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EMPIRE, TRADITION, AND IDEOLOGIES:
THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES 1898-1920.

By

Andrew Faber Larson

Bachelor of Science, University of South Dakota, 2013.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts


Grand Forks, North Dakota

December

2015

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Andrew Faber Larson
9 December 2015

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ABSTRACT

The American Anti-Imperialist League began in Boston in 1898 and shortly thereafter worked to consolidate other anti-imperialist organizations in an attempt to prevent the United States from creating its first overseas empire. The League was united in its opposition to empire yet its organizational structure prevented it from becoming a truly national, and thus unified, special interest group. Early on in 1898, the League's unity came from its appeals to preserve the traditional American foreign policies of George Washington, ideas surrounding isolation from the affairs of Europe and its focus upon the Americas in particular. The League also advocated for the preservation of the Monroe Doctrine. Thus, in the early fight against empire, the League appeared to be a cohesive unit, in that its traditional based arguments against Empire were broadly appealing to all anti-imperialists and presented the appearance of a focused nationalist organization. This seeming cohesion led to the league supporting a presidential candidate but upon his defeat, and the initial establishment of an American empire, the façade of league unity and centralization fall part. When the main argument that drew everyone together began to fail, the league lost focus. This is most clearly seen in the rise in secondary arguments that the different factions within the League started to make against empire during a period when the establishment of the American empire seemed eminent . When the League had an opportunity to show that in many ways their arguments were vindicated, they lacked the internal unity and appropriate structure to do so. This study of the League demonstrates that while it was a national organization and while it had a convincing, at least to them, appeal to American traditions, its disparate nature caused its internal structure to deteriorate thereby causing a lack of organization and ultimate failure.

For my wife Jessica,
the most brilliant woman I have ever met.

Chapter 1: Introduction

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States found itself in a world filled with global empires. European nations such as England, Spain, and France were imposing their sovereignty over large regions of the globe. The creation of these empires changed international relations while disrupting what was, in regards to American diplomacy and international affairs, a relatively peaceful century. These changes forced the United States, which over the 19th century held on to its traditional policies defined by the Monroe Doctrine, Manifest Destiny and isolationism, to react to these rapidly changing global affairs. American- European relations throughout the nineteenth century changed greatly, from open war , during the War of 1812, to close political and economic alliances. American relations with Spain, a traditional European imperial state, began to deteriorate over Spain's treatment of its Caribbean colony, Cuba. Relations with Spain reached a fever pitch with the sinking of the USS Maine and, as the USA became involved in this crisis, it too quickly confronted the pressures of empire.

On the evening of 15 February, 1898, a small explosion in the magazine of the USS *Maine*, moored in Havana harbor, ignited the large on-board ammunition magazine resulting in a catastrophic explosion that killed the majority of the crew; only 89 of the 350 sailors aboard survived¹. When the news of the Maine's destruction reached the

¹ US Navy Department, "The Destruction of USS Maine" *Naval History & Heritage Command*, 13 August 2003, accessed 17 March 2015, <http://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/disasters-and-phenomena/destruction-of-uss-maine.html>.

United States, many Americans began to clamor for war. Yellow journalists quickly blamed the tragedy of the *Maine* on Spanish aggression thereby igniting such an uproar amongst the American people that full scale war was nearly unavoidable. The Spanish American War commenced on 25 April 1898, two months after the sinking of the *USS Maine*, and lasted until August of 1898. This short-lived war saw few American combat casualties, indeed far more Americans died due to disease than to combat itself. The United States won a series of quick victories in Cuba as well as the South Pacific, notably the Battle of Manila Harbor and the Battle of San Juan Hill, and soon after the fighting drew to a stalemate and devolved into siege style warfare around the city of Santiago. It was at this point that Spain initiated peace negotiations and the 1898 Treaty of Paris officially concluded the Spanish-American War. The treaty gave the United States dominion over many of the former Spanish colonies, including the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The treaty also granted Cuba independence. The treaty brought with it a whole new set of questions. Most importantly, what was the United States going to do with all of the territory that comprised Spain's former colonies? Ultimately, the United States was left with the choice of retaining the colonies for themselves, and by extension founding the first American empire, or to give them their independence.

After the 1898 Treaty of Paris was signed, it was clear that a majority of Americans, who became known as imperialists, wanted to retain the former Spanish colonies. Their reasons for maintaining control of these territories varied, but most imperialists agreed that they could serve as overseas marketplaces for domestic goods. The Imperialists also believed that colonies epitomized American Exceptionalist sentiments. Imperialists also played on American fears regarding European empires and

the expansion of European power further into the Pacific. The ranks of the Imperialists were further swollen as a result of prominent Americans who stood in support of, and actively campaigned for Imperialistic arguments.

Some of these Americans, such as Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred Thayer Mahan, William Randolph Hearst, and Joseph Pulitzer used their celebrity and their media connections to influence the masses of Americans by swaying their opinions and spreading imperialism's goals. Newspaper owners William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer both used their newspapers as places to spread their pro-imperial opinions. They both wrote numerous editorials whose sole purpose was to enflame the opinion of many Americans against the Spanish empire, and drum up support for imperialism. These journalists quickly became known as yellow journalists, which was a subtle jab at their truthfulness and the quality of their writing. Yellow Journalism is characterized as a way of providing stories in which the writers provided little factual information and sought to enflame the public toward their points of view. The Yellow Journalists used their positions of power to sway the American public toward imperialistic viewpoints. Other prominent Americans such as the assistant secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, influential naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, and many well-known politicians in Washington supported Imperialism as the Spanish American War drew to a close. Through yellow journalism, and support from prominent Americans, the arguments of imperialism grew in popularity amongst the American people. At the war's conclusion, the majority of Americans clamored for an American empire.

Yet, even as the yellow journalists fanned the flames of an American empire, some opposed it. While in the minority, those in opposition to the creation of an

American empire started to make their voices heard as they began to coalesce into groups that eventually became known as the Anti-Imperialist League (AIL). The AIL began in 1898 as a small grassroots movement; however it quickly grew into a large nationwide political movement. The Anti-Imperialists in early 1898 consisted of many disorganized, loosely affiliated, small local groups. However, these groups grew in popularity in many of the large metropolitan areas on the Eastern seaboard, and eventually spread to other locations around the United States.

Prior to 1898 and the foundation of the Anti-Imperialist League, Anti-Imperialist sentiments were popular throughout the nineteenth century. The early nineteenth century saw anti imperialist arguments in regards to every American expansion. Notably the purchase of the Louisiana territory garnered a great deal of Anti-Expansionist backlash.² Expansion into native American land holdings in the western United States also created Anti-Expansionist arguments. Later, in the nineteenth century the American push to take control of Hawaii created a large amount of push back from Anti-Imperialists who argued that the annexation of Hawaii would create an American empire.³ Anti-Imperialist sentiments were not confined to the last decade of the nineteenth century, rather they were popular throughout the nineteenth century.

The Anti-Imperialist League (AIL) began on a small scale and, despite the large amount of support that the AIL gained, it was always in the minority. The small local chapters of the Anti-Imperialist League were the heart and soul of the movement, and were solely responsible for its longevity. These local chapters were strewn across the

² Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, (New York: Knopf Publishing, 2008), 65-67.

³ Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire From the Revolution to Vietnam: a History of U.S. Imperialism*, (New York: Haymarket Books, 2003.)

United States in small towns and large cities. The AIL's local chapters consisted of ordinary Americans who were ideologically opposed to McKinley's foreign policies and the establishment of an American empire. The Anti-Imperialist movement became increasingly popular amongst Americans as the Spanish American war loomed on the national horizon. Very quickly, these smaller groups began to coalesce into larger entities and larger regional leagues arose in large metropolitan areas concentrated on the eastern seaboard. With the Spanish-American War underway, the Anti-Imperialist League continued to grow in popularity, and the larger cities' leagues became extremely influential. These larger leagues' influence allowed for the founding of a national Anti-Imperialist League on 15 June 1898.⁴

The eastern seaboard of the United States was the center of AIL influence. The larger regional leagues on the east coast had proximity to the lawmakers of the United States, manufacturing centers, and populations centers of the eastern seaboard. However, the AIL was also present in larger west coast cities, such as Los Angeles and Seattle. The leagues in those cities were central to the AIL's efforts on the western seaboard. Despite this, the west coast AIL chapters were much less influential, and not nearly as active on a national scale. The mid-western region of the United States was not without larger prominent regional leagues as well. Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis and Kansas City all played host to larger regional league organizations with large memberships.⁵ The League office based out of Chicago quickly became one of the most influential regional leagues in the entire country due to its centralized location. The Chicago regional league called

⁴ Fred H Harrington, "Literary Aspects of American Anti-Imperialism 1898-1902," *New England Quarterly*, 10, No. 4 (1937), 650.

⁵ E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 133.

itself the Central Anti-Imperialist League, and had thousands of members.⁶ Chicago played an important role in the AIL, however, the eastern seaboard of the United States saw the greatest concentration of AIL's efforts and activity.

The cities that had the largest effect on the AIL's membership were centered in the northern part of the eastern seaboard. Boston and New York were the home of two of the major regional leagues on the east coast.⁷ Before the formation of a national league the different regional branches all referred to themselves by different names. For example, The New York branch called itself the Anti-Imperialist League of New York. These groups demonstrated a certain amount of individuality and remained largely autonomous even after the establishment of the national Anti-Imperialist League.⁸ The AIL saw a groundswell of support from Americans, and its membership numbers grew very quickly. Michael Cullinane writes, "By 1898 there were ten regional branches and membership had swollen to the hundreds of thousands."⁹

Eventually, the leaders of the regional groups knew that to achieve their ultimate goal of halting the growth of the American empire and restoring isolationism as the dominant political ideology in the United States, the AIL would need to establish a cohesive national presence. Therefore, on 15 June 1898 saw the foundation of the national headquarters of the Anti-Imperialist League in Chicago.¹⁰ The New York and Boston offices eventually became more prominent than even the Chicago office, due to their proximity to Washington DC, and New England's business interests. As a result the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 134.

⁸ Ibid, 135.

⁹ Michael Patrick Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, (New York: St Martin's Press. 2012), 24-25.

¹⁰ Harrington, "Literary Aspects," 650.

national office moved to Boston in 1904.¹¹ With this centralization, the AIL developed a cohesive ideology that sought to appeal to the American people as a whole; The argument that the United States ought not establish an empire overseas. This remained the dominant argument as the AIL challenged imperialism. The Anti-Imperialist League sought to keep America from deviating from its traditional diplomatic policies, isolationism being the most important of those. The League wanted to keep the United States from establishing an empire because it violated the fundamental diplomatic policy of isolationism. The AIL's appeals to preserve traditional foreign policies was the rallying point behind which the AIL came together.

However, as it became increasingly apparent that the Imperialists would be victorious and establish an American empire, the AIL began to fracture, and secondary arguments became more popular amongst the more prominent members of the AIL. The presidential election of 1900 saw the AIL's largest triumph as well as its greatest defeat. The election of 1900 pitted William Jennings Bryan, a Democrat, against incumbent Republican William McKinley. Bryan was a prominent Anti-Imperialist, and political activist. The AIL was essential in the nomination of Bryan; however, during his presidential race his views on Free Silver were a point of contention between prominent members of the AIL and the democratic party at large. This disparate nature of the League's upper echelons was further illustrated upon Bryan's stunning defeat at the hands of McKinley. The AIL began to further fracture after Bryan's defeat and the AIL saw the rise in secondary arguments further weakening the prominence of the AIL.

1900 also saw a number of other events that were important to the purpose of the AIL's arguments. 1899 saw the beginning of the Philippine Insurrection, where the

¹¹ Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism*, 134.

Philippines fell into open revolt against its new imperial masters. However, as the AIL lost its cohesion it could not mount convincing arguments to support their positions against empire. During this time, the United States also signed a treaty with the United Kingdom to build a canal across the Latin American nation of Nicaragua. All of these things compounded the fracturing of the AIL into a number of smaller groups squabbling about what was the best way to combat empire.¹²

Historians have been looking at the American empire almost from the moment of its inception. The historiography of the Anti-Imperialist League, while somewhat distinct, must be understood within the broader historiography that deals with the establishment of an American empire as a whole. That being said, the historiography of American imperialism is not one that fits neatly within several well-defined categories. There are however, certain patterns which emerge in the historiography, patterns which seem to reflect the concerns and politics of the times in which these analyses were written.

The earliest historians who looked at the establishments of an American empire at the close of the nineteenth century were those who are now thought of as the traditionalist historians a group who argued that the United States began to push for empire in an effort to placate the popular opinion of Americans at the time. Thomas Bailey, Fred Harvey Harrington, and Julius Pratt were among them. These historians were writing in the nineteen thirties and forties, a time when much of the political discourse was related to foreign policy, was dominated by the debate over isolationism. Many people were re-examining the nation's role as an imperial power and as a player on

¹² Lens, 195-203.

the world stage; indeed many American politicians and intellectuals were reexamining the decisions, made decades earlier, which had brought American to such a problematic place. For the most part, they argued that the government giving in to the popular demands of the American populous was the purpose for the establishment of an American empire.

Thomas Bailey is a crucial figure in this form of analysis. His 1938 article argued that the re-election of President McKinley in 1900 was a referendum on American imperialism and that McKinley's re-election was proof positive that the majority of Americans believed in the principals of empire that they supported his imperialistic policies.¹³ Bailey even brought these issues up again in a review of Julius Pratt's 1937 book, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*. Bailey argued that Pratt's examination of the establishment of empire was woefully lacking in any examination of American popular opinion in *the years between the Hawaiian coup de' etat, and the outset of the Spanish American War* from 1893-1898.¹⁴ Similarly, Fred H. Harrington in his 1935 article, "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900", focused on the importance of public opinion, arguing that the Anti-Imperialist League was formed in order to turn back the tide of a growing wave of imperial sentiment among the American people. Even as he documented the AIL's earliest attempts at subverting the establishment of an American empire, Harrington also noted the ramshackle nature and the disunity of the AIL, paying particular attention to the

¹³ Thomas A Bailey, "Was the Presidential Election of 1900 A Mandate on Imperialism?", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 24, 1. (1937), 43–52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1891336>.

¹⁴ Thomas A Bailey, "Review of *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*." *The American Historical Review*, 42, 4 (1937).

election of 1900 as a catalyst for profound disagreements among the members and ultimately the deterioration of the League itself.¹⁵

That being said not every historian of this time period believed that the American empire was created as a reaction to public outcry. As noted above, Julius Pratt argued that the Imperialist factions were spurred forward not by public opinion by a desire for economic gains, as well as certain religious reasons. He argued that these factors were crucial to the understanding of the establishment of the American empire. Indeed it was the business, religious and political leaders who desired territorial expansion for their own reasons who were instrumental in shaping the public opinion. His work also made explicit parallels between the acquisition of the Hawaiian and the Philippine islands. These parallels are important when examining this time period.¹⁶ This viewpoint on American imperialism was quite different than others of the time period and is much more characteristic of historians who wrote much later.

The second time that American Imperialism was examined in detail by historians occurred soon after World War II. It was in this period that the United States was no longer concerned with reverting away from Imperialism, and were re-evaluating their place in global politics, but this period is characterized by a profound debate between Americans who were trying to decide exactly where they stood in global politics. That being said these historians tended to look at the establishment of empire by examining a broader set of themes, progressivism, race relations, and ideas of national superiority,

¹⁵ Fred H. Harrington, "The Anti-imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 22, 2 (1935,) 211–230, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1898467>.

¹⁶ Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898 The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Island*, (Boston: Johns Hopkins Press,1938).

among them. These historians tended to argue that an American empire was merely a manifestation of these larger ideas in the realm of foreign affairs.

Historians during this time period examined empire through a number of lenses. Historians like Christopher Lasch in his article, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man." looked at the establishment of an American empire as a racial issue. He looks at how the ideas of race played into the arguments of the imperialists and anti-imperialists alike.¹⁷ On the other hand, William Luchtenberg in his article, "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1916" looked at the establishment of the American empire through the notions of popular opinion. He argued that progressives in the United States were vastly in favor of the establishment of an American empire. He argues that progressive attitudes were important to the success of and initial establishment of an American empire, and Luchtenberg also argues that Theodore Roosevelt's ascension to the presidency was the ultimate expression of these two ideas being undeniably linked.¹⁸ Richard Hofstadter, in his book *Age of Reform From Bryan to FDR*, also looks at the importance of the populists on this time period, and argues that the political ideas of the late nineteenth century were dictated by that movement.¹⁹

All of these historians are arguing that different social aspects of American society were manifesting themselves in the form of the American empire. The creation of these studies illustrates the era that they were writing within. The ideological supremacy

¹⁷ Christopher Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol XXIV, No. 3 (1958).

¹⁸ William E. Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1916," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39, 3 (1952).

