

IMPERIALISM IN AMERICA

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Imperialism is the forcible imposition of one country's rule over another country. This was good for the people in the mother country, but not good for those who lived in the smaller country being taken over. American Imperialism was caused by the United States' desire to expand overseas. It had political, economic, and social effects on people, which people had very split views on. Some believed that it was beneficial, while some believed that it was against the Declaration of Independence. Some believed that democracy was linked to expansion, while others saw that it would lead to political feuds. Supporters believed that it helped expand the American economy, while those opposed believed it would not. Those opposed also believed that it would result in an increase in social conflict, while those who supported it believed that it promoted people exchanging ideologies with each other. The United States used Imperialism to acquire the Philippines. American Imperialism consists of policies aimed at extending the political, economic, and social/cultural influence of the United States over areas beyond its boundaries, an example of this being Hawaii and was viewed controversially.

Annexation is the addition of other territories to a country. An example of this is the annexation of the Philippines. Not all Americans were actually in favor of Imperialism. People who opposed it believed that it countered the country's commitment to protecting individual rights and freedoms. Some felt that the annexation of the Philippines violated the Declaration of Independence since the US didn't have the "consent of the governed."¹ Imperialism could also lead to political feuds since no country wants to be controlled by another entity. An example of this is the Philippine–American War. On the other hand, there were still people who supported Imperialism. Those who supported it believed that democracy was linked with expansion, that it was the duty of the United States to spread democracy worldwide.¹ So for the annexation of the

¹ Lesson 19 Notes

Philippines, these people would have supported it as they would have felt that they were spreading democracy to them.

Economically, imperialism was expensive. Samuel Gompers, who was a labor leader, felt that the territories being added would result in the American wages being lowered, which would further result in them taking jobs away from Americans.¹ Supporters of Imperialism viewed that it benefited the economy because it provided cheap access to a source of labor and raw materials. This would save the government lots of money on these things. However, only one side benefited economically. Imperialism views economics as a “zero-sum” game. This theory contends that for one to become richer, someone else must become poorer.² Some people viewed this as a good thing, while some viewed it as a bad thing. Pro-Imperialists believed that there was a need to advance the American economy, which is why they believed in Imperialism. They felt that by further expanding the United States, it would help increase the country’s economy.

Many people viewed Imperialism negatively in social terms. Booker T. Washington believed that Imperialism would increase social conflict in the United States since African Americans were still not granted full rights. Granting rights to people living in other countries, that would be acquired by the US, would be unfair because many current American citizens were still struggling to be granted theirs.¹ Jane Addams, William Jennings Bryan, Mark Twain, and Andrew Carnegie were anti-imperialists who became members of the Anti-Imperialist League,

² Amadeo, Kimberly. “Imperialism: Definition and Impacts on US History.” The Balance. Accessed November 6, 2020. www.thebalance.com/imperialism-definition-and-impacts-on-us-history-4773797.

formed in 1899. They did not support the Treaty of Paris, in which the Philippines was acquired by the United States in 1898. Their view was that this action violated the fundamental principle that just republican government must derive from the "consent of the governed."¹ Pro-Imperialists praised social Imperialism because it resulted in the exchange of traditions, cultural ideologies, and customs. This led to nations broadening their horizons. They also praised this because it led to a myriad of technological advancements including transportation, infrastructure, roads, educational institutions, and more.³

American Imperialism was caused by the United States' desire to expand overseas. It benefitted them, but not those in which they were taking over. It had political, economic, and social effects on people, in which people did not all have the same views on. Politically, those opposed believed that Imperialism violated the Declaration of Independence and would lead to political feuds, while supporters believed that expansion was the key to spreading democracy around the world. Supporters believed that Imperialism would help to advance the American economy, while opposers believed that it would ruin it since they thought it would lead to Americans losing their jobs to foreigners and the American wage being lowered. People, such as members of the Anti-Imperialist League, believed that expansion, such as the acquisition of the Philippines, violated the fundamental principle that just republican government must derive from the "consent of the governed," while supporters led to the exchanging of ideologies and a myriad of technological advancements. Although there were disagreements between if it was good or not for America, it did help America become the booming country that we know of today.

³ "11 Main Pros and Cons of American Imperialism." ConnectUS, January 24, 2020. connectusfund.org/11-main-pros-and-cons-of-american-imperialism.

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