danger, the investors have no right to insist that we shall depart from our settled policy and abandon our principles for them. They went there with their eyes open. Even Mr. Taft has always until now asserted that our purpose was embodied in the phrase, "The Philippines for the Filipinos." His Secretary of War, echoing very clearly his chief's views, said only last December in his annual report that our "policy may be expressed as having for its sole object the preparation of the Filipinos for popular self-government in their own interest and not in the interest of the United States."

THE AMERICAN INVESTORS.

But Cardinal Gibbons in his letter says:

To withdraw from the Philippines at a fixed time in the future, regardless of conditions in those islands, would work a serious injustice to the many Americans and farsseeing citizens of other countries who have invested their money in developing the resources of those islands. * * * It would work great harm to those investors as well as to the Filipinos themselves for this country to withdraw and witness a resultant reign of anarchy.

Yet, as has been said, Cardinal Farley, and many other eminent Catholic prelates a few years ago, signed a petition urging Congress to grant the Philippine Islands their independence; and Cardinal Gibbons wrote:

It appears to me that we can not retain them (the Philippines) indefinitely, since such retention is so opposed to our traditional policy.

Has the investment of American capital caused a change of view, or have the years of American rule rendered the Filipinos less fit to govern themselves? In either case we can not afford to delay action. Every dollar of American capital will strengthen the cardinal's argument in favor of investors. Every year of continued American rule will enhance the unfitness.

The opponents of independence have long foreseen the effect of this argument, and have done their best to stimulate investment, all the while veiling their purpose with hypocritical talk of ultimate independence. Their real feeling finds private expression, however, and it is clearly expressed in a letter written by a Government employee in the Philippines, a college man who won distinction in his undergraduate days as an able student, and who has earned promo-