¹⁹ Richard Hofstadter, *Age Of Reform From Bryan to FDR*, (New York: Vintage Publishing, 1960).

of the United States was recently "proven" in the victory in World War II, and therefore the political ideologies of the United States were not being examined as vehemently as previously, instead social aspects of American society were being examined during this time period.

The nineteen sixties and seventies saw a plethora of studies related to American imperialism being conducted. This time period, during the Vietnam War, and the height of the Cold War, saw a resurgence in interest in the formation of America's earliest imperialist policies. The pushback against imperialism was paramount, and it is no surprise that it was this period that the Anti-Imperialist League was looked at more extensively than ever before.

Historians at this time tended to look at ideas of Manifest destiny, and the importance of the taking of new territory for the United States. Parallels between America's actions during the height of the Cold War, and the end of the nineteenth century were not difficult to draw. Richard Welch in his 1979 book, argued that the uncertainty of the future of America spurred imperialistic attitudes forward in the late nineteenth century. He argues that an uncertain populous, accustomed to outward growth was floundering in a time where there was no longer a western frontier. This uncertainty was solved by the establishment of an American empire.²⁰ William Appleman Williams, a member of the Wisconsin revisionist school, in his book, *Empire as a Way of Life* argues that an American empire was established in order to satiate American's need for new territories. He argues that Manifest Destiny and the quest for new territory was

²⁰ Richard E. Welch Jr, *Response to Imperialism: The United States and the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

inherent in what it meant to be American.²¹ His thesis is quite telling of his thoughts on the time period that he wrote within as well as his perception of the tragedy of American diplomacy itself.

Other historians focused on the importance of commerce in the establishment of the American empire as well. Walter LaFeber in his 1963 book *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, examines the importance of commerce on the establishment of an American empire. He argues that while other ideas such as race, and national security were significant, they were not the most important.²² Similarly, Lloyd Gardner, in his book *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy Since 1898*, looks at the economic imperialism that the United States conducted throughout the early twentieth century, but begins with these ideas being extrapolated backward onto the initial establishment of an American empire.²³ These historians looked at the importance of commerce in the establishment of empire, drawing an important parallel to the time period that they lived in. The nineteen sixties and seventies saw the closing of Asian marketplaces due to the spread of communism, and the comparison between the late nineteenth century and the mid twentieth was not a difficult intellectual leap. In fact it came up in several works such as Sydney Lens' book, *The Forging of the American Empire*, which draws a direct correlation between the establishment of an American empire and the war in Vietnam.²⁴

²¹ William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²² Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1890-1898*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

²³ Lloyd C. Gardner, *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy Since 1898*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1976).

²⁴ Sydney Lens. *The Forging of the American Empire: From the Revolution to Vietnam: A History of U.S. Imperialism*, (New York: Haymarket Books, 2003.)

The Anti-Imperialist League also got a great deal of attention during this time period. The parallels between the Anti-War movement of the nineteen sixties and seventies and the AIL are undeniable, which caused a number of historians to look at the AIL through this lens. Historians like E Berkley Tomkins examined the AIL in his book, *Anti Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate 1890-1920*. In his book he examines the AIL as a group of people. He argued that the AIL was formed from a disparate group of people, and that the diverse nature of these people was the primary strength of the AIL. He continues to argue that the AIL could appeal to a large number of Americans, and in doing so could offer legitimate alternatives to the establishment of empire.²⁵ He also highlighted these arguments in an earlier article entitled "The Old Guard: A Study of Anti-Imperialist Leadership." Tomkin's arguments all hinged on his idea that the AIL's strength is drawn from their diversity.²⁶ Another historian Robert Beisner also looked at the upper echelons of the AIL's leadership in his book *Twelve Against Empire*. Beisner examines twelve different members of the AIL's leadership and their individual arguments against Imperialism. He notes that all of these people, while from different socio-political backgrounds united behind the individual idea that empire was a mistake for America.²⁷ Alternatively, Daniel Schrimmer, author of *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War*, examines the ideas that the AIL was promoting, and the way that they were being put forth. He argues that the arguments of the AIL were crucial to the understanding of the AIL's successes and failures; however,

²⁵ E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

²⁶ E. Berkeley Tompkins, "The Old Guard: A Study of Anti-Imperialist Leadership," *The Historian*, Volume 30, Issue 30, May 1968. 366–388, Accessed 5 November 2015, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-6563.1968.tb00325.x/full>.

²⁷ Robert J. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire The Anti-Imperialists 1898-1900*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968).

he focuses on the racial and economic issues regarding the creation of the American empire.²⁸

The period of the nineteen sixties and seventies in the history of the United States was a tumultuous one. America was at war, for what many considered to be imperialistic goals, and it is no surprise that in this period there would be a great deal of renewed interest in the period which witnessed the United States emergence as an imperial power, and particularly the people who opposed that development. It was also during this time period that James Field, in his article "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book" argues that historians have a very difficult time dealing with the topic of American imperialism because of this lack of any true unity within the historiography. He argues that the poorest chapter in any book on American diplomacy is the one that deals with American imperialism because of the lack of America's want to truly examine its empire building. He also argues that more modern historians are far too focused on the notions of traditional historians, and attacks historians who wish to seat a discussion of American imperialism into a broader framework.²⁹

After this brief explosion of interest in the establishment of the American empire in the late nineteen sixties and seventies, there was a dearth of studies. It was not until the late nineteen nineties and into the twenty-first century that investigations of American imperialism began again in earnest. The historians who examined imperialism during this time period examined it from a number of different viewpoints. They tend to look again at more of the social and cultural issues related to empire. Race, ethnicity, class, and

²⁸Daniel Schrimmer, *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War*, (Rochester VT: Schenkman Books Inc, 1972).

²⁹ James A. Field, "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book," *The American Historical Review*, 83, 3 (1978)

gender, and similar categories of analysis are important to those historians. The dawn of the twenty-first century was defined by social equality movements, as well as a new found importance of the study of social history/ cultural, or subaltern history, and these viewpoints are illustrated in the writings of the various historians who write during this time.

Historians began to look at the ways that empire was allowed to be established again in this time period. Michael Hunt's book *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* looks at the ideas which American foreign policy was rooted, and how those impacted Imperialism. He argues that racial superiority, ideas of liberty and the support of revolutionary ideas were the cornerstones of American foreign policy, and briefly examines the ramifications these ideas had on the establishment of the American empire. Hunt argues that as the nineteenth century drew to a close all of these different ideas informed the Americans who advocated for the establishment of empire, and what pushed America toward its status as a great nation.³⁰ Walter Nugent's book *The Habits of Empire*, examines the ways that the American republic became an American empire. His argument that the United States established not one but three empires is an interesting examination of this overarching idea. How the United States transitioned from its initial borders into the political and economic powerhouse that it is today is the major focus of Nugent's work. His analysis focuses on the traditions that created the first American empire, how those traditions were used to justify the second empire established in 1898, and the use of these precedents of foreign policy in the post World War II political

³⁰ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

atmosphere.³¹ These historians looked primarily at how the United States was ideologically prepared for the acceptance of empire, rather than the establishment of the empire as a whole. They examine how the notions of empire were able to grow rather than how it grew specifically.

Scholars have begun to look at the AIL again as well. Erin Murphy, in her article "Women's Anti-Imperialism: The White Man's Burden and the Philippine American War" argues that Anti-Imperialism was not just for white males. She argues that the AIL was filled with women whose ideas and arguments were prominent, and that these women played an important role in the AIL. She argues that the importance of women in the movement has been underestimated up to this point in the historiography.³² Eric T Love, in his book *Race over Empire*, argues that ideas of race were not taken into account by imperialists, but it was the Anti-Imperialists who argued that race was an enormous issue to be taken into account when studying the establishment of an American empire.³³ Michael Patrick Cullinane in his book, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, argues that the various individual AIL member's arguments are important to understand the AIL's grander narrative as a whole.³⁴ Jim Zwick has prepared a number of different books containing primary source material, as well as a website that archives this material for scholars to access.³⁵ These scholars of the AIL expand on their predecessors look at the

³¹ Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, (New York: Knopf Publishing, 2008).

³² Erin L Murphy, "Women's Anti-Imperialism, the White Man's Burden, and the Philippine-American War: Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest," *Gender and Society*, 23 (Sage Publications, Inc. 2009), 244–270, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20676773>.

³³ Eric. T Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and US Imperialism. 1865-1900*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

³⁴ Michael Patrick, Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012),

³⁵ Jim Zwick, "Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935." Accessed 10 November 2015, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/d/192.html>.

AIL as a whole. They look at individual people or groups of people and how they translated their ideas into the rhetoric of the AIL.

This is specifically where this author enters into the historiography. While each individual group of historians, their individual arguments and viewpoints are significant, it is important to examine how these various ideas effected the AIL's overarching arguments as a whole. This work challenges the conclusions of Tomkins in particular, who saw a great amount of strength in the movements diversity. This author argues that the diversity of the members of the AIL was the ultimate cause of its demise. This thesis looks at as the primary cause of the AIL's founding, the preservation of American traditions. As the ultimate failure of this primary goal began to loom, the Anti-Imperialist League began to fracture at its highest levels. As this work shall demonstrate, in the aftermath of the election of 1900 it was the diversity of opinion on several related but secondary issues to empire that weakened the AIL and ultimately fractured its unity and brought about its demise. Not to put too fine a point upon the matter, the widely varying interests and arguments of these different individuals and sub-groupings destroyed the unity and effectiveness of the Anti-Imperialist League, and in so doing hindered their ability to subvert the establishment of the American empire.

The AIL is an important example of an American oppositional group at the turn of the twentieth century. This time was a transitional period for the United States from moving from the dominance of the western hemisphere, and moving onto the world stage as a major force. With the victory over the Spanish empire, the United States became a legitimate player in world politics, and the dawn of the twentieth century saw an

opportunity for America to determine its own destiny from a favorable position.

Imperialists, and their arguments, sought to assist the United States in this endeavor.

During this time, the AIL served as a check to the popular opinion of imperialists, they attempted to preserve the traditions that the United States abided to throughout the nineteenth century. These arguments were put forward by Washington and continued under his successors, with minor changes piling up over time. The Anti-Imperialist League was a group of Americans that came from all walks of life, social strata, and political points of view. This large variance in personages united behind one argument, to halt the march of imperialists, and stop the creation of an American empire. This variation of people coming together under one banner, was largely unprecedented in American history.

It was only when it became obvious that the AIL's appeals to traditional arguments were not working, that the high ranking members of the AIL began to fracture along alternate lines. These secondary arguments drove wedges between the leaders of the League and the effectiveness of the AIL began to wane. The election of 1900 served as a further contention point between the members of the League it brought forward fundamental disagreements between high ranking members of the AIL which facilitated the League's further fracturing. Afterward, secondary arguments became even more and more influential amongst the upper echelons of the AIL and the divisions in the League's. These complex arguments, and the variety of the members of the AIL all with their own opinions about what was the most important reason for avoiding empire, makes the AIL a difficult aspect of American diplomatic history to examine.

All of these aspects of the AIL, and the influence of their arguments on their efforts are an important facet to understanding the AIL and American diplomatic history at the turn of the twentieth century. One cannot do a full examination of the AIL without looking at the AIL's arguments against the establishment of empire. Countless Historians examine the establishment of the American empire at the turn of the twentieth century, but many of them largely ignore the AIL as an influential force on that important episode in American Diplomatic history.

The subsequent chapters will look at the arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League. The first will look at the more traditional arguments of the AIL, those based upon traditional foreign policies such as isolationism, and the Constitution, that were the driving force behind the unification of the AIL. The second will examine the fracturing of the AIL due to the rise in secondary arguments and the further fracturing of the AIL after the election of 1900. Which demonstrates the AIL's fragility and the effects of disunity on the AIL.

Chapter 2:

Traditional Arguments

In 1898, the United States stood on the brink of acquiring a global empire and while most Americans were in favor of this, a small minority who formed the Anti-Imperialist League, spoke out against this by articulating a series of arguments and political activism through which they expressed their support for traditional isolationist policies of the United States. The AIL even ran a presidential candidate in the election of 1900. However, in early 1898, when the answer to the question whether or not an American Empire would be formed was not yet finalized, the AIL argued against the establishment of empire by appealing to the larger diplomatic traditions of American history and to the constitution. Members of the AIL saw empire as a deviation from a well-established American system and identity. The degradation of traditional foreign policies, the political ramifications that would ensue from that degradation, and the preservation of the American way of life all served as a solid platform for all of the AIL's arguments. The AIL also feared the ramifications of the United States becoming entangled in the affairs of Europe, empires, and world politics at large. In conjunction with the preservation of traditional foreign policies, the AIL's arguments, which were established by their prominent members, attempted to dissuade the American people from supporting the annexation of the former Spanish colonies, the Philippines in particular. The AIL argued that the deviation from the tradition of isolationism was an arch-

hypocrisy against what they believed American greatness was built upon. Indeed, the AIL asserted that further deviation from isolationist arguments could spell doom for the republic.

In a January 4, 1899 speech, Carl Shurz, a prominent Civil War veteran, politician, and Anti-Imperialist, stated that:

According to the solemn proclamation of our government, the [Spanish American] war had been undertaken solely for the liberation of Cuba as a war of humanity and not of conquest. But our easy victories had put conquest within our reach, and when our arms occupied foreign territory, a loud demand arose that, pledge or no pledge to the contrary, the conquests should be kept, even the Philippines on the other side of the globe and that as to Cuba herself, independence would only be a provisional formality. Why not? was the cry.³⁶ The Anti-Imperialist League disagreed with popular American opinion that clamored for the annexation of the former Spanish American colonies by arguing for the continuation and preservation of well-established American traditions. The AIL believed that the United States did not need to act in a manner similar to the aggressive European imperial states and that the US ought to tirelessly work to preserve the global status quo through the preservation of traditional American foreign policies. The AIL held that traditional American foreign policies must be reinstated, lest the American republic, the American way of life, and the rights and privileges of every American, be put in harm's way.³⁷

In 1898, saw the outset of the first phase of the AIL's activism; however, it was short lived. The League's disparate membership rallied around the influence of the prominent members and what they believed would be the best arguments against empire; an appeal to tradition. The central argument that they utilized, and of which the rest were built upon, was that the aggressive foreign policies put forth by President William

³⁶ Carl Shurz, "American Imperialism," *American Imperialism in 1898*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1955) 71.

³⁷ William Lloyd Garrison, "War and Imperialism Fatal to Self Government," *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920), Vol. 60, No. 9 (October 1898), 210.

McKinley marked an abandonment of the traditional foreign policies, notably isolationism. These larger arguments can be illustrated by examining their constituent parts.

The first method that the AIL used to argue against the abandonment of traditional ideologies, such as isolationism, was to refute President William McKinley's foreign policies. The AIL utilized the United States Constitution as the cornerstone of many of its arguments. The AIL believed that the establishment of an overseas empire would facilitate the degradation of this important document, which stood at the core of the American system. The Anti-Imperialist League argued that the United States' Constitution did not allow for the establishment of overseas colonies, and did not include any provisions for their governance. The AIL's platform also put forward an argument against the abandonment of nineteenth century land acquisition tradition because the Spanish colonies were not destined to become states. They referenced traditional viewpoints that new territories could not be kept as colonial possessions. The final traditional argument that the Anti-Imperialist League used was that all former territorial acquisitions were made under completely different circumstances. All of these arguments revolved around the preservation of traditional foreign policies and by extension the American way of life that the AIL felt were being cast aside in favor of the creation of an American Empire.

It was a combination of all of these beliefs that prompted the League to actively work to combat the aggressive foreign policies of President McKinley, and subvert popular Imperialist opinion. These politically motivated protests were the primary way that the Anti-Imperialist League worked to impede the progress of the establishment of

an American Empire. Early in 1898 the AIL's membership grew rapidly, and quickly gained the support of several prominent Americans, politicians, authors, and entrepreneurs. These individuals served as the purveyors of their arguments and platforms, and were a major source of growth for the AIL. Early in 1898, the AIL and their goal of subverting the establishment of an American empire seemed possible.

The basis of a majority of the early Anti-Imperialist League's arguments against an American empire involved an appeal to tradition; especially in regards to foreign policy. The League viewed traditional foreign policies, like isolationism and the Monroe Doctrine, as responsible for the early survival, and consequently, the later success, of the United States. They saw the movement to a more aggressive, and jingoist, foreign policy under McKinley as hypocritical and antithetical to the traditional American way, and that his proposed movement away from isolationism had the potential to cause the decline of the republic itself.³⁸ The League used this idea as the cornerstone on which to build their arguments against imperialism.

The AIL viewed America's direct conflict with Spain over the island of Cuba as a blatant disregard of the tenets of the Monroe Doctrine and other traditional isolationist foreign policies. American involvement in a civil war between the Cuban people and their Spanish imperial representatives was a violation of the precedent of the United States' tradition of letting revolutions run their course. Direct involvement in the affairs of sovereign states, and the jingoist rationale for becoming involved, were seen as hypocritical by the Anti-Imperialist League.³⁹

³⁸ William Jennings Bryan, "First Speech Against Imperialism," *The Savannah Interview, Bryan on Imperialism*. (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1970) 5.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

The Teller amendment, signed in 20 April 1898, bolstered by the arguments of the AIL, dictated that the United States could not retain Cuba as a part of a larger overseas empire; therefore, the island of Cuba would be granted its independence. The Teller Amendment also explicitly forbade the United States from overtly annexing Cuba.

The United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts, its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.⁴⁰ However, despite this early setback, the Imperialists eventually got the chance to exercise control over Cuba.

George Gray, an Anti-Imperialist and one of the negotiators in Paris in 1898, argued that the establishment of an American Empire would "reverse accepted continental policy [and] introduces us into European politics and entangling alliances."⁴¹ Gray argued, along with the Anti-Imperialist League, that the jingoist foreign policies espoused by McKinley would project the United States into world affairs on a scale that was unprecedented in American history. The Anti-Imperialist League viewed the abandonment of traditional foreign policies as hypocritical, and many argued that McKinley's jingoist policies spelled the doom of the American republic at large.

Anti-Imperialist Elmer Adams, a U.S. District court judge, wrote about the justifications for empire and the hypocrisy that the United States Government was perpetrating by deviating from traditional foreign policies in an article from *The Yale Law Journal*. In it he noted, that the United States military invasion in Cuba.

had largely to do with bringing the island of Cuba into that condition which justified, if indeed it did not in honor require, our intervention, to protect Spanish

⁴⁰ Lloyd C Gardner, *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy Since 1898*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1976) 31.

⁴¹ Michael Patrick, Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*. (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012) 27.

subjects from the weak and degenerate government which such policy had largely conducted to bring about.⁴² Adams commented on the abandonment of the central piece of American traditional foreign policy, the Monroe Doctrine. The Anti-Imperialist League saw McKinley's blatant disregard for traditional foreign policy ideologies for a more convenient, self-serving, notion was nothing short of hypocrisy.

This foundational argument allowed the AIL to make numerous secondary arguments that all related to the AIL's perceived abandonment of American traditions. For example, the AIL also looked at the concepts of the consent of the governed, the establishment of an American empire would be the death of that key belief. Influential members of the AIL, like William Jennings Bryan and Mark Twain gave outspoken speeches across the United States that railed against the degradation of a concept that they believed was central to the preservation of the freedoms given by the Constitution.⁴³

The tribulations that the Anti-Imperialist League had with President McKinley and his jingoist foreign policies was evident in their concern for the people of the former Spanish colonies and the concept of the "consent of the governed." This concept was, and still is, viewed as pivotal to the survival of any republic. This concept gave the right to decide what is best for a nation to the people who reside therein.⁴⁴ According to the Anti-Imperialist League, McKinley and his foreign policies violated the right to "consent of the governed" of the people living on the Pacific islands. Historian Fred Harrington looked at the AIL's arguments against President McKinley's policies. These arguments

⁴² Elmer B. Adams, "The Causes and Results of Our War With Spain From a Legal Standpoint," *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (Dec. 1898), 120.

⁴³ Bryan, "First Speech Against Imperialism." 5.

⁴⁴ Benedict R Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised and extended. ed.), (London: Verso. 1991). Benedict Anderson, an influential historian, sheds light on these ideas in his book *Imagined Communities*.

took a look at the integral nature of the concept of the consent of the governed to the United States.

the doctrines which asserted that a government could not rule peoples without their consent, and that the United States, having been conceived as an instrument of and for its own people, should not imitate the methods or interfere in the affairs of the Old World nations in any way. However these doctrines may be regarded today, there can be no doubt that they had a very real meaning for the citizens who organized the anti-imperialist movement. Almost to a man the anti-expansionists sincerely believed that abandonment of these "guiding principles" would mean the doom of the republic.⁴⁵

A similar observation of McKinley's new foreign policy was demonstrated on several occasions within the *Advocate of Peace*, an Anti-Imperialist newspaper. The AIL argued publicly through various publications such as *The Advocate of Peace*, and various newspapers from across the nation. The Advocate of Peace, an Anti-Imperialist newspaper, founded in 1837, was used by the Anti-Imperialist League during the last several years of the nineteenth century, and into the early years of the twentieth century. The concept of the "consent of the governed" was central to the League's arguments, and the AIL's publications expressed this view many times throughout the last several years of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ The League argued that without consent from the people of the former Spanish colonies the United States had no right to rule over them. As William Lloyd Garrison put it, "War is incompatible with free government. It is the handmaid of despotism. It necessitates the stifling of free discussion."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Fred H., Harrington, "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States 1898-1900," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (September, 1935).

⁴⁶ Moorfield Storey, "The Neutralization of the Philippines as a Peace Measure. From the recent Annual Address of Moorfield Storey, President of the Anti-Imperialist League of Boston," *The Advocate of Peace (1894-1920)*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January, 1908), 19-20.

⁴⁷ William Lloyd, Garrison. "War and Imperialism Fatal to Self Government," *The Advocate of Peace (1894-1920)*, Vol. 60, No. 9 (October 1898), 210.

Garrison, and the Anti-Imperialist League, extended their argument to include the notion that if the United States government was able to strip the consent of the governed away from the people of the Pacific islands, what was to stop it from doing the same to the American people at large. The Anti-Imperialist League believed that this would ultimately result in the death of the republic as a whole. Jennings Bryan weighed in on the impact of colonialism on the American people and the "consent of the governed.":

Heretofore greed has perverted the government and used its instrumentalities for private gains, but now the very foundation principles of our government are assaulted, Our Nation must give up any intention of enter upon a colonial policy, such as is now pursued by European countries, or it must abandon the doctrine that government derive their powers from the consent of the governed.⁴⁸

Garrison, in a very outspoken article that called out the United States for its ideological duplicity, argued that the consent of the governed was denied to the people of the various island chains the United States were involved in previous to 1898. The United States prior to the Spanish American war subjugated the Hawaiian and Sandwich island chains.

To enter upon such a career as our Jingo picture, we must renounce the principles which have made the country great. Imperial rule abroad necessitates imperial rule at home. No nation can have adjustable ethics, applicable alike to freedom and to the government of subjugated races. If it is right to deny suffrage to the governed people in the Sandwich Islands, it will not be long before, under the plea of necessity, suffrage in the United States will be curtailed and the right of the governed to choose their representatives denied.⁴⁹

These articles serve as telling examples of how the AIL presented its ideas to the American people.

Historian Fred Harvey Harrington, outlined The AIL's arguments further by arguing that the consent of the governed was important to legitimate the government's imperialist policies. The Anti-Imperialist League pointed out that consent was not given, or even sought out. Garrison also argued against the Imperialists who wished to abandon

⁴⁸ Bryan, "First Speech Against Imperialism," 5.

⁴⁹ Garrison, "War and Imperialism Fatal to Self Government," 208.

the traditions that the United States had been so faithful to for nearly a century. They also wanted to become actively involved in global politics, which the AIL argued would do nothing more than hurt the people of the United States in the long run.

The Anti-Imperialist movement existed before the establishment of the AIL and the members of the movement held beliefs similar to those of the AIL. Even before the onset of the Spanish American War, imperialist rumblings in Washington D.C. reached the Anti-Imperialists. Early publications in the popular Anti-Imperialist newspaper, *The Advocate of Peace* put forth a scathing commentary on President McKinley's inaugural address in 1897 that denounced many of his political stances.

The author argued that "The President says " we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression."* This certainly implies, though it does not say, that we must avoid the temptation of territorial greed. Our real danger lies just here. If we become greedy of more territory, for the purpose of national aggrandizement, we shall be sure to become territorially aggressive, if not directly by arms, yet by other means which are often quite as effective and not less criminal.⁵⁰ This was a quite forthright commentary on the way that many Anti-Imperialist League members eventually began to feel about the annexation of territory, even before the outset of the Spanish American War.

The Anti-Imperialist League sought to prove to the American people that the traditions of isolationism and the preservation of traditional American foreign policies like the Monroe Doctrine, were important to the survival of the United States. The AIL argued that McKinley's policies were hypocritical and jingoist, and that the abandonment of the traditional foreign policies would injure the health of the United States in the long run, undermine the "American way", and begin to erode the thoughts and traditions that Americans held most sacred, including the ideology of the consent of the governed.

⁵⁰ "President McKinley's Inaugural," *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920), Vol. 59, No. 4 (April 1897), 78.

The AIL's next argument against the establishment of empire utilized the United States Constitution as evidence. The AIL argued that the Constitution made no provisions for the United States to establish a European style empire that would include non-contiguous territory. The Anti-Imperialists used traditional rhetoric as well as literal interpretations of the Constitution to argue that it was contrary to the fundamental tenets of American democracy for President McKinley and his government, with the support of other Imperialists, to establish an overseas empire. The AIL asserted that President McKinley and the imperialists were violating the supreme law of the land.

The Constitution serves as the basis for all laws and policies instituted in the United States. Throughout its history, it has seen its fair share of controversy, and revision, and continues to be hotly debated to this day. The debate between the Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists, over the legality of creating an overseas empire, was no different. The Imperialists argued that the spirit of the Constitution would not prevent the United States from taking the former Spanish colonies and keeping them as an overseas possessions. They posited that the founding fathers had not imagined that the United States would have the ability to become a world power capable of establishing an overseas sphere of influence, and therefore did not write provisions into the Constitution for such an occurrence.⁵¹ According to the Imperialists, in the event the United States found itself in possession of overseas territory, an occurrence not anticipated by the founding fathers, that McKinley and his administration had to do what they thought was best for the nation.

The Anti Imperialists, on the other hand, argued that the letter of the Constitution needed to be followed, that the founding fathers wrote the constitution as a living

⁵¹ Tomkins, 25-26.

document, and that since there had been no amendments specifically providing legal avenues for the establishment of empire that it was forbidden by law.⁵² Essentially, the Anti-Imperialist League argued that the establishment of an empire was antithetical to a literal reading of the Constitution, and they argued this point vigorously.

H.E Von Holst, a prominent German-American Anti-Imperialist, also discussed the importance of the Constitution, and the implications it had for the establishment of an empire, the constitutions stances on self government, and its importance to the perpetuation of freedom and American values.

The federal government under the constitution has never swerved from the path thus taken by the old Congress. Our laws teem with provisions bearing testimony to the fact that self government is the basic national principle, not merely granted as an inestimable privilege to the incipient new commonwealths, the in choate states of the future, but also imposed upon them as an irrefragable obligation.⁵³ Von Holst's perspective allowed the Anti-Imperialist League to see the hypocrisy being perpetrated by the President McKinley from an outside viewpoint, and thereby bring into focus the true nature of McKinley's deviation from traditional American foreign policies and America's most foundational document.

The AIL's arguments that the Constitution did not include protocols for the acquisition of new territory was not a new one in 1898. In fact, Anti-Expansionists argued against acquiring new territory as far back as the purchase of the Louisiana territory from France. Michael P. Cullinane looked at the Anti-Imperialist ideology beginning to form in this time period. "Interpreting the law in cases of acquisition and governance of new territory would persist as one of the most relied on means of anti

⁵² William Jennings Bryan, "Cincinnati Speech" (1899) *Bryan on Imperialism*, (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1970) 11.

⁵³ H.E. Von Holst, "The Annexation of Hawaii," *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920), Vol. 60, No. 3, (March 1898), 65.

imperial activism throughout the nineteenth century,..."⁵⁴ Anti-Imperialist arguments renewed these arguments regarding the thoughts that the United States was not able to acquire new territory under the Constitution. Even prior to the establishment of the AIL, Anti-Imperialists were hard at work in an effort to subvert the establishment of empire. Arguments against the annexations of Hawaii, and other Pacific island chains illustrated these ideas.⁵⁵

The Anti-Imperialist League and Imperialists alike, used the Constitution and its lack of explicit language as legal justification for their arguments. AIL supporter, and prominent lawyer, Elmer Adams examined the language in the constitution that caused expansion controversy.

First: Section III, Article 4, ordains as follows: "The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States." Second: The same section and article ordains as follows: "New states may be admitted by the Congress into this Union."⁵⁶ "There is certainly no power given by the Constitution to the federal government to establish or maintain colonies bordering on the United States, or at a distance, to be ruled and governed at its own pleasure, nor to enlarge its territorial limits in any way except by the admission of new states."⁵⁷ According to Adams, the Constitution did not give the Federal government the right to annex the islands of the former Spanish empire and incorporate them into the United States. The Anti-Imperialist League took this concept and incorporated it into their rhetoric, and built several of its political arguments around this concept.

The Anti-Imperialist League argued that since the Constitution did not give specifics when it came to the concept of adding new territory into the union that traditional annexation practices ought to be observed. The Anti-Imperialist League was

⁵⁴ Cullinane, 13.

⁵⁵ Tomkins, 18-22.

⁵⁶ Adams, "The Causes and Results of Our War With Spain From a Legal Standpoint," 123.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 126.

opposed to keeping the former Spanish colonies because they were not slated to become states. The people who lived in these new territories were kept in a state of limbo, where the people were not U.S. Citizens because the islands were not states, but neither were they free because the islands were not granted their independence. An excellent example of this was the islands of Hawaii. The United States annexed the islands of Hawaii in 1898, but they did not become a state until 1959.⁵⁸ The people of Hawaii stayed in this state of limbo for six decades and were subsequently taken advantage of by American business owners, all the while, not having the rights and privileges of American citizens.⁵⁹ It was this type of political ambiguity that the Anti-Imperialist League sought to avoid. Historian Julius W. Pratt commented on the Hawaiian situation that the United States found themselves in, as the AIL viewed it.

Annexation by joint resolution was Unconstitutional. Hawaii, if annexed, would in all probability become a state with two senators. In view of this unwelcome possibility, Senator Morrill announced that he was opposed to annexation. 'weather by treaty or by joint resolution, by flagrant Executive usurpation, or in any manner which leaves an open door for their admission into the union as a state.⁶⁰

In 1898, US Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts argued that taking these foreign lands and incorporating them into the United States' sphere of influence without making them into states was antithetical to the constitution by its very nature.

Dominion over subject people, and the rule over vassal states, was forbidden to us by the constitution, by our political principles, by every lesson of our own history and of all history. Our rule should be to acquire no territory except where we can reasonably expect that the people we acquire will, in due time and on suitable conditions be annexed to the United States as an equal part of a self governing republic.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, (New York: Random House, 2008), 256-264.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 256-264.

⁶⁰ Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898 The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, (Boston: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 323-324.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 324-325.

According to the AIL the constitution did not provide any way for McKinley and his government to annex the former Spanish colonies, and keep them as colonies, without extending the rights and privileges of citizenship to the inhabitants of the islands, and eventually creating states out of the new territory. They argued this because of the annexation traditions that the United States adhered to throughout the twentieth century. Never before had the United States taken control of territory without the express purpose of creating states out of them.⁶²

The Anti-Imperialist League utilized the American Constitution as evidence to prove to the American people that the arguments espoused by the Imperialists were hypocritical and in direct violation of the supreme law of the land. The AIL used the Constitution to illustrate the folly of McKinley's new policies and the annexation of the former Spanish colonies, as well as provide illustrations of what the future possibly held if the United States was allowed to establish an overseas empire.

The Anti-Imperialist League also argued that the United States was not given the right to take new territory without the express purpose of making them into states. Again, the League relied on the Constitution for evidence against the Imperialists. The Anti-Imperialist League believed that if territory was to be incorporated into the United States, the Constitution demanded that they become states. President McKinley and his administration had little to no interest in making states out of the former Spanish colonies and so the AIL accused them of egregiously violating the basic tenets of the constitution.⁶³ The lack of answers to the question of whether or not the acquired Spanish

⁶²Theodore Woolsey, "An Inquiry Concerning our Foreign Relations," *Yale Review*, I (August, 1892.) 162-174.

⁶³Adams, 124

colonies would gain statehood, according to the League, was nothing short of yet another hypocrisy.

The Anti-Imperialists were not completely blind to the appeal of Imperialist arguments, and the desire for additional territory to be incorporated into the United States. They argued that the former Spanish colonies could be annexed into the United States, if and only if they were destined to become states, according to the provisions of statehood provided in the Constitution. The AIL admitted that the Constitution did provide for the federal government to take territory for the express purpose making them into states; however, the people therein would be imbued with all of the rights and privileges that came with being a citizen of the United States. The AIL argued that the United States annexing this territory without making them into states would again leave the people in a state of limbo and would truly violate the rights of the inhabitants of the islands. The violation of these people's rights would be a slight against the integrity of the Constitution of the United States, and weaken the standing of the United States globally, according to the Anti-Imperialist League.⁶⁴ William Jennings Bryan, a prominent Anti-Imperialist, looked at the issues with annexation and its inconsistencies with the making of new states.

If all annexed territory is given a territorial form of government with the understanding that the territorial form is merely a preparation for complete statehood, then no annexation will be tolerated, unless the people who are to come in are capable of sharing in the full destiny of our people.⁶⁵ In this statement Bryan is arguing that if the people of the Philippines are not capable of sharing in the responsibilities that come along with becoming states, then the annexation of the Philippines cannot be tolerated. Bryan is alluding to the tradition of annexing

⁶⁴ Ibid, 350.

⁶⁵ William Jennings Bryan, *Bryan on Imperialism. Speeches, Newspaper Articles and Interviews*, (1899), (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1970), 65.

territory in preparation for the formation of new states. The AIL as a whole stressed the importance of being consistent with this tradition.

AIL member Julius W. Pratt looked at the way that the democratic Anti-Imperialist senators looked at the annexation of territory.

If the Philippine islands were taken under American sovereignty, argued the Democratic Senators, the Constitution in its full extent would at once become applicable. The Filipinos would become citizens; all taxes, duties, and imposts must be applied to the islands equally with the continent.⁶⁶ These senators argued that the annexation of the former Spanish territory would convey the rights and privileges of every American citizen automatically upon every inhabitant of the annexed territory. According to those Senators, that being the case the United States would then incorporate millions of non-white, non-English speaking, and non-protestant citizens into the body politic of the United States. These areas also would, according to traditional precedent, require statehood shortly thereafter, including the representation in the national government. All of these were issues that the largely white male protestant, and largely Republican, government officials would find difficult to accept. This issue truly brought the attention of the Anti-Imperialists' supporters to the internal issues, and the overall hypocrisy that the Imperialists argued for.⁶⁷

The Anti-Imperialist League as a whole, concurred with the Democratic Senators. The AIL argued that if these islands were to be incorporated into the United States that they should become full states, and the people would become American citizens. The Anti-Imperialist League believed anything short of statehood would be in violation of the Constitution. Elmer Adams wrote about the destiny of the former Spanish Colonies."In other words, under the Constitution of the United States, as it now stands, statehood is the

⁶⁶ Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, 348.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 348-349.

ultimate destiny of all territory belonging, or which may belong, to this nation."⁶⁸ Adams went on to discuss the way that the United States set itself precedent for allowing exceptions to the protocol for the admission of new states. He looked at the rather loose population requirements, as well as the state governmental systems that the territories set up before inclusion as states. Adams continued by arguing that with minimal work the Philippines would meet the governmental requirements and the population requirements set up in the constitution were easily met. In fact, Adams argued that the Philippines could be comfortably split into as many as five new states for inclusion into the Union.⁶⁹

The AIL argued that if the United States was not going to make the territory into states, they required independence. Alexander Vest, an Anti-Imperialist democratic senator from Missouri was the first person to propose legislation that would keep the United States from keeping the new acquisitions as colonies. Vest was not against the concept of acquiring territory, but he believed, like the AIL, that they should be made into states. Historian Michael Cullinane quotes Vest as follows, "(territory) must be acquired.... with the purpose of organizing such territories into states suitable for admission into the Union."⁷⁰ Vest, a vocal Anti-Imperialist, is also quoted by Historian Julius W Pratt, as saying

That under the Constitution of the United States no power is given to the Federal Government to acquire territory to be held and governed permanently as colonies. The Colonial system of European nations cannot be established under our present constitution, but all territory acquired by the Government, except such small amount as may be necessary for coaling stations, must be acquired and governed with the purpose of ultimately organizing such territory into States suitable for admission into the Union.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Adams, "The Causes and Results of Our War With Spain From a Legal Standpoint" 125-126.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 126.

⁷⁰ Cullinane, 30.

⁷¹ Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, 346.

Vest saw the federal government perpetrating a hypocrisy, by defying the Constitution of the United States in favor of jingoist foreign policies.

Moorfield Storey, another prominent Anti-Imperialist also looked at the concept of independence for the former Spanish Colonies. He argued that giving independence to the former colonies, the Philippines in particular, could be easily achieved, and that the islands themselves could be placed under a protectorate treaty agreement signed by the global powers and made into an independent nation.⁷²

The Anti-Imperialist League also used fear to motivate the American people into supporting their point of view. They argued that the preservation of the American way of life was directly tied to the preservation of traditional foreign political ideas, and that without these traditions that the basic tenets of American society would begin to crumble.

Tradition was integral to the Anti-Imperialist League. The League's members argued that traditional ideologies were integral to the survival of the nation, and the preservation of the personal freedoms that came along with it. The survival of the republic held a great significance to the Anti-Imperialist League, and many members argued that the inclusion of noncontiguous territory into an overseas empire would lead to the collapse of the American republic. Vest weighs in on the importance of personal liberties.

There was no place under our constitution for the colonial system of Europe, based , as that system was 'upon the fundamental idea that the people of immense areas of territory can be held as subjects, never to become citizens.' It was against that system that our revolutionary war had been fought, and it was unthinkable that we should reestablish it ourselves.⁷³

⁷² Moorfield Storey, "The Neutralization of the Philippines as a Peace Measure". From the recent Annual Address of Moorfield Storey, President of the Anti-Imperialist League of Boston" *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920). Vol. 70, No. 1, (January, 1908), 19-20.

⁷³ Pratt, *Expansionists of 1899: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, 346.

Vest argued that the annexation of the former Spanish colonies, and not including them as states, providing the people who resided therein with the rights and privileges of citizenship, the United States would become nothing more than a despotic regime.⁷⁴

William Jennings Bryan also contributed to this argument by saying, "The Imperialists do not desire to clothe the Filipinos with all the rights and privileges of American citizenship; they want to exercise sovereignty over a theory entirely at variance with constitutional government."⁷⁵ Bryan went on to say, "Imperialism might expand the nation's territory but it would contract the nation's purpose. It is not a step forward toward a broader destiny; it is a step backward, toward the narrow views of kings and emperors."⁷⁶ The AIL used these arguments, and others like them to declare McKinley's new policies as hypocritical.

When it was apparent that McKinley, and the imperialists, would not allow the new colonies to become states, the Anti-Imperialist League began advocating for a way that the United States could disentangle itself from the ideological quagmire that it found itself in. The AIL provided President McKinley and the American people with a choice, independence or statehood. When it became obvious that statehood was not likely, the AIL began to push for the independence of the former Spanish colonies.

The Anti-Imperialist League felt that any acquisition taken by the United States must be destined to be a state, and that any island that was not going to be made into a state ought to be allowed independence. William Jennings Bryan spoke on the importance of independence as well. "The Filipinos are not far enough advanced to share in the government of the people of the United States, but they are competent to govern

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Bryan, *Bryan on Imperialism: Speeches, Newspaper Articles and Interviews*, 12

⁷⁶ Ibid, 15.

themselves."⁷⁷ These views were directly tied to feelings of American Exceptionalism amongst Anti-Imperialists. Historian Julius W. Pratt looked at the arguments of US Senators Platt and Chilton who were prominent in drafting the 1898 declaration of war, and its amendments. They argued, that without the consent of congress the Philippines and the Filipino people could not be brought into the United States without being in direct violation of the Constitution. They believed this because of the perceived inferiority of the Filipinos, as well as the supposed superiority of the American political system.

Pratt also looked further at the arguments of Platt and Chilton who questioned the ability of the United States to annex the former Spanish colonies under the spirit of the Teller Amendment.⁷⁸ The Teller amendment kept the United States from directly annexing Cuba, and Platt and Chilton argued that the spirit of the amendment provided a blanket proclamation that the United States could not annex any of the former Spanish colonies. The Anti-Imperialist League advocated the United States allowing the former Spanish Colonies be admitted into the Union as states, and if they were not going to become states, that they be allowed their independence.

The AIL's final argument regarding the preservation of traditional ideologies concerned the precedent established by the acquisition of the former American territorial acquisitions. Imperialists argued that a precedent had been set as early as the Louisiana purchase that allowed presidents to annex territory into the control of the United States government. These acquisitions, argued the Imperialists, gave the United States the prerogative to take whatever territory it so chose as a spoil of war, or other action as

⁷⁷ William Jennings Bryan, "Jackson Day Speech at Chicago," *Bryan on Imperialism*, (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1970), 13.

⁷⁸ Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands*, 354.

agreed upon between two national states. This is best illustrated when examining the end of the Mexican American War and the annexation of the American southwest. However, the Anti-Imperialist League was skeptical of any claims regarding such precedent and sought to refute them.

Imperialists argued that the founding fathers supported territorial expansion, and they used the American expansion under President Thomas Jefferson as evidence for their claims. Further expansions including Texas, the American southwest, from Mexico, and the purchase of Alaska from Russia, solidified these precedents in the minds of the American people. AIL thinkers such as William Jennings Bryan retorted with their own evaluation of Jefferson and his viewpoints on imperialism, and in doing so invalidated imperialist arguments, as the annexation of the Spanish colonies were incongruous with the precedents set by the United States early in the nineteenth century. Bryan in several of his speeches discussed this idea.

Jefferson has been quoted in support of imperialism, but our opponents must distinguish between imperialism and expansion; they must also distinguish between imperialism and expansion; they must also distinguish between expansion in the western hemisphere and an expansion that involves us in the quarrels of Europe and the orient. They must still further distinguish between expansion which secures contiguous territory for future settlement and expansion which secures us alien races for future subjugation. Jefferson favored the annexation of necessary contiguous territory on the North American Continent, but he was opposed to wars of conquest and expressly condemned the acquiring of remote territory.⁷⁹

Our opponents, conscious of the weakness of their cause, seek to confuse imperialism with expansion, and have endeavored to claim Jefferson as a supporter of their policy. Jefferson spoke so freely and used language with such precision that no one can be ignorant of his views. On one occasion he declared, 'If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, It is that we should have nothing to do with conquest.' and again he said: 'Conquest is not in our principles; it is inconsistent with our government.'⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Bryan, *Bryan on Imperialism: Speeches, Newspaper Articles and Interviews*, 5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 75.

Bryan drew a distinction between the acquisition of territory on the North American continent and the acquisition of overseas territory. This distinction became an important point for the AIL which became the backbone of the retorts to the Imperialist arguments.

After examination of the United States' previous territorial acquisition, the AIL argued that the annexation of territory before the Spanish American war was acceptable within the ideological constructs of America's traditional foreign policies. Prominent Anti-Imperialist Carl Shurz, in an 1899 speech entitled "American Imperialism", looked at the differences between the annexations of Florida, Alaska, and others in relationship to the then current string of proposed annexations by the United States.

All the former acquisitions were on the continent, and excepting Alaska contiguous to our borders. They were situated, not in the tropical, but in the temperate zone where our people could migrate in mass. They were but very thinly peopled - in fact without any population that would have been in the way of new settlement. They could be organized as territories in the usual manner, with the expectation that they would presently come in the union as self governing states with populations substantially homogenous to our own. They did not require a material increase of our army or navy, either for their subjection to our rule or for their defense against any probable foreign attack provoked by their being in our possession.... Compare now with our old acquisitions as to all these important points those at present in view.⁸¹

Shurz argued that the previous acquisitions were contiguous territory, and were annexed for the express purpose of creating space in thinly populated areas for the white Anglo-Saxon protestant American population to spread out, and prosper. He countered imperialists by arguing the former Spanish colonies were annexed for different purposes. He went on to argue that the people of the United States would never move to these tropical island locations en-masse as they had previously.⁸²

The League also had to deal with the popular notion of Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny was the ideology that the United States was destined to spread outward

⁸¹ Shurz, "American Imperialism," *American Imperialism in 1898*, 78.

⁸² *Ibid*, 78-79.

beyond its borders and was very popular early throughout the nineteenth century. It was initially used to justify the expansion across the continent, however imperialists used this concept when justifying the expansion into the Pacific with the islands of the former Spanish empire. The Anti-Imperialist League attempted to discredit this; however, the idea that the United States was destined to continue to spread its influence outward was extremely popular amongst the American populous. Manifest Destiny was a notion that was too powerful, popular and widespread for the AIL to effectively refute.⁸³

The Anti-Imperialist League worked to refute the notion that the Spanish colonies could be acquired as an empire, based on historical precedent. The Imperialists evoked the authority of the founding fathers like Thomas Jefferson, as well as utilizing the popular ideology of Manifest Destiny to justify the annexation of overseas colonies. The Anti-Imperialist League, throughout its lifespan, spent a great deal of time arguing against these ideologies, attempting to illustrate the folly of creating an overseas empire.

The abandonment of traditional isolationism, as well as a criticism of McKinley's replacement foreign policies were two of the ways that the Anti-Imperialist League illustrated the hypocrisy of the creation of an American Empire. The Anti-Imperialist League supported the traditional foreign policies of Washington and Jefferson, as well as, the Monroe Doctrine. They supported isolationism and sought to check to the acceptance of McKinley's jingoist imperial foreign policies.

The League also believed that the acquisition of new overseas territories was hypocritical. The AIL argued that the Constitution did not have the any provisions for the annexation of the former Spanish colonies. They also argued that the United States did not have the precedent for annexing new territory without making them into states,

⁸³Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Yale University Press, 2009), 39-42.

and that all the territory annexed by the United States throughout the nineteenth century, was conducted under different conditions. The AIL believed that the creation of a European style empire was against the tenets of the Constitution and that the former colonies ought to be granted their independence.

Further arguments brought by the AIL, stated that if the United States was not going to be granting them their independence, then the United States needed to make them into states, which would come with the appropriate representation in Washington and the rights and privileges as American citizens.

The AIL, throughout their arguments against imperialism, had a constant warning to the American people. They argued that if the United States were to begin assembling an empire, the American republic would begin to deteriorate. The AIL believed that if the United States could deny the people of the former Spanish empire the right of the "consent of the governed" across the Pacific, what would preclude the government from denying American citizens those same rights at home. The AIL also thought that the if the United States were to set up an empire that the death of the republic could be a direct result.

To the members of the Anti-Imperialist League, all of these arguments illustrated the hypocrisy that the United States found itself in at the end of the Spanish American War. Throughout 1898 the AIL relentlessly attempted to stem the tide of imperial expansionist sentiment amongst the American people by showing the American people the importance of tradition. Isolationism, and traditional foreign political ideas was very important to the Anti-Imperialist League. The League emphatically opposed to the acquisition of overseas colonies at the end of the Spanish American War, and they

believed that the United States was being hypocritical when annexation began to occur.

Historian Theodore P. Greene, discussed the AIL's arguments for the traditional political and social doctrines of the United States.

Anti Imperialists, on the other hand, asked whether a republic like the United States could afford to contradict its political and social traditions by assuming control over other peoples who were to be its subjects, not its citizens. Would not such a course endanger our basic institutions and weaken our philosophy of government? These were the central and the enduring questions which posed the dilemma for thoughtful citizens.⁸⁴

Imperialists worked hard to contradict the Anti-Imperialist League at every turn, and were largely successful. The Imperialists argued that the AIL was standing in the way of progress and discounted the League's arguments at every turn.

As the months drew on, and the Spanish American War drew to a close, it became more and more obvious that the AIL was not going to succeed in its goal to subvert the establishment of an American empire. This realization began to stress the unity of the high ranking members of the AIL. Secondary arguments, that branched off of the appeals to tradition, began to creep into the league's rhetoric. This became an issue because of the disparate nature of the members of the AIL. People from all walks of life were no longer united behind appeals to tradition and the associated arguments. These secondary arguments began to fracture the AIL's delicate internal balance. This is part of the Anti-Imperialist League that is largely ignored by historians, and it is something that is unique to this analysis of the AIL.

While these secondary arguments were always present amongst the ranks of the AIL, by the time the year 1900 divisions amongst the upper echelons of the AIL were bad enough that the outset of the Philippine Insurrection could not re-unite the AIL. In an attempt to reunite the AIL behind one specific cause the AIL put forth William Jennings

⁸⁴ Theodore P Greene, *American Imperialism in 1898*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1955), *i*.

Bryan as a presidential candidate. The presidential election of 1900 marked a turning point for the AIL. William Jennings Bryan ran as a Democrat, and also supported a number of the AIL's arguments. However, Bryan also supported the notion of Free Silver, which was unpopular with a large number of Democrats. Free Silver was also less than popular with several of the high profile members of the AIL. Bryan's unpopular ideas cost him the presidency, and also cost the AIL its chance to have a supporter in the White House. Bryan's defeat was particularly hard on the Anti-Imperialist League because afterward the divisions amongst the high ranking members, and the rise in importance of secondary arguments became even more pronounced than before. These secondary arguments were the direct reason for the AIL's loss of effectiveness and, in turn, allowed the establishment of the American empire to be completed relatively unopposed.

Chapter 3:

Secondary Arguments

Prior to 1900, the AIL struggled against the growing tide of popular and political support for the creation of an American empire; clearly, the League was fighting a losing battle. The League's leadership thought that the only way to reverse the process was to field William Jennings Bryan as a presidential candidate against McKinley in 1900. Unfortunately, McKinley's victory was another crushing defeat for the Anti-Imperialist League. Bryan's loss exacerbated the inherent turmoil within the upper echelons of the AIL's leadership. This defeat as well as the increasing probability of an American empire loomed large in the minds of the AIL's members. The upper echelons of the AIL created the rhetoric, and the further and further away from their central goal the more divided they became over the AIL's internal policies. Since the AIL was such a disparate group of Americans, from all sorts of different political, economic, and racial backgrounds, the deterioration of its primary objective resulted in the rise of secondary arguments. These secondary arguments illustrated the partisan nature of the AIL's leadership and its inherent inability to work together, it also created a loose confederation of groups that all presented different arguments to the public. The AIL lost its united front, and in turn much of its effectiveness. This loss of effectiveness led to the AIL being unable to capitalize on some of the events that took place in and around 1900, most notably the Philippine insurrection.

It is these arguments that many historians tend to miss in their brief examinations of the Anti-Imperialist League. Many historians do not examine the ideas of the AIL at all, but it was the rise of these secondary arguments that facilitated the AIL's fall from prominence. The disparate nature of the AIL's members led to the rise of these secondary ideas and, in turn, led to the fall of the AIL due to infighting amongst its highest echelons.

After its creation, membership in the American Anti-Imperialist League grew for a variety of reasons. Many members became involved because of their adherence to ideas of American Exceptionalism, racial superiority, national security, and others. While the preservation of traditional foreign policies and ideologies served as the primary argument against Imperialists early in 1898, these secondary arguments were quite popular amongst many of the members of the Anti-Imperialist League from the very outset. However, the prominence of these ideas escalated as 1898 drew to a close, and became even more important after the election of 1900. There were many of the secondary arguments that the Anti-Imperialist league relied upon to combat imperialist sentiments; however, several became more influential with its members than others. These arguments saw their genesis in the traditional arguments, but began to branch further and further away from the preservation of traditional ideologies as the turn of the century approached.

The first of the AIL's secondary arguments came from an economic standpoint. The AIL believed that the Imperialist entrepreneurs advocated for annexation in order to benefit themselves and their shareholders. The League attempted to illustrate that one of the major reasons that the United States considered annexing islands across the Pacific

Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico was due to pressure from American business interests. Imperialists argued that the markets in Asia would open new outlets for the American economy, and provide protected overseas markets for excess American goods.⁸⁵ The League believed that the United States did not need to subjugate, and forcibly place them under the American sphere of influence in order to provide foreign markets for excess American goods.

The next secondary argument resonated with League members in very different ways. The concepts of race and equality played important roles in the establishment of the American empire. Also, American Exceptionalism was an important ideology to Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists alike. The concept that white Anglo-Saxon Protestants would sit in the houses of government as equals alongside Filipinos and Cubans was largely looked at as a preposterous notion.⁸⁶ Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists alike, used racist viewpoints to justify the retention of the former Spanish Colonies. Prominent Imperialists also used racist arguments such as "The White Man's Burden" or "Benevolent Assimilation" to justify the annexation of the former Spanish colonies.⁸⁷ Some members of the Anti-Imperialist League also used their own unique brand of racism throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The final secondary ideology was important to Imperialists as well as Anti-Imperialists, and is important to many Americans even to this day. This final ideology involved the preservation of national security. The imperialists argued that retention of the former Spanish colonies were integral to the national security of the United States.

⁸⁵ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.) 18.

⁸⁶ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*, (Yale University Press. 2008), 79-81.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 61-70.

Alternatively, the Anti-Imperialists argued that the United States had no reason to be overly concerned with national security after the Spanish American War was resolved, due to the positive relationships that the United States had with the imperial powers of Europe. The AIL also argued that the retention of these colonies could lead to future hostilities over trade routes and land disputes between the imperial nations.⁸⁸

By 1900, these various secondary arguments, became nearly as important to the League as their views on traditional isolationism. While these were not as integral to the AIL as the preservation of traditional isolationism they were still important to the arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League because they initially grew from these traditional viewpoints. That being said, the divergence from its primary objectives illustrated the AIL's incongruent arguments composition, and made extremely obvious the fact that the Anti-Imperialist League was a confederation of political and social interests. The inherent greed of the American business interests who pushed for the acquisition of foreign markets, racist attitudes, and the preservation of national security all served as secondary arguments against Imperialism for the AIL. These secondary arguments are important when examining the League's efforts after the treaty of 1898, and are the direct reason for the loss of effectiveness of the AIL after 1900 presidential campaign until the end of its life.

In the years following the end of the Spanish-American War, the American Anti-Imperialist League attempted to bring into disrepute the American business interests' Imperialist sentiments. The Anti-Imperialists worked tirelessly to discredit and to combat

⁸⁸Theodore Woolsey, "An Inquiry Concerning our Foreign Relations," *Yale Review*, I (August, 1892.) 162-174.

the American entrepreneurs' insurances on empire in an effort illustrate to the American people the folly of empire. These entrepreneurs included the leaders of businesses such as James Dole, J.P. Morgan, and others.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, American industrial and agricultural production out-paced domestic demand, leading to a large excess in American trade goods. From the industrialists perspective the liquidation of these excess trade goods was of paramount importance. One solution to this issue that they devised involved utilizing overseas markets to assuage the stress of the excess goods on the marketplace.⁸⁹ The problem was that overseas marketplaces changed a great deal during the nineteenth century. At its beginning, the United States traded a majority of its excess goods into the European markets.⁹⁰ However, throughout the nineteenth century, American businesses began to out produce the demands of European marketplaces. As the nineteenth century wore on, European nations became increasingly protective of their domestic marketplaces and American products faced restrictions in many European nations. As a result, American business interests searched for new overseas markets in order to sell their excess goods. The Asian markets of China, Japan and the other Asiatic countries provided American business owners with promising locations to move their excess goods.⁹¹

As American business owners planned to flood the Asian marketplaces with American goods, several European empire, began to divide up the Asiatic marketplaces into "spheres of influence" in the mid-nineteenth century. Also, Japan was a developing

⁸⁹ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 125.

⁹⁰ E. Berkley Tomkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 5.

⁹¹ Walter, LaFeber, *The New Empire. An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), 379.

nation in its own right and was looking to expand onto the mainland of Asia. The French government closed Indochina to most foreign trade, and Germany, France, England, Japan and Russia divided China into several "spheres of influence" and the United States could not trade freely with the Chinese. These spheres of influence became zones of economic control for each nation, where they enjoyed special political arrangements, such as "most favored nation status", as well as economic incentives to trade with that particular location. John Hay's Open Door Notes, facilitated the further bolstering of these spheres of influence by crafting legitimate treaties and other governmental agreements between China and the United States.⁹² "[t]he imperialistic powers were carving up China like a ripe melon, and American merchants were beginning to fear that they might be shut out of this potentially vast market."⁹³ The business interests of the United States were left with very limited options. John Hay's "Open Door Notes" could only go so far in opening Asia to American trade agreements. Therefore, the most attractive option to the American entrepreneurs was to lobby for the annexation of non-contiguous territories and to use these locations as an outlet for excess American goods.⁹⁴

The plight of the American business interests was discussed in detail in the trade journals of the time. These trade journals delineated the growing problem with American production as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Journals such as the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, *The Journal of Commerce*, the *Boston Herald*, and the

⁹² Thomas Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, (Tenth Ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980) 470.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 471-472.

⁹⁴ LaFeber, 370.

Tradesman discussed the importance of the expansion of American business interests into stable overseas markets.⁹⁵

By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States out produced most every other nation on the planet. It was this over production that led the United States to depend on overseas markets to sell the excess goods.⁹⁶ The Anti-Imperialist League was not opposed to the expansion of American industry, quite the contrary in fact. Some of the most prominent AIL members were extremely successful entrepreneurs, the most notable being Industrialist and steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie. However, the AIL was opposed to the annexation of territory by the United States in order to create a "sphere of influence" of its own. The AIL argued that this annexation of territory was not congruent with traditional foreign policy standards and pandered directly to the greed of a handful of wealthy Americans. The AIL argued that the annexation of territory benefiting only a few Americans, and that the country would be accepting long term commitments in an effort to make a few Americans wealthy in the short run. "Some Anti-Expansionists urged financial retrenchment in order to start American industries and farms booming again rather than paying fancy price tags for noncontiguous territory."⁹⁷ Roland G. Usher a prominent politician and historian defined Imperialist viewpoints on the purpose of the American economy.

The economic interests of the nation may be divided into the right to advance in all just ways our economic welfare at home; to extend American trade to all parts of the world; to insure a continuity of intercourse with all countries; to protect the lives and property of American citizens in foreign countries and on the high seas.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Ibid, 371-372.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 18.

⁹⁷ LaFeber, 32.

⁹⁸ Roland G Usher, *The Challenge of the Future*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), 77.

The American business interests claimed that they were in need of the non-contiguous territory in order to secure markets to sell their surplus goods to non-native marketplaces. The AIL attempted to discount this notion and felt it was just another hypocrisy that the American government, and imperialist media, perpetrated against the American people.⁹⁹

At the end of the Spanish American War, American business interests were squarely in favor of retaining the former Spanish colonies; however, this was not always the case. At the outset of 1898 the majority of American business interests were opposed to starting hostilities with Spain. The League took this change of faith and made it into the cornerstone of their argument against economic Imperialism.¹⁰⁰ Historian Julius W. Pratt, in his article "American Business and the Spanish American War", looked at the change in opinion that occurred within the minds of the American business interests. He also looks at the arguments of the business interests for retaining the former Spanish colonies. In his argument, he posits that the American business interests were not supportive of the war early on; however, as the war drew on they saw the financial advantages that the war could create for them and submitted them.¹⁰¹ The pendulum shift in the ideas of the American business interests illustrates the importance in the finding of new outlets for American goods, as well as, the rise in popularity of imperialistic ideas throughout the upper echelons of American society. The League argued that business interests were succeeding in exporting the excess domestic supply of trade goods without access to these specific markets before the outset of the war and questioned why they so

⁹⁹ Tomkins, 20.

¹⁰⁰ Gerald K Haines, *American Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 67.

¹⁰¹ Julius W. Pratt, "American Business and the Spanish American War," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XIV, (May 1934), 163-201.

vehemently claimed that they required them after the war. The League questioned the changes that had supposedly occurred in the American economy in less than a year's time, and why the American industrialists were so adamant that the United States needed to take the former Spanish colonies as colonial possessions.

South Dakota Senator, and prominent Anti-Imperialist, Richard Pettigrew argued about the importance of American business interests in the establishment of the American Empire.

An imperial policy has as its object the enrichment of the imperial class. The plain man, the farmer, the miner, the factory worker, is not the gainer through imperialism. Rather the monopolist, the land owner, the manufacturer, the trader, the banker, who have stolen what there is to steal at home, devote their energies to the pursuit of an empire because the pursuit of empire gives them an opportunity to exploit and rob abroad. We annexed Hawaii, not to help the Hawaiians, but because it was a good business proposition for the Sugar interests. We Took the Philippine Islands because the far seeing among the plutocrats believed that there was a future economic advantage in the east. For the same reason we are in Haiti, Costa Rica and Panama. Each step along the imperial path is taken for the economic advantage of the business men of the United States at the expense of the liberty and the lives of the natives over whom we secure dominion.¹⁰² Pettigrew provided a blunt commentary on the potential motivations of the American business interests. Pettigrew's statements were indicative of the League's views about the arguments of the American business interests.

Missouri Senator, Carl Shurz, another prominent Anti-Imperialist, discussed the supposed requirement for American business interests to acquire foreign markets as an outlet for excess American goods.

We are told that our industries are gasping for breath; that we are suffering from over-production; that our products must have new outlets, and that we need colonies and dependencies the world over to give us more markets. More markets? Certainly. But do we, civilized beings, indulge in the absurd and barbarous notion that we must own the countries with which we wish to trade? Here are our official reports before us telling us that of late years our export trade

¹⁰² Richard F Pettigrew, *Imperial Washington*, (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1922), 358.

has grown enormously, not only of farm products, but of the products of our manufacturing industries.¹⁰³ Shurz did not believe in the necessity for access to foreign markets, and was unimpressed by the arguments that the United States ought to take the former Spanish possessions as colonial entities.

A large portion of the calls for war with Spain came from American business interests. Throughout the nineteenth century, American businesses invested in the economies of the Spanish colonies for decades, especially in Cuba. The amount of money that Americans were investing in Spanish colonies was on the rise. From 1897 till 1898, American business interests invested approximately fifty million dollars into the Cuban economy; however, one hundred million had been more characteristic of American investments in Cuba throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴ These investments steadily grew over the years, and the stark lowering in the investment amounts was an important indicator to the beginning of American hostilities with Spain. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw American businesses begin to lose money under the Spanish governance.¹⁰⁵ That being said, as hostilities got underway American businessmen began to see the potential commercial success that the United States would find themselves in at the end of the war. Historian Thomas Bailey discusses this new found knowledge, "Businessmen, hitherto partly blind to their commercial opportunities, now found their eyes jarred wide open by Dewey's booming guns."¹⁰⁶ Bailey goes on to quote President McKinley and his view on the new found markets. "If it is commercialism to want the possession of a strategic point giving the American people an

¹⁰³Carl Schurz, "American Imperialism," (The Convocation Address delivered on the occasion of the Twenty Seventh Convocation of the University of Chicago, 4 January 1899), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Bailey, 471.

¹⁰⁵ LaFeber, 450.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 458.

opportunity to maintain a foothold in the markets of that great Eastern country [China], for God's sake let us have commercialism."¹⁰⁷ The change in the attitudes of the business interests from the beginning of the Spanish American War to the end of it were stark and the AIL was looking for ways to combat the arguments of the business interests.

Julius W. Pratt wrote about American business interests and how they wanted to acquire these islands as a route to acquire new overseas markets.

We can now turn to the question whether American business was imperialistic; whether, in other words, business opinion favored schemes for acquiring foreign territory to supply it with markets, fields for capital investment, or commercial and naval stations in distant parts of the world....We have seen above that the rising tide of prosperity was intimately connected with the increase in American exports, particularly of manufactured articles. That the future welfare of American industry was dependent upon the command of foreign markets was an opinion so common as to appear almost universal.¹⁰⁸

Imperialists gained a groundswell of support when the business concerns saw the former Spanish colonies as stepping stones on the way to Asian marketplaces.

The Anti-Imperialists argued that the European nations had not cut off American trade with Asia completely, and there was no reason to suspect that the Asian markets would be closed to American goods any further. The AIL argued that since this was the case there was no real reason to subjugate the people of the Pacific for a few Americans to make a great deal of money. Shurz also discusses this notion in his article *American Imperialism*.

But does the trade of China really require that we should have the Philippines and make a great display of power to get our share? Read the consular reports, and you will find that in many places in China our trade is rapidly gaining, while in some British trade is declining, and this while great Britain had on hand the greatest display of power imaginable and we had none.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 472.

¹⁰⁸ Pratt, 163-201.

¹⁰⁹ Schurz, 2.

Imperialists argued that if the United States were to pass on the retention of American colonies that it could spell doom for the American economy. They argued that with the decline in European trade to Asia, that the United States was in a perfect position to capitalize on their decline and stood to make a great deal of political and economic gains. Shurz continues on to write that he found it absurd and completely irrational that the arguments of the American imperialists not to capitalize on the commercial opportunities of the former Spanish American empire would cripple the American economy for decades.¹¹⁰

The American business interests also had an impact on the president himself. The Anti-Imperialist League, for a time, counted on the fact that McKinley was also against the establishment of empire. Early in his presidency President McKinley decided not to actively try to annex new territory, and the AIL believed this policy was a big victory for their cause. However, the Spanish American War approached, McKinley came under more and more pressure from prominent American businessmen and members of the legislature, and eventually he changed his mind. After McKinley's change of heart, the League opposed his policies in any way that he could.

William Jennings Bryan described the arguments of the American business interests of the United States. He elaborated on why the Imperialists required the islands of the former Spanish empire.

The principal arguments, however, advanced by those who enter upon a defense of imperialism are: First, That we must improve the present opportunity to become a world power and enter into international politics. Second, That our commercial interests in the Philippine Islands and in the Orient make it necessary

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

for us to hold the islands permanently. Third, that the spread of the Christian religion will be facilitated by a colonial policy. Fourth, That there is no honorable retreat from the position which the nation has taken.¹¹¹

He attempted to warn and illustrate to the American people that once the United States became entangled in the former Spanish colonies it would be impossible, or dishonorable to leave them to their fate. This fear of entangling alliances was common amongst the members of the Anti-Imperialist League.

William Jennings Bryan continued to argue against the prominent American business interests' points of view. He looked at the way that business interests justified their arguments to themselves.

Some defend annexation on the grounds that the business interests of the islands demand it. The business interests will probably be able to take care of themselves under an independent form of government, unless they are very different from the business interests of the United States. The so-called businessmen constitute a very small fraction of the total population of the islands, which will say that their pecuniary interests were superior in importance to the right of all the rest of the people to enjoy a government of their own choosing.¹¹²

The justifications of the American business interests were quite controversial to Bryan, and taking colonies to serve the interests of a few Americans was hypocritical according to him. Senator Pettigrew also looked at how these business interests justified their arguments for the United States to take the former Spanish colonies, as well as other pacific island territories .

The annexation of Hawaii was the first big victory won by the business interests in their campaign to plunder outside of the United States. It was the precedent that they needed , the precedent that made easy the annexation of Puerto Rico, the Platt Amendment to the Cuban Treaty, the conquest of the Philippines and the

¹¹¹ Bryan William Jennings, "Bryan on Imperialism." (Arno Press of the New York Times: Ney York, NY, 1970), 85.

¹¹² Ibid, 56.

other imperialistic infamies that have sullied the good name of the United States during the past twenty years.¹¹³

Pettigrew and Bryan both attempted to discredit the imperialists' arguments by postulating that the United States was not suited to be an imperial power. These two prominent Anti-Imperialists argued that the American character would be irreparably damaged if the United States were to take the islands as colonies.

American business owners in the late nineteenth century used any excuse they could muster in order to acquire new markets in the Pacific. These new markets were to serve as an outlet for excess American goods that could not be sold in the home marketplace. Imperialist business owners, and political pundits in Washington, attempted to justify the acquisition of these new islands through a series of different arguments. The Anti-Imperialist League sought to disprove these justifications as nothing more than hypocritical pandering to influential and greed driven Americans.

American entrepreneurs used their "pull" to influence American foreign policy throughout the nineteenth century. Before the outset of the Spanish American war, American business interests had no real designs on the Spanish colonies, but as soon as they became available for exploitation, many American entrepreneurs began to advocate for annexation after they saw the possibility of monetary gains. The Anti-Imperialist League attempted to stop these business interests from seizing these islands. The League spent a great deal of effort refuting the arguments of the American entrepreneurs, but to no avail. The desire for overseas markets by those in control of great swaths of the

¹¹³ Richard F Pettigrew, "Imperial Washington." (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, 1970), 319.

American economy was too great for the Anti-Imperialist League to quell.¹¹⁴ Contrary to Tomkins', the disparate nature of the AIL saw the rise in these secondary arguments against empire, which created a rift in the upper echelons of the Anti-Imperialist leadership, and these divisions hindered the league's ability to refute imperialist arguments effectively.

The next secondary ideology that the Anti-Imperialist League held was that the racial makeup of the former Spanish colonies made them undesirable to bring them into the American sphere of influence. This concept sprang from ideas of American Exceptionalism as well as the racism of white Anglo-Saxon protestants. Government policies and political stances, throughout the nineteenth century, perpetuated racial superiority complexes setting the stage for racist attitudes to play an important factor in the Spanish American War. Race relations in the United States at the time of the Spanish American War were tense and the arguments of Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists used racist attitudes as an augment to their arguments.

Throughout the nineteenth century the Constitution of the United States was amended in order to address race relations. 1864 saw the passage of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States that abolished the long standing institution of slavery in the United States. Shortly thereafter, on 9 July 1868, the fourteenth amendment passed, and it extended constitutional rights, as well as citizenship rights to all of the freed slaves.¹¹⁵ These amendments as well as many other reconstruction legislations and policies extended a shaky semblance of equality to the

¹¹⁴ LaFeber, 7-10.

¹¹⁵ "United States Constitution." National Archives of the United States, Accessed 1 November 2015, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html.

African American populations throughout the United States. The practical effectiveness of these policies was another matter.

White policy makers , especially in the South, had a hard time accepting the new found equality of the former slave population. These feelings led to a large number of state and local laws and also created "black codes" and "Jim Crow Laws" in the southern states. These laws tried to subvert the newfound rights of the African American population throughout the late nineteenth century into the mid twentieth century.¹¹⁶

Not only were the African Americans discriminated against because of their race, but white lawmakers attempted to subvert the rights of any non-whites. These lawmakers also passed a number of laws subjugating the Chinese and Japanese populations living in the United States. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 as well as the Chinese exclusion Act of 1882 saw the United States close its borders to Chinese immigrants, as well as Chinese merchant ships. These laws were in kept in effect until mid way through World War II.¹¹⁷

The United States was also less than kind to its native populations in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Legislators, throughout the existence of the United States, and even before, had trouble dealing with the native populations, seeing them as "backward", and even "barbaric". These notions continued forward into the psyches of the legislators in the late nineteenth century. As white populations began moving further and further westward, and more states were being admitted into the union, the native populations of these regions were being brought into the United States, often by threat of or application of violence. Governmental legislations in the late nineteenth century, such

¹¹⁶Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, (Random House, 2008), 269.

¹¹⁷Ibid, 270.

as the 1871,1885,Indian Appropriations bills, as well as, the 1889 Homestead Act, denied the native populations the right to consider themselves separate nations, forced them onto reservations and allowed settlers to take the traditional lands of the Native Americans as their own.¹¹⁸

The late nineteenth century was a hotbed for racism. Various legislations passed by largely white legislators, brought racial tensions and racist attitudes under scrutiny of the federal government. In fact, some historians argue that the last two decades of the nineteenth century were where Americans were at their most racially intolerant.¹¹⁹ Many historians look at these racist attitudes in order to evaluate the inability of the United States to grant the former Spanish colonies their independence. Historian Walter Nugent writes, "The Filipinos therefore had the bad luck of encountering American society and government at its most racist moment,"¹²⁰

All of these different acts, and pieces of legislation set the stage for the creation of for American Imperialism. They all played a role in how the lawmakers of the time decided to proceed with the establishment of an American empire. Rubin Francis Weston, in his book *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*, writes, "Ideas of race superiority in the United States have been a clear and perceptible thread that runs through the warp and woof of the American fabric."¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Nugent, 270.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 268.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 269.

¹²¹ Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 32.

Nugent looks at the inherent racism that was commonplace within the United States. He discussed the American belief that the people of the Pacific islands, and the former Spanish colonies were unable to govern themselves.

The consistent position of the president and others close to him was that the Filipinos were not capable of self government. Aguinaldo, his colleagues, and other Filipinos were referred to by tribal names, and thus diminished in legitimacy. Their inferiority was assumed, not analyzed, it was conventional wisdom, resting on racial and religious biases prevalent among even educated Americans of the day. ... Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists alike regarded Filipinos as a non Anglo-Saxon, non white, and hence inferior race, like blacks or, more explicitly, Indians.¹²²

The inherent racism ran rampant throughout the United States through all levels of the social strata, all the way up to the highest levels of government.

According to historian Walter LaFeber, Anti-Imperialists argued, "The United States suffered from a land glut already; no more land could properly be developed. If the Union acquired more territory, it might be Latin American, and this would aggravate the race problem."¹²³ Race relations had had a direct influence on what territory the United States acquired in the past. The territory annexed at the end of the Mexican American War had a great deal to do with the races of the people who lived in those locations. Many Americans at the time did not wish to annex those areas because of the need to extend the rights and privileges of American citizenship to non white people.¹²⁴ American Exceptionalist ideologies took hold during this time period as well, many Americans did not want to annex Mexican territory in fear of the admission of states that were largely, or entirely of Latin-American descent.

¹²² Nugent, 267.

¹²³ LaFeber, 32.

¹²⁴ Hunt, 80-81.

These racist arguments, and precedents were taken into consideration by the Anti-Imperialist League. The League's members opposed the establishment of an American empire for both racist and non-racist reasons. The members of the Anti-Imperialist League was not exclusively racist, and motivated by racist arguments, but some were, and those motivations bear exploring. The racially motivated arguments of the AIL contributed to the fracturing of the Anti-Imperialist League, and its loss of effectiveness.¹²⁵

Racism amongst members of the Anti-Imperialist League was commonplace. The inherent racism that many of the League members held was closely connected to their regional affiliations as well as their Anti-Imperialist arguments. However, the league as a whole never espoused specific racially motivated arguments in a public way. The racist arguments varied from person to person. Many of the League's members saw the inclusion of the islands as colonies as incompatible to the basic principles of the United States, according to the Constitution. When it became obvious that the new colonies would not become states in the traditional sense, but were still going to be retained by the United States, the racist arguments and attitudes of many Anti-Imperialist League members became more prominent. This led to a split between AIL members who were pro-equality, and others who were more racially motivated.

Some of the more prominent Anti-Imperialists in the U.S. Congress were outwardly racist about their ideas. Many of these racially motivated senators resided in the Southern states. Senator Donelson Caffery of Louisiana, argued that the islands of the Philippines could not be annexed because the inhabitants were not able to give their

¹²⁵ Tomkins, 10.

consent to be governed. Caffery argued, " it would be impolitic, unwise and dangerous to incorporate... a distant country beyond the sea, whose inhabitants were of a Dissimilar race, with a different religion, customs, manners, traditions, and habits..."¹²⁶ Senator John Daniel of Virginia feared that the inclusion of the Filipinos into the body politic would create a split between inferior and superior. He argued that half of the population would become dependent a circumstance that was akin to the conditions of slaves prior to the Civil War. Daniel went so far as to claim that if the Filipinos were brought into the Union their dependence on the United States would become perpetual, and the United States would have to rule over them as a despot. All of these statements were made after his staunch support of the intervention in Cuba.¹²⁷ John L. McLaurin of South Carolina argued that it was imprudent to incorporate a "mongrel and semi barbarous population" into the political schema of the United States. McLaurin continued by calling out some of the universal suffragists in Congress, who also supported imperialism. He argued that the incorporation of the lesser races into the empire, but not offering them statehood was hypocritical by its very nature.¹²⁸ Benjamin Tillman, of South Carolina, also was quoted as saying "The advocates of the Philippine policy were undertaking to annex islands containing 10,000,000 of the colored race, of whom more than one-half were barbarians of the lowest type."¹²⁹ The Anti-Imperialist cause met with a great deal of support from the Southern states, however this support was blended with outwardly racist attitudes common in that region of the United States. That being said racist ideas were not uncommon in the north as well.

¹²⁶ Weston, 93-94.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 92.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 94.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 90.

Other, non-southern, political members of the League often had racial biases against the people of the newly acquired lands in the Pacific as well. Anti-Imperialist Senator from South Dakota, Robert Pettigrew, in his article *Aggression in the Philippines* compares the people of the Philippine Islands to the "naked savages" that were conquered by the British across the globe.¹³⁰ He also argued that Imperialism's ultimate goal is to conquer and subjugate the "weaker races". Pettigrew further argues that the annexation of weaker nations, that were "incapable of self government", would lead to the dilution of white bloodlines, and by extension the pureness of the American governmental system. "The vigorous blood, the best blood the young men of our land, will be drawn away to mix with the distant races and hold them in subjugation."¹³¹ This desire to protect the peoples of the United States from a dilution of white purity was not an uncommon view amongst Anti-Imperialists.

Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem "The White Man's Burden", became extremely popular in the United States. It bluntly portrayed the widely popular notion of superiority of Caucasians over every other race, and argued that it was the duty of the white race to elevate every other race. Kipling's views were taken up by Imperialists who used them as justification for the annexation of the former Spanish Colonies. Kipling's poem served as a prominent argument for Imperialists. It allowed feelings of racial superiority to be transferred onto imperialistic arguments. Historian Erin Murphy discusses the influence of Kipling on the racial climate of the late nineteenth century.

For example, in February 1899, McClure's magazine published Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands."

¹³⁰ Richard F. Pettigrew, "Imperial Washington." (Arno Press of the New York Times: New York, NY, 1970), 333.

¹³¹ Ibid, 367.

In the midst of debates over the United States' involvement in the Philippines, the poem spread quickly. In it, Kipling advised the United States to take its place alongside Great Britain and make the sacrifices necessary for the civilization of those "half devil and half child."¹³²

The "White Man's Burden", was well received by the imperialists including Theodore Roosevelt who received an advanced copy. Weston argues that the imperialists of the late nineteenth century valued Kipling's argument and that they believed that America had the duty to accept the burden of imperialism as a matter of racial pride.¹³³

The Anti-Imperialist League, on the other hand, objected to the supposed duty of the White Man's Burden espoused by Kipling, and believed that it embodied the racist arguments of the imperialists. Murphy also looks at the Anti-Imperialist viewpoint on Kipling's famous poem.

However, it ["The White Man's Burden"] was also the inspiration for many anti-imperialist counter poems, serving as a phrase for anti-imperialist ridicule because of contradictions between violence and civilization. More than a phrase, "the white man's burden" was a cultural schema with a set of masculinized aspirations for the United States in the Philippines, aspirations to which anti-imperialists vehemently objected. It was against the tidal pull of this schema that anti-imperialists navigated their course.¹³⁴

Anti-Imperialist writers penned dozens of Anti-Kipling poems, editorials, and opinion pieces that sought to refute the influence of his poem.¹³⁵

There were also some members of the Anti-Imperialist League who disliked McKinley's new foreign policies because of its' inherent racist qualities. Some of the more prominent Anti-Imperialist League members, with Mark Twain among them,

¹³² Erin L. Murphy, "Women's Anti-Imperialism, 'The White Man's Burden,' and the Philippine American War," (*The Asia-Pacific Journal*), 251-252 <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Erin-Murphy/3182>.

¹³³ Ibid, 253-254.

¹³⁴ Weston, 19.

¹³⁵ Zwick, 22.

worked against annexation, because he believed that the people of those islands deserved their independence.

In the minds of the AIL, the United States was discarding traditional ideologies for new ideologies, such as, "Benevolent Assimilation." The concept of Benevolent Assimilation ran hand in hand with the concept of Manifest Destiny that was common in the United States at this time. Benevolent Assimilation was McKinley's concept of the United States pushing forward into the wider world, and placing American governmental systems overseas, in an effort to do what was best for the people in those places. Benevolent Assimilation built upon Manifest Destiny, which was an important concept in the United States in the nineteenth century. It described the widely held belief that the United States was destined to expand its borders across the North American continent.

After the end of the Spanish American War, American politicians evoked Manifest Destiny, and in turn, Benevolent Assimilation, in the United States, to justify the expansion across the Pacific ocean, beyond continental borders. The Anti-Imperialist League, on the other hand, saw expanding beyond the natural borders of the continent as incompatible with the concept of Manifest Destiny, and traditional American ideals as a whole. The AIL also believed that McKinley merely evoked Manifest Destiny under the guise of Benevolent Assimilation, in order to subjugate the non-white populations of the former Spanish colonies, via racially motivated policies.

Benevolent Assimilation was defined by President William McKinley who stated that:

It should be with the earnest and paramount aim of the military administration to win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and

liberties which is the heritage of a free people, and by proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of Benevolent assimilation, ...¹³⁶
To McKinley, "Benevolent Assimilation" meant that the United States would go into the Philippines, as well as the other former Spanish islands, and liberate the people from the tyranny of the Spanish government. The imperialists saw Manifest Destiny, and its ideological counterpart, Benevolent Assimilation as integral to the future of the United States that were seemingly in line with what the United States represented ideologically. The AIL on the other hand argued that these ideas were incongruent with traditional American foreign policies.

The reality of what the United States claimed their policy was, and what the Anti-Imperialist League argued the policies of the McKinley administration were, were very different things. Mark Twain and the rest of the Anti-Imperialist League sought to show that there were atrocities being perpetrated across the Filipino countryside under the guise of Benevolent Assimilation. The League tried to impress upon the American people that men and women were being butchered in their homes, and tortured, all under the guise of McKinley's racially motivated "Benevolent Assimilation". Weston writes, "While the president was speaking to congress, the United States Armed Forces were trying to "benevolently assimilate" the Filipinos - with bullet and bayonet at a ratio of ten Filipinos killed to one American."¹³⁷

Mark Twain describes the atrocities in detail in many of his writings. Twain attacked the idea of Benevolent Assimilation in an article entitled "The Philippine Incident".

we have pacified some thousands of the islanders and buried them; destroyed their fields, burned their villages, and turned their widows and orphans out of doors;

¹³⁶ Nugent, 268.

¹³⁷ Weston, 103.

furnished heartbreak by exile to some dozens of disagreeable patriot, subjugated the remaining ten millions by Benevolent Assimilation which is the pious new name of the musket.¹³⁸

"Benevolent Assimilation" to Twain and others within the Anti-Imperialist League, was nothing more than shiny rhetoric to disguise war time atrocities, to transmute racist foreign policies in the minds of the American people, and to mask the Filipino resistance to American control. To the AIL, McKinley's "Benevolent Assimilation" became another hypocrisy in a long line of hypocrisies following the Treaty of Paris of 1898.

Senator Pettigrew, argued that McKinley's Benevolent Assimilation was doing nothing more than pandering to the desires of the industrialists, and other American business interests. He argues that assimilation to imperialists is the same a subjugation of what he believed to be an inherently inferior race of people.

The Imperialist's aim is to assimilate, not the people of these possessions, but their lands and their wealth. If the people will work, the American plutocrats will exploit their labor as well as the resources of their respective countries. If the people refuse to work, they will be brushed aside and men and women who will be more amenable to discipline will be imported from some other country to take their places.¹³⁹

Pettigrew goes on to evidence this argument by stating that the subjugation of the inferior peoples for the gain of the imperialists is exactly what occurred in Hawaii. He goes on to compare Hawaii to the Philippines by arguing the American efforts to Benevolently assimilate the Filipinos would only be temporary, because if they resist, new peoples would be imported, who would be more agreeable to being assimilated.¹⁴⁰

Former President Benjamin Harrison critiqued President McKinley's "benevolence" in his article, "The Status of Annexed Territory and Its Free and Civilized Inhabitants." Harrison argued that McKinley's policy of benevolently assimilating the

¹³⁸ Mark Twain, Jim Zwick, *The Philippine Incident*, 58.

¹³⁹ Pettigrew, "Imperial Washington," 347.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Filipino population, but not making them citizens only made them slaves to American popular opinion. It was that popular opinion that had a tendency to shift and change as the years went on.

The benevolent disposition of the President is well illustrated in these instructions. He conferred freely, "until Congress shall take action,- upon the Filipinos, who accepted the sovereignty of the United States and submitted themselves to the government established by the commission, privileges that our fathers only secured after eight years of desperate war. There is this, however, to be noted, that our fathers were not content to hold these priceless gifts under revocable license. They accounted that to hold these things under tenure of another man's benevolence was not to hold them at all. Their [Filipinos] battle was for rights, not privileges- for a constitution not a letter of instructions."¹⁴¹

Harrison argued that the popular opinion of the American people could always shift, and the "privileges" of American "benevolence" could always be revoked, and that the rights of the Filipinos would never be concrete unless the constitution was applied to them after they became U.S. citizens. A status that many Imperialists would be hard pressed to extend due to their racist assumptions.

Other imperialists believed that they could wrap their imperialistic arguments in polished words and phrases, claiming that the burden of imperialism fell onto the United States, and that it was their duty to protect their "little brown brother".¹⁴² The inherent racism of the imperialists was obvious and distinctly aimed at the people of the former Spanish colonies, however most Americans simply embraced the racially charged arguments of the Imperialists.

Race played an enormous role in the acquisition of the American empire, on both sides of the issue, Imperialist and Anti-Imperialist alike. Issues of racism were deeply

¹⁴¹ Benjamin Harrison, "The Status of Annexed Territory and Its Free and Civilized Inhabitants." *North American Review*, CLXXII (January 1901), 12.

¹⁴² Bailey, 476.

engrained in the psyche of American leaders and effected ideologies, political debates, and policy changes.

Historians, years after the annexation of the Philippines, have the advantage of hindsight. The Anti-Imperialists, however did not. It is easy to deplore these people for their racist attitudes and insensitivities, and to place modern notions of equality and race upon their actions. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Anti-Imperialists found themselves bound to their time period, were products of their environment, and were quite different than their ideological successors today. Racism was a reality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and even the ideologues of the Anti-Imperialist League were not immune.

Disagreements amongst the upper echelons of the AIL's leadership over racial issues was yet another cause for the fracturing of the Anti-Imperialist League. The League's members stood on different sides of the racial issues, with some supporting equality, while some others supported notions of white superiority that were very common throughout this time period. These schisms between the members of the AIL were just one more stumbling block for the unity of the AIL, and in turn their campaign against the rising tide of imperialism suffered.

The third and final secondary ideology that will be explored here is that of the preservation of national security. National security was important to the Americans of the late nineteenth century, much like it is to Americans today; however, for very different reasons. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the Pacific Ocean brimming with large empires that could potentially make an aggressive strike on the western seaboard of

the United States with little warning, and this inherent fear of invasion soon became embroiled in the annexation debates.

The American Imperialists as well as United States government in the late nineteenth century attempted to justify the acquisition and establishment of an American Empire in order to protect national security. One of the main justifications was that the islands would be taken by another power if the United States did not. The imperialists held the notion that the islands of the former Spanish Empire were strategic military assets that once acquired could not be relinquished for fear of their being obtained by another empire. This concept became known to the AIL as the "fiction of requirement". These concepts became major influences on public opinion that the Anti-Imperialist league sought to disprove to the American people.

During the last few months of the Spanish American war, many American imperialists argued that if the various island chains of the former Spanish empire were not taken under the protection of the United States, that they would fall under the sphere of one of the European nations. England possessed several nearby island chains, as well as Australia and India in the region, France controlled the Indochinese peninsula, and Japan was an emerging industrial nation that was beginning to outgrow its borders and looking for areas to exert its influence. Also, the German states, in 1871, united into a German Empire, and was looking to expand its sphere of influence as well. These major players, as well as some of the smaller empires, Russia, Holland, Belgium, and others, all looked at the possessions of the declining Spanish empire as opportunities for territorial expansion.¹⁴³

¹⁴³Greene, 1.

American Imperialists argued that the collapse of the Spanish empire, at the end of the Spanish American war, created a power vacuum in Spain's former colonies and that if the United States did not step into this obligation, some other major power would and, in turn, would freeze the United States out of the markets, and strategic assets in these emerging colonies. Some imperialists also feared that the newly liberated Spanish colonies, if the United States gave them their independence, would simply backslide and control would revert back to their former colonial masters or fall under the control of a new one.¹⁴⁴ The Anti-Imperialist League argued fervently against these concepts, and did its best to disprove the imperialists' arguments on these issues.

The notion that the United States needed to shield these islands from the predatory Europeans was a fallacy that the Anti-Imperialist League attempted to expose. The League argued that the Spanish empire had been waning for decades, and if the Europeans wanted the islands for themselves they would have taken them already. The League used the islands of Hawaii as a pertinent example. Hawaii was independent and largely undefended for centuries, if a European nation was going to take the Hawaiian islands why had it not happened up to that point? Anti-Imperialist H.E. Von Holst looked at the view that the United States needed to shield these islands from predatory Europeans.

Some of them [Imperialists] believe, and all of them try to make us believe, that we act, in a way, under compulsion, because if we do not take Hawaii, most certainly some other power will? Probably England. For proofs, we ask in vain. The question why some other power, especially England, did not take it long ago, although the natives could never have offered.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Bailey, *Diplomatic History of the American People*, (Tenth Ed.), (Prentice Hall: Englewood NJ, 1980), 463.

¹⁴⁵ H.E. Von Holst, "The Annexation of Hawaii," *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920), Vol. 60, No. 3 (March 1898), 65.

Von Holst argued that the United States did not ask the Hawaiian populous if it wanted to be annexed, at least not in any "fair" fashion, and proceeded to annex Hawaii anyway.

Von Holst disputes that the Hawaiian annexation was necessary, and any precedent set by it subsequently void. He questioned what had stopped any of the so-called predatory European empires interested in the island chain from taking it long before the United States could have.

To the Anti-Imperialist League the concept of predatory Europeans in the Pacific, scooping up islands to their heart's content, was ludicrous, and they sought to prove it to the American people. The Anti-Imperialist League used an international incident, between the United States and the German Empire, as evidence. The German empire had stationed several warships in the Philippines and were poised to take Manila from American control early in the Spanish American War. It was only when Admiral Dewey began to become aggressive toward the German navy, despite being out-manned and out-gunned, that the German warships backed down and were escorted out of Manila harbor by an observing British fleet. The League used this incident as an argument for their position that the European empires would not have taken the former Spanish colonies for themselves, in an effort to respect the American protection of those islands, as well as American interests.¹⁴⁶

Historian and political analyst George Kennan, also supported the Anti-Imperialist League's arguments about predatory European nations. Kennan argued that the probability of predatory Europeans trying to take territory out from under the United States was slim.

¹⁴⁶ Tomkins, 13-15.

In the case of Puerto Rico and Hawaii, this argument seems to me to have been unsubstantial. There was no real likelihood anybody else intervening. Puerto Rico could quite safely have been left with Spain, or given independence like Cuba, so far as our security was concerned. In the case of the Philippines the question was a more serious one.¹⁴⁷

Kennan then went on to describe the incident with the German navy in Manila Harbor.

He argued that this incident played more into the arguments of the imperialists.¹⁴⁸

The Anti-Imperialist League also looked at the emerging attitudes of some of the European imperial powers. Imperialists argued that predatory imperialist powers would take the opportunity to expand their empires. The League used them as evidence against the idea that they would seek to work against the United States and their interests.

Historian Michael Hunt argued that:

The conviction that an upstart, pugnacious, despotic Germany was the common enemy gave these sentimental notions strong strategic implications. German machinations, real or imagined, in Samoa, China, the Philippines, and Latin America had come to worry American officials. The British, on the other hand, set about carefully cultivating American goodwill.¹⁴⁹

Hunt argued that the different individual nations were more or less likely to entangle themselves in American foreign policy. After the end of initial hostilities with Spain in the Philippines, the AIL argued that Germany, and all of the other European imperial powers would respect American interests if the Philippines were granted their independence. Imperialists on the other hand argued that the various imperial nations were consistently looking to expand their power, and there was no reason to expect that they would respect American policy and viewpoints.¹⁵⁰ Nugent agrees with Hunt when he argues that "European competition", the fear that Britain or Germany might get it all,

¹⁴⁷ George F Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 133.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 128-134.

played some role until 1899 and even to 1914.¹⁵¹ These ideas were often presented by imperialists and the Anti-Imperialists had a difficult time refuting them.

Much to the chagrin of the AIL, the Imperialists were eventually proven correct, when the German government sought to take the portions of certain islands for themselves, and lobbied for a partition of the Philippine islands. However, the United States annexed the Philippine islands and the German request was withdrawn.¹⁵²

Many Imperialists, playing on the fears of many Americans, argued that these newly freed islands were necessary acquisitions in order to protect American security. They argued that the west coast of the United States would be vulnerable to naval attack if the former Spanish colonies were not acquired. They also argued that Puerto Rico was an important station in the defense of the American gulf coast. The League attempted to dispel the notion that the islands of the former Spanish empire had any significance at all to the protection of American coasts.

We [England and America] both stood timorously by at Port Arthur and wept sweetly and sympathizingly and shone while France and Germany helped Russia rob the Japanese; and how gallantly we went to the rescue of poor Cuba, friendless, disparaging, borne down by centuries of bitter slavery, and broke off her chains and set her free, with approving England at our back, facing disgruntled Europe, and in her friendly eye, a warning and the light of battle.¹⁵³

The idea that the nations of Europe would not respect American interests in the Pacific was refuted by the AIL, who evidenced American relations with England as a powerful source of support.

¹⁵¹ Nugent, 256.

¹⁵² Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, (New York: Holt Publishing, 1935), 465.

¹⁵³ Zwick, Twain, "Introducing Winston Churchill," (1900), 10-11.

Many American Imperialists believed that the annexation of the islands in the Pacific was necessary for the United States' national security. Von Holst wrote about this in a *Advocate of Peace* article entitled, "Annexation of Hawaii". Von Holst wrote, "Our Western coast, say the annexationists, is dangerously exposed ; the way to it will be most effectively blocked to every enemy if Hawaii is ours, for the hold of no man-of-war is big enough to steam from Asia to Australia over the vast Pacific."¹⁵⁴ Von Holst goes on to argue that Hawaii has no military value and evidences Alfred Thayer Mahan, a prominent naval military strategist, as an authority on naval military strategy.¹⁵⁵ The Anti-Imperialist League referenced Mahan's arguments that the Hawaiian islands were of little strategic importance and that the annexation of those islands in no way made the western coast of the United States safer from foreign invaders.

Senator Carl Schurz argued that acquiring islands to protect the American borders would create a subsequent need to acquire even more islands in order to protect the initial islands. Schurz was arguing that the dangers of the hunger for territorial expansion would create a "snowball" effect that once begun would be difficult to stop.

If we take those new regions, we shall be well entangled in that contest for territorial aggrandizement, which distracts other nations and drives them far beyond their original design. So it will be inevitably with us. We shall want new conquests to protect that which we already possess. The greed of speculators working upon our government, will push us from one point to another, and we shall have new conflicts on our hands, almost without knowing how we got into them. It has always been so under such circumstances, and always will be. This means more and more soldiers, ships, and guns.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Von Holst, 63.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 64.

¹⁵⁶ Schurz, "American Imperialism," 1.

The snowball effect of taking islands in order to defend islands would eventually be unsupportable according to the Anti-Imperialists and the cost of maintaining and defending these islands would outweigh their benefit.

Shurz was not the first to put forth the snowball argument. In fact, *The Advocate of Peace* put forth a commentary on President McKinley's inaugural address in 1897 which argued that territorial aggression simply led to more territorial aggression.

The author argued that "The President says " we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression."* This certainly implies, though it does not say, that we must avoid the temptation of territorial greed. Our real danger lies just here. If we become greedy of more territory, for the purpose of national aggrandizement, we shall be sure to become territorially aggressive, if not directly by arms, yet by other means which are often quite as effective and not less criminal.¹⁵⁷ This commentary on the way that many Anti-Imperialist felt about the annexation of territory, even before the outset of the Spanish American War. The AIL capitalized on these ideas and worked them into their rhetoric and arguments.

Shurz also argued that the territorial hunger of the imperialists and business interests would not stop at the Philippines, and that would put the United States into conflict with the European imperial nations. Shurz argued that the British were supportive of the annexation of the Philippines because it would keep the United States busy and keep them from meddling in British affairs in the Pacific. American British political relations at this time were good, and the AIL used this relationship to argue that American interests had an ally in the Pacific to assist in the preservation of an independent Philippines.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ "President McKinley's Inaugural," *The Advocate of Peace*, (1894-1920), Vol. 59, No. 4 (April 1897), 78.

¹⁵⁸ Schurz, "American Imperialism," 1.

The Anti-Imperialist League was skeptical at best when it came to the notion that the people of the United States would be safe guarded by the acquisition of the former Spanish colonies. The League argued that the former Spanish colonies were not necessary for national security, and were largely proven correct in their time. The League argued that national security of the United States had not been threatened, and the nation had no true enemies on the Pacific coast.

The fate of the islands of the former Spanish empire, Guam, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, as well as the islands of Hawaii were in question at the end of the Spanish American War. In opposition to the Imperialist arguments the Anti-Imperialist League argued that they were not of strategic importance and, for a time, the league was correct; however, as the twentieth century rolled along, and World War I erupted in Europe, those islands took on a greater military, and strategic significance.

The Panama Canal had not yet been built at the time of the Spanish American war, however the French canal project failed, but a joint American-British project was poised to be set into motion. The project was still in the planning stages. Imperialists such as Theodore Roosevelt, were cognizant of the future strategic significance of islands like Cuba and Puerto Rico. Those two islands served, and continue to serve as an important component to the protection of the Gulf of Mexico. The tip of Florida, the Atlantic side of Cuba, and Puerto Rico, all served, and continue to serve, as key entry points for shipping to and from the Gulf of Mexico. They also served as key points of control for what would become the Panama Canal. Cuba and Puerto Rico became very important components to American national security, especially during the Cold War.

Imperialists also argued that Hawaii had a great deal of geographical significance to the United States. Hawaii is, strategically situated approximately halfway between the west coast of the United States and the eastern coast of Asia making it a strategically significant acquisition during the first half of the twentieth century, and imperialists in the late nineteenth century foresaw this importance. The United States used Hawaii as a re-coaling station for its naval vessels, but more importantly for American merchant ships. Guam, and American Samoa, served similar functions as the Hawaiian islands. However, the military significance of these islands was not great as those of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

The Philippine islands served as a potential marketplace for American goods, but it also served the United States as a stopping point on the way to Chinese markets. There were naval bases installed on the Philippine islands however, they were of little consequence until the outset of World War II. The Philippines were not as important strategically as the other islands but economically it became the jewel in the crown of the American empire that the United States acquired at the end of the Spanish American war.¹⁵⁹

The Anti-Imperialist league spent a great deal of time and effort attempting to discredit imperialist arguments for annexation. The Anti-Imperialist League argued that the former Spanish colonies were not of any strategic importance. The Anti-Imperialist league was, for the most part, incorrect. However, in the late nineteenth century, the United States had no legitimate enemies that could threaten American shores, and the AIL's argument carried some influence. The League could not evaluate the importance of the islands in to the future, but only the past, and they were using the information that

¹⁵⁹ Pettigrew, 358.

they had. The Anti-Imperialist League was a product of their time, and their objections to the annexation of the former Spanish colonies, were reflections of the political climate of the late nineteenth century.

The Anti-Imperialist League spent a great deal of time illustrating the folly of the Imperialists' push to establish an American Empire. The League worked very hard to discount the Imperialists' arguments, and they reacted to a few important Imperialist arguments. These reactions became the basis for alternate arguments that became important to the AIL's arguments.

The Anti-Imperialists argued that the establishment of the American empire was undertaken, at least in part, to pacify the nation's business interests. The League believed that the endless search for foreign markets were not as important to the survival of the United States as the Imperialists concluded. The League argued that the foreign markets were open up to that point, and there was no evidence that they would close to American goods and services into the future.

Racism also played an important role in the application of the AIL's alternate arguments. American Anti-Imperialists were products of their time. They lived in a time where the United States was not a equal place for non-white peoples in the late nineteenth century. The United States was arguably at one of the most racially prejudiced time periods in its history. The Anti-Imperialists, used racist, and non-racist arguments alike in order to discredit the Imperialists' arguments. Ideas such as "The White Man's Burden" and McKinley's "Benevolent Assimilation" were vehemently discredited and abhorred by the AIL. Despite the people of the United States taking great steps forward in the latter

years of the nineteenth century, the inherent racism that was ingrained in the American psyche served as an important part of Anti-Imperialist League's thought processes, and the development of their arguments.

Also, preserving national security was, and still is, a paramount concern for the United States government. The Imperialists of the late nineteenth century saw the establishment of an empire as imperative to preserving national security. Imperialists argued that the establishment of an empire was principal in protecting American trade routes and coastlines. The Anti-Imperialists were very adamant that the United States did not require the islands of the former Spanish empire in order to protect national security. The League argued that the United States was not in danger and the islands were in no way integral to American national security. The importance of the islands were not fully grasped by the AIL, and many Imperialist Americans believed them to be standing in the way of progress.

The American Anti-Imperialist League stood against the establishment of an American empire. The League spent a great deal of time attempting to discredit the arguments of the imperialists. The United States made a great deal of changes to its foreign policy in the last several years of the nineteenth century and the Anti-Imperialist League was attempting to resist these changes. While they were ultimately unsuccessful, the League fought for what they believed in and wanted to try to protect their country from making, what they believed to be, a fatal mistake that potentially could have spelled the death of the United States.

These secondary arguments were important to the AIL; however, they did cause a fracturing amongst the upper echelons of the AIL's leadership, contrary to the arguments of other historians like Tomkins. The Anti-Imperialist League was a disparate group of Americans whose reason for uniting, stopping the establishment of an American empire through appeals to traditional American policies, was destroyed by the end of 1898. It was at this point that the secondary arguments began to become more and more important to the League's rhetoric. The leadership's personal partisan roots began to dominate their arguments, and the secondary arguments grew in popularity. These secondary arguments directly led to a loss of the AIL's effectiveness, and its unity. The AIL was no longer united for one cause and the varying nature of the league's members came to define each individual's rhetoric against imperialism.

As 1900 approached, the AIL's strength waned, and the election of 1900 was the final straw for any true semblance of unity amongst the AIL's high ranking members. Bryan's defeat at the hands of McKinley further fractured of the arguments and rhetoric of the AIL. The Anti-Imperialist League's ultimate demise was facilitated by the rise of these secondary arguments.

Chapter 4:

Conclusion

The Anti-Imperialist League was a political pressure group founded in 1898. In the nearly two decades that it opposed the establishment of an American empire, the AIL garnered support from a number of prominent Americans, from many different social and political strata, who flocked to the AIL and were important to its cause. The League also relied on elected officials who became members to assert their influence into the houses of government allowing the AIL to reach the people who made the decisions that they were so ideologically opposed to. Politicians such as Carl Shurz, William Jennings Bryan, former President Grover Cleveland, and Richard Pettigrew all are counted amongst the more outspoken members of the political elite who favored Anti-Imperialist viewpoints.¹⁶⁰ These prominent Americans came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and all held different ideas of what was important for the preservation of the United States in the long run. It was these influential members of the AIL who were responsible for the development of the arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League as a whole.

Historians tend to examine the American empire from the perspective of the Imperialists. There are not nearly as many examinations of the Anti-Imperialist League. Those that do look at the AIL do not typically look at their arguments and their evolution. However; this evolution played against the Anti-Imperialist League's weaknesses. The

¹⁶⁰ E Berkley Tomkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 6.

AIL's disparate nature and a rise in the importance of secondary arguments contributed to their loss in unity, ultimately caused the AIL to flounder. This worked in the favor of the Imperialists and contributed to their ultimate failures. These notions have not been taken into account by historians up to this point. However; previous investigations of the AIL provided a unique perspective on a ground breaking time in American history, and it is important to look at them in order to gain a deeper and richer understanding of American diplomatic history at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Anti-Imperialist League was popular among Americans early in 1898. As Michael Cullinane noted, "By 1898 there were ten regional branches and membership had swollen to the hundreds of thousands."¹⁶¹ The AIL garnered a great deal of support from prominent Americans who united with one another behind the idea of preventing imperialism from expanding to the United States. They sought to achieve this by arguing in favor of traditional foreign policies like isolationism; however, as it became increasingly apparent that the United States was going to establish an empire, dissention amongst the leadership arose. This dissention began to fracture the resolve of the leadership and secondary arguments began to take on a larger and larger role within the rhetoric of the AIL. In this context, the AIL helped to field a Democratic presidential candidate in the election of 1900 against William McKinley. The League's candidate was prominent Anti-Imperialist, William Jennings Bryan. Bryan, was a staunch Anti-Imperialist, but his views on other issues, such as the free coinage of silver, did not go over well with a portion of the AIL's leadership. The dissention within the upper echelons of the League escalated even further, and after Bryan's defeat the League continued to

¹⁶¹ Michael Patrick Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012), 24-25.

fracture from within. These fractures shook the ramshackle alliance between the various personages, political, economic, and social groups to its core, and the importance of secondary arguments became further and further entrenched in the arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League. Political infighting became a major stumbling block for the AIL and it soon was a mere shadow of its former self. Its influence began to wane shortly after 1900, as the Philippine insurrection was underway the AIL was unable to capitalize on the bloodshed in a meaningful way. As the first World-War approached, the Anti-Imperialist League drew less and less support until finally, on 27 November 1920, the Anti-Imperialist League of the United States officially disbanded.¹⁶²

For nearly twenty years after its 1898 creation, members of the Anti-Imperialist League worked tirelessly to prevent and then subvert the establishment of the American Empire. They aimed to educate the American people on the inherent dangers involved with the abandonment of traditional ideas such as isolationism, and exposed the perceived hypocrisy of empire building by President William McKinley and his government. The League used a number of different arguments to sway the American people away from the idea of Empire.

The first set of arguments that the AIL utilized were political in nature. They argued that the establishment of empire violated American foreign political traditions. The AIL believed that the isolationist Foreign Policy ideas espoused by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, as well as the Monroe Doctrine, were being cast aside in favor of new jingoist foreign policies. The AIL credited traditional isolationist policies directly in the success of the United States, and they criticized President McKinley for his

¹⁶² Tomkins, 132.

new foreign policies, as well as his deviation from the traditional foreign policies that the United States had thrived under for the previous century.

The Anti-Imperialist League also used the United States Constitution in making their arguments and used it as evidence of how the hypocritical nature of empire and the potential for the violation of the supreme law of the land. They argued that the United States Constitution did not give the federal government the right to annex non-contiguous territory. The AIL also asserted that the Constitution did not allow for the inclusion of colonies under the American system of government. It was believed by many members of the AIL that a European style empire was not compatible with the American governmental system. They argued that if the United States did annex, or otherwise take control of the former Spanish colonies, that it was required, under the Constitution, to make them into states. Inhabitants of these new states would become United States citizens, with all of the rights and privileges that went along with that status. The AIL evidenced precedents of making states out of new territory set long before the Spanish American War. Anti-Imperialists asserted that excluding the creation of new states from the former Spanish colonies, that those islands needed to be granted their independence. The AIL used the Constitution of the United States as evidence to support their claims that the annexation of the former Spanish colonies was hypocritical and in direct conflict with the document upon which the United States was built.

The AIL argued that the annexation of the former Spanish colonies and keeping them as unincorporated territory would deprive the inhabitants of any rights provided by an independent government, while also denying any rights that would be granted as an American citizen. This concept violated the basic tenets of what the United States had

fought for during the American revolution, and had unfalteringly stood for, for over a century. The AIL held that the consent of the governed would be violated, and that the people of the former Spanish colonies would be kept in a state of limbo that would make them neither free citizens of their own government nor citizens of the US. The AIL went so far as to emphasize that if McKinley's government could take the basic human rights of those people away, what would stop them from taking the rights of American citizens away, and that the collapse of the republic could be a side-effect of McKinley's jingoist foreign policies. The collapse of the republic was a constant refrain in the arguments of the AIL. They saw the republic's collapse as the ultimate failure of the American experiment, and they expressed these ideas throughout their arguments.¹⁶³ The early arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League were based on traditional foreign political ideals and served as the basis for the AIL's primary arguments. These arguments began to take a back seat to several secondary arguments that rose in prominence soon after the signing of the 1898 Treaty of Paris.

These secondary arguments grew out of the traditional arguments of the Anti-Imperialist League. These secondary arguments highlighted the disparate nature of the League's membership. As 1898 drew to a close it became clear to the AIL in a creation of an American empire was nearly unavoidable. This stress created a fracturing amongst the leaders of the Anti-Imperialist League, and their internal unity quickly deteriorated. This caused a rise in the secondary arguments of the AIL. This rise in the secondary arguments led to the AIL becoming even less and less effective in arguing against the establishment of empire. The election of 1900 was the League's last ditch effort to come together

¹⁶³ Michael Patrick Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012), 1.

behind a common cause. The Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan, was a staunch Anti-Imperialist. Bryan's Anti-Imperialist ideas were important to the AIL, but some of his other arguments, notably his stance on Free Silver, further split the AIL's leadership in their support of him. Bryan's defeat in 1900 broke the Anti-Imperialist League's unity once and for all. This break in unity kept the AIL from fielding successful arguments against empire after 1900, and left them unable to capitalize on events such as the Philippine Insurrection.

The Anti-Imperialist League's fracturing further facilitated the rise in a number of secondary arguments that, after the election of 1900, took precedence over the preservation of traditional American foreign policies. The AIL posited that empire was being pushed forward by America's business interests. At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States began to out produce domestic demand for goods. At this point, certain business interests argued that only one outlet for America's excess goods remained, and that was Asia. The last decade nineteenth century saw a brief, yet severe, economic downturn that caused the European nations to begin to partition off areas of the Asiatic marketplace for their own exports and began to exclude American goods. This facilitated imperialist American business owners to push for the securing of specific rights and privileges within the Asiatic marketplace. These pleas from business owners brought forth agreements like the Open Door Notes, which played a large role in American foreign policy for decades to come. However, when the opportunity to take control of the Philippines, gain exclusive rights to the marketplaces therein, and the access that the Philippines would provide to other Asian markets, the American business

elite latched onto that concept and threw their support behind annexation.¹⁶⁴ All of these secondary arguments rose in prominence due to the fracturing of the AIL and served to illustrate the disparate nature of the AIL and its leadership.

The AIL saw the catering of American policy to serve the needs of a few business interests as hypocritical by its very nature. It went against everything the AIL believed that the United States stood for. The AIL argued that the wants of the few did not outweigh the needs of the many. The AIL stated that American manufacturing community was not hurting for overseas markets, and that the European nations provided the United States access to the Asian marketplaces up to that juncture, and believed that that trend would continue. The Anti-Imperialist League felt that the greed of the business interests would saddle the United States with a responsibility that American taxpayers would pay to support for decades to come. All of this in an effort to make a small number of Americans a great deal of wealth in the short term. The AIL saw the American business interests pushing for annexation as greedy hypocrites who only wanted to make a quick buck.¹⁶⁵

The Anti-Imperialist League also played upon the racial tensions and racist attitudes that were present in the United States at the time, in order to counter imperialist arguments. Some Anti-Imperialists believed that the United States ought not to annex these areas, because they would need to become states. They alleged that the former Spanish colonies were full of racially inferior people who could not handle the responsibility of being American citizens. Also some Anti-Imperialists stated that the

¹⁶⁴Carl Schurz, "American Imperialism," (The Convocation Address delivered on the occasion of the Twenty Seventh Convocation of the University of Chicago, 4 January 1899).

¹⁶⁵William Jennings Bryan, "Bryan on Imperialism," (New York: Arno Press of the New York Times, NY, 1970), 56.

people who resided locations would become members of the body politic and therefore receive votes and adequate representation in congress. As a result, non-white males would be allowed to sit in Congress, and to many Anti-Imperialists, indeed to many Americans, this was an outlandish notion at best.¹⁶⁶ The racial inferiority of the Filipino people was not even in question, they were almost unanimously seen as, "little brown brothers" who were not capable of taking care of themselves.¹⁶⁷

It is important to point out however, that not all of the members of the AIL were outwardly racist in their rhetoric, but were indeed products of their time, and racial equality was not a popular notion amongst white Anglo-Saxon protestants in the late nineteenth century. Some members like novelist Mark Twain was supportive of the notions of freedom which were quite evident in his Anti-Imperialist writings.¹⁶⁸

Finally, the AIL argued against the ideas that the former Spanish colonies were necessary to annex in order to protect America's national security. Imperialists argued that the colonies were necessary to take control of because of predatory European nations in the Pacific. They argued this because during the latter half of the nineteenth century, great swaths of Asia had been conquered, or just annexed into several large, globe spanning, European empires. However, the AIL argued that the United States had few, if

¹⁶⁶ Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 93-94.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas A Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 8th ed., (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), 476.

¹⁶⁸ Jim Zwick, *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine American War*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), XX.

any, enemies on their western seaboard, and that these islands would not provide any military value, because they were too far out from the western coast.¹⁶⁹

Also, the Imperialists argued that the United States ought to annex these islands to keep them out of the hands of those same predatory European empires. The AIL came back at this argument by providing evidence that these islands were not sought after by any European nations, up to that point, and remarked that the Spanish empire had been weakening for some time, and held little control over a number of the more remote islands. The AIL argued that if the European nations wanted to take those islands before, they would have done so already. The AIL's arguments were further strengthened by the case of Hawaii, which was an independent kingdom for centuries, and remained that, until the annexation by the United States.¹⁷⁰

The American Anti-Imperialist League was a large group of people who were quite passionate about stalling the effort to create an American empire. They argued that a continuation of traditional foreign political ideologies was in the best interests for the American people and the continuation of the American republic. Their abject failure to preserve the United States without an empire, saw the fracturing of the AIL and the rise of secondary arguments. These arguments illustrated the true differences in the leadership and their personal values. The people of the AIL worked for several years after the establishment of empire to roll back empire, but were ultimately unsuccessful.

¹⁶⁹ H.E. Von Holst, "The Annexation of Hawaii," *The Advocate of Peace* (1894-1920), Vol. 60, No. 3, (March 1898), 63

¹⁷⁰ Julius W Pratt, "American Business and the Spanish American War," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XIV (May 1934), 163-201.

Even though the American Anti-Imperialist League was ultimately unsuccessful in its goal to subvert the establishment of an American empire, its goal of preserving American traditional foreign policy ideologies did succeed. As soon as the end of the first World War, the United States began to question its station in the world. The United States found itself in a position to control the fate of the free world; however, as the first World War drew to a close the American people's appeals for a return to tradition grew louder and louder. Various groups such as "America First" spearheaded movements to reinstate the traditional foreign political ideologies, the same arguments that the Anti-Imperialist League espoused throughout its existence. Other groups with similar arguments as the AIL, like the Anti-War movement in the 1960's also advocated for a return to isolationist policies. The Anti-Imperialist League was the ideological predecessor to many of these groups and it was, at least in part, responsible for keeping traditional American foreign policies alive, by keeping them in the forefront of the minds of many of Americans.

The AIL was a group of Americans who were displeased with the foreign policies of its government, and sought to change their situation. The establishment of the American empire was an important segment of American political history. The ramifications of the establishment of empire rung throughout the twentieth century, and continue to effect the United States and its policies to this day. The AIL challenged the federal government in a time that this was not commonplace. They questioned the foreign policies of the president, and set a precedent for other groups to do so throughout the twentieth century. Finally, the AIL helped to keep traditional policies alive in the minds of American policy makers. The end of World War I brought about a resurgence of

traditional foreign policies like isolationism that continued throughout the interwar period, and similar ideas can be traced throughout the twentieth century to this day.

